

Polly's Pondering

*"Just a closer walk with thee, grant it Jesus is my plea.
Daily walking close to thee, let it be dear Lord, let it be."*

I am not much of a golfer. Never really had much of an opportunity to really learn. So, it seems a bit strange that I woke the other morning with the word "mulligan" on my mind. I know that it is an unofficial golfing term that allows someone to have a "do-over" for a previous poor swing, attempting to have a better outcome or a more effective path forward without a penalty.

Yesterday when I was settling down to sleep, I was thinking about the newsletter article that was on my *to do* list. More specifically, the January newsletter. January is most often associated with resolutions. I process very similar to a "mulligan" – a "do-over" in that it is a decision to change something, improve a habit, or start fresh attempting to have a better outcome or a more effective path forward. I began to wonder what synonyms there were for "mulligan". It was clear this was taking me down a rabbit trail of sorts. But then it struck me, not because of the synonyms listed but rather from the one word that was missing. Why was repentance not listed as a synonym for "mulligan". After all it offers a fresh start with forgiveness and restoration.

The difference is that repentance is a total change of mind and direction. It involves sorrow for previous choices that are sinful, a conscious decision to turn from those actions and to choosing to move forward in a more effective way forward that is more inline with Christ. In other words, a simple "do-over" is an act of repeating a previous action with the same intent while hoping for a better outcome. Repentance is a change in mindset that seeks to move forward with a change in behavior with an intent of a totally different outcome.

Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped Out." Proverbs 28:13 says, "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy and 1 John 1:9 reads, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

It is my prayer that this January we look for more than a "mulligan", more than a simple "resolution" and that we ponder deeply where we need repentance. Because when we repent, we will enter into a deeper more profound path forward that will give us a more effective and transformative path forward leading us to a closer walk with Christ. Amen and Amen.