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A Spiritual Lesson In Video Game Language 9d

Inspired By God, Presented And Written By Pastor
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(In God I Trust And Write)

Platform: NES

Game: Super Mario Bros. 3

Topic: Around The World 4a—Equipped For All
Good Works 1: 1-Up Mushroom

1: Opening Prayer

2: Opening Discussion

What is the highest kind of equipment God has ever given you?



Picture Taken From NES: Super Mario Bros. 3—
Level 5-5

Most Christians are likely to say salvation in Christ, which is the obvious choice; think about it more and you'll see this is just the beginning.

How often do you feel like you need to be forgiven for messing up and want another shot at getting things right (not sinning, past mistakes, lost opportunities etc.)?

Without salvation, nothing comes after this life but bad news, however God does want to do more than save us, so He will use us in mighty ways. Before we can get to the good stuff of going to preach the good news around the world, we have to remember that we have the second highest equipment ever made as well on our side, second chances; we can relax in the fact that we don't have to get everything absolutely correct.



Picture Taken From NES: Super Mario Bros. 3—Level 4-Fortress #2

Mario fans will know what this picture depicts, which is a 1-Up Mushroom. This question box contains 3 of them and before that in the previous screen in the fortress, there was another one of these secretly hidden (if you know where to look). I collected enough coins here as well to get yet another 1-Up (for getting 100 coins). Unfortunately for the bad guys, they have to allow these second chances to occur—good news for the good guys. The game of Super Mario Bros. 3 is filled with these 1-Up Mushrooms and many, many chances to get 1-Up's in general. I am often finding myself (as a decent player) filled to the maximum limit of 99 lives and these 1-Up's not meaning much until I lose one or more. This is true in our own spiritual lives too because the Devil must allow second chances to flow in abundance.

3: Bible Study

In our Bible Study, we are going to study what pastors call the “open mouth, insert foot” disciple named Peter. Peter made many mistakes in his spiritual journey in Christ, but became a very

powerful disciple and apostle. Let's look at some of the ways he needed the spiritual version of the 1-Up Mushroom; think of this as a Biblical tour of these mistakes and redemptions.

First, let's look at Luke 9: 28-36

28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.

31 They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

33 As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

34 While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

36 When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time

what they had seen.

This is more of a mistake than a sin, Peter didn't understand that glorified bodies didn't need a shelter from the elements; Jesus seems to ignore rather than rebuke. For this lesson's sake though, Peter is 0-1.

Second, let's look at Matthew 26: 31-56

31 Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

“I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

33 Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

34 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

35 But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

Gethsemane

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter.

41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.

44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Peter is 0-4

Jesus Arrested

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.”

49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

50 Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.”

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

51 With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me.

56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

In another passage of scripture, the servant who cut off the servant's ear is found to be Peter; this is found in John 18: 10.

Joh 18:10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Another mistake, Peter is 0-5.

Peter seems confident now (maybe a little arrogant), Peter brushes off Jesus' prediction for some reason and then he's one of those that fell asleep at his post in Gethsemane. Peter is 0-5 (for falling asleep three times, cutting off the ear and his mistake earlier at The Transfiguration).

Next, we see that Peter follows Jesus prediction to the letter. Let's look at Matthew 26: 69-75.

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

70 But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.

71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

72 He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know

the man!”

73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”

74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.

75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “**Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.**” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter is now 0-8 (Disowning Jesus three times on top of the other mistakes and/or sins).

Jesus after the resurrection, gives Peter his spiritual 1-Up's. Let's look at John 21.

1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way:

2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

3 “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are

you?” They knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of

John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”)

21 When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what

about him?”

22 Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”

23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Isn't this wonderful?

Jesus sees the potential in Peter when he doesn't see it in himself. Peter thought it was “game over” for him—but it wasn't.

Let's be fair to Peter; he had some successes and not everything was bad in the beginning; one example of success we will discuss is the strong faith that Peter shows for the most part. Let's look at Matthew 16: 13-20.

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Peter's faith gives Jesus the green light to promote him—even though sometimes he was over zealous,

or underestimated his shortcomings. When Peter messed up like he did, it changed nothing, except Peter needed to repent and go on with his mission around the world in Jesus Christ.

However, there are warnings as well here later in the scriptures. Let's look at Romans 6 1 Peter 2: 16

16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.

Also, let's look at Romans 6: 15-23

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Just because we are free, we don't want to waste our opportunities in Christ by sinning just because we feel like it.

4: Final Discussion And Thoughts

When we look at the above scriptures and discussions, where does this leave a person with bad habits?

This is tough, but usually, people with bad habits that are believers will have a searing conscience and will pray repeatedly for help and be repentant; this is the way God has for us to be given those spiritual 1-Up's. Sometimes though, these people

don't know how sinful a certain habit is and therefore prayers need to be offered for eyes to be opened and hearts to turn from those habits that hinder so easily.

What have we learned?

We will all sin and make mistakes, but God is patient and kind. For those earnestly seeking Christ, the 1-Up's continue ceaselessly and for this, we need to be glad and thankful. We need to always ask God to help us with all trouble and have faith that we are His forever.

5: Closing Prayer