

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Lost and Found Series, Sermon #4

Sermon Title: What To Do When You've Lost Your Delete Key: The Story of Peter, Matthew 16, 17; Mark 9; Luke 22

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**INTRODUCTION:** This is the fourth sermon in the Lost and Found Series.

- The first was “What To Do When You’ve Lost Your Cutting Edge, the Story of the Ax Head that Floated.”
- The second was “What Not To Do When God Has Given You a Second Chance: The Story of Jonah.”
- Last week was “What To Do When God Seems Lost: The Story of the Lost Ark of the Covenant.”

There are two points to today’s message:

1. Sometimes Peter spoke without thinking (and I’ll give you three examples).
2. Sometimes Peter acted without thinking (and I’ll give you three examples).

**ILLUSTRATION:** A friend of mine named Eric posted a funny note online. He wrote: *My trusty 2012 laptop has lost its delete key—which, I’ll tell you, is absolutely the most valuable key on the board. That key has had more of a beneficial effect upon my future than all of the other keys combined. So pray for me. This is not going to be pretty.*

I began thinking about the truth of that statement—the delete key is the most valuable key on the keyboard.

**ILLUSTRATION:** There was a day when we didn’t have such an option. Don King told me when he was in the Army, he did what was called “The Morning Report.” It was a daily report on each man in his unit. The report was done on a

typewriter (without a delete key) and had to be completely error free. If he got to the end of the report and made one error, he had to start all over.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Many of you remember the IBM Selectric, which has the backspace key and the correction ribbon. We all remember White Out, that little bottle of white paint you could use to cover errors or those small white plastic sheets with a chalky substance you could insert between the typewriter key and the piece of paper.

**ILLUSTRATION:** All of those correction products have been replaced by the delete key on computers. We no longer have to start all over if we make a mistake. It allows us to back up and change an error. It allows us to back up and completely restate something, or it allows us to completely delete something altogether. Numerous times, I've written things only to delete all of it.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Deleting things is easy today. In fact, sometimes it is too easy. I was in college when computers became popular. Like most people my age and older, I learned how to use a computer on my own. Without any training, there were times I accidentally deleted an entire term paper and a file. Back then, software was still in its early stages of development, and it wasn't easy retrieving deleted files.

**ILLUSTRATION:** A few years ago, I heard a speaker talk about today's youth and how they've grown up in an edited society. He used video as an example. TV and movies edit out the mistakes, and when people create their own videos, they have the ability to delete all their mistakes. The speaker said young people today are afraid to take risks because they live in an edited world where the mistakes have been removed. I believe in recent years that's changed somewhat with YouTube and other formats. People post everything, mistakes and all.

**QUESTION:** While we have the ability to edit our typed mistakes and our video mistakes, wouldn't it be nice if we could just hit the delete button at times in our life and start over?

**ILLUSTRATION:** Each time after my eight car wreck—I was hit by others—I felt as if my mind was playing tricks on me with the idea that perhaps I could delete the last five minutes and avoid the crash altogether.

Have you ever said, *I can't believe that just happened?*

When we say something we shouldn't and when we do something we shouldn't, it's as if we've lost our delete key. "I spoke without thinking. I acted without thinking." We're all guilty.

Two nights ago, a friend who is working on her doctorate asked me what is the most common question asked of me as a military chaplain. The answer was simple: *Since I've messed up, how do I start over?*

The question remains, "What do we do when we've lost our delete key? When it's too late to edit what we've said or done, what are we to do?"

**INTRODUCTION:** The life of Peter comes to mind. I've preached about him several times, each time from a different angle. There is so much to learn from his life—the good, bad, and the ugly. Peter, in some way, represents all of us in raw, human form. Numerous times, Peter lost his delete key; he said things and did things without thinking.

### **First, SOMETIMES PETER SPOKE WITHOUT THINKING.**

Have you ever been around a group of people and couldn't get a word in? Do you know someone who speaks as soon as there is a pause in the conversation? That was Peter. He spoke whatever was on his mind. He seemed to lack a filter.

### **Here is the first example of Peter speaking without thinking—**

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked the question "Who do you say that I am?" Peter was the one who answered the question correctly.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 16:16 <sup>16</sup>*You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.*

Then, right after that, he disagreed with Jesus, which was an unwise thing to do.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 16:21 – 23 <sup>21</sup> *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

<sup>22</sup> *Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”*

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”*

**EXPLANATION:** Jesus rebuked Peter for his statement. Peter’s response was to remain silent. We don’t have any record of him responding in any other way.

**APPLICATION:** When we say something we shouldn’t, we should not be surprised if we are rebuked.

**Here is the second example of Peter speaking without thinking—**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 9:2-5 <sup>2</sup> *After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*

<sup>5</sup> *Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)*

**EXPLANATION:** This was a dumb thing for Peter to say because he put Moses and Elijah on equal ground with Jesus. It’s interesting we get the inside scoop as to why Peter said anything at all. He spoke because he did not know what to say. No one else said anything. At such an awe-inspiring time, he didn’t have to say anything. In fact, he probably ruined it for the others.

Then the story goes on as if Peter said nothing. In other words, what he said was ignored.

**APPLICATION:** If we say something we shouldn't, we should not be surprised if our words are ignored.

**Here is the third example of Peter speaking without thinking—**

**SCRIPTURE:** John 13:2-8 <sup>2</sup> *The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.* <sup>3</sup> *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;* <sup>4</sup> *so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.* <sup>5</sup> *After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

<sup>6</sup> *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"*

<sup>7</sup> *Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*

<sup>8</sup> *"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."*

**EXPLANATION:** Peter should have remained silent. Jesus was giving an illustration right here on forgiveness. Now look what Jesus said:

**SCRIPTURE:** John 13:8-10 <sup>8</sup> *Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."*

<sup>9</sup> *"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"*

<sup>10</sup> *Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean."*

**EXPLANATION:** Peter missed the point. One Christian writer said Peter's statement was like a believer saying, "Lord, I refuse to confess my sins to You, and I refuse to come to you for cleansing!" And, his second statement about wanting more of a bathing than what Jesus offered was like a believer saying, "Lord, I have sinned as a Christian, and therefore, I need to be saved all over again!"

**APPLICATION:** In this example, Jesus used Peter’s impulsive words to teach a lesson. If we speak impulsively and can’t hit the delete button, it might lead to a teachable moment.

Not only did Peter sometimes speak without thinking,

## **Second, SOMETIMES PETER ACTED WITHOUT THINKING.**

**Here is the first example of Peter acting without thinking—**

The disciples were on a boat, and they saw a man walking on water. Peter said, “Jesus if it is you, call me to you,” and Jesus did just that.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 17: 29-31 <sup>29</sup>*Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.* <sup>30</sup>*But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”*

<sup>31</sup>*Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”*

**EXPLANATION:** Peter acted without thinking. Had he not been so impulsive, he would have noticed the wind and the fact Jesus knew how to handle the wind.

**APPLICATION:** When we fall because we’ve lost our focus and cannot hit the delete button, we need to cry out for help.

**Here is the second example of Peter acting without thinking—**

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 22: 47-51 <sup>47</sup>*While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him,* <sup>48</sup>*but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”*

<sup>49</sup>*When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?”* <sup>50</sup>*And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.*

<sup>51</sup> *But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.*

**EXPLANATION:** In trying to defend Jesus, Peter did not realize Jesus did not need a defense.

**APPLICATION:** When we do something terrible and cannot hit the delete button, it may take a miracle from God to fix the situation. Let’s not test God that way.

**Here is the third example of Peter acting without thinking—**

Luke 22 and John 18 both tell us about Peter’s denial of Christ. Jesus predicted Peter would betray him three times, and Peter flatly denied he would ever do such a thing. After Jesus’ arrest, while he was headed to his trial, the scripture says Peter followed at a distance and warmed himself by a fire. In this case, Peter spoke and acted without thinking.

The words he uttered without thinking were: he did not know Jesus, he was not one of the disciples, and he had no idea what they were talking about.

His action of following at a distance was done without thinking. Then the rooster crowed—as Jesus said it would—and Peter wept bitterly. I believe his remorseful weeping was repentance.

**APPLICATION:** The application is clear to me. If we act and say terrible things and can’t hit the delete button, there may be no other option but to just weep bitterly in remorse. We should repent of those words and actions that are sinful.

**CONCLUSION:** In my message, I’ve focused on the negative impulsiveness of Peter. No doubt he wished he could have hit the delete button many times. We learn a lot from Peter because he represents all of us at some time or another. The truth is life doesn’t have a delete key. We cannot go back in time and unsay something we regret saying or undo something we regret doing.

When we've spoken like we shouldn't, we, like when Peter, might get rebuked like he was rebuked for challenging Jesus. People might ignore us like Peter was ignored when he said something dumb on the Mount of Transfiguration. Or, if people around us are merciful when we speak out at the wrong time like Peter did during the foot-washing, it might lead to a teachable moment.

When we've acted like we shouldn't, we, like Peter, need to cry for help like he did when he sank into the water, or we might need a miracle like Jesus' healing of the man's ear. Or, like when Peter denied Christ, we may be able to nothing but weep bitterly and repent.

Thank God he owns the missing delete key! Jesus restored Peter. And, after Pentecost, Peter was completely different! He was a mature man! First and Second Peter both reflect his maturity.

And, with us, look how God uses the delete key:

God spoke through the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 43:

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 43:25 <sup>25</sup>*I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.*

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 103:12 <sup>12</sup>*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah in Chapter 31:

**SCRIPTURE:** Jeremiah 31:34 <sup>34</sup>*For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.* (This is repeated in Hebrews 8 and 10.)

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