

Repentance Is Real

By Shauna Ikahihifo

Years ago, a young man who was a dear friend of mine called me up and asked to go for a drive. As young single adults pursuing our own goals, we did not see each other as often as we once had. So I welcomed this chance for us to catch up on each other's lives. The moment he got in the car, however, I sensed something was wrong. For most of the drive we sat in silence.

Finally, he turned to me with tears in his eyes.

I gently asked, "What's wrong?"

He hung his head as he began to tell me of his choices during the last few months. Here he was, one of the most valiant men I knew, almost

sobbing as he described how far he'd fallen in such a short time. Beaten down, he lamented, "I've lost everything. It's over."

As he said those words, I felt something ignite within me. "Don't you believe in the Atonement?" I asked him. "Didn't the Savior suffer for *all* of our sins? Do you really think you're beyond His power to save?" I pleaded for him to not give up, bearing testimony that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all the blessings of eternity could be his as he repented.

The Power of Repentance

I later discovered an unlikely scripture hero, Corianton. This man's story

Although my friend felt his mistakes had ruined his life forever, I knew that, like Corianton, he could get back on track.

helped me better understand the infinite mercy of the Atonement and the reality of God's desire for us to receive His promised blessings.

When the Book of Mormon first introduces Corianton, the son of Alma the Younger, he and his older brother Shiblon are being called to preach the gospel to the Zoramites, an apostate Nephite group (see Alma 31:7). While we later see Shiblon commended for his "faithfulness and [his] diligence" (Alma 38:3), we discover that Corianton was not so stalwart.

While still a missionary, Corianton "[forsook] the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron . . . after the harlot Isabel" (Alma 39:3). His

behavior was so wicked that when the Zoramites saw his conduct, they would not believe the words of his father, Alma (see Alma 39:11).

But fortunately it was not too late for Corianton to change. His father's counsel showed him how he could be cleansed from his sins and be pure before God again. Alma encouraged Corianton to come unto Christ and turn away from all the materialism and iniquitous behaviors he once entertained. (See Alma 39:9–14.) Eventually, Alma called Corianton again to the work (see Alma 42:31; also 49:30).

Corianton returned to the ministry with his brothers (see Alma 43:1–2). They proclaimed the gospel throughout all the land with so much success that they were able to establish the Church in every city (see Alma 45:22).

We Can Try Again

Corianton's failure to be obedient was not the end of him. Although it may have seemed to him that he had lost everything, his father, Alma, and the Savior knew otherwise. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Corianton was able to repent and change course.

Corianton could have decided it was too hard to change or that the shame of his errors was too much to face, but he didn't give up. He didn't decide that he had fallen too far to be saved. Instead, he repented and worked to become a faithful servant, not only fulfilling his duty but magnifying it. Later he and his father and brothers were all referred to as "men of God" (Alma 48:18). Corianton apparently continued to serve and possibly had a leadership role (see Alma 63:10).

All Is Not Lost

After our talk in the car, my dear friend realized that he was not beyond the mercies of our Savior's Atonement. He eventually took all the necessary steps to fully repent of his transgressions, become clean and pure before the Lord, and enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He went on to marry in the temple and become a father. He is still receiving blessings he thought he'd missed out on because of past wrongs.

If we ever find ourselves thinking we've fallen too far for Heavenly Father to rescue us, let us remember we can turn to Him and that through the miraculous Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be made new. All is not lost, for with God our potential is endless. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

As we drove in silence, my friend turned to me and said, "I've lost everything. It's over."

