

Remnant Life Church
May 5, 2019
Hope for the Peter in All of Us
Mark 16:1-8

- I think one of the most interesting people throughout the final week of Jesus' life was Peter.
- Peter, in this time of great turmoil and emotion, like many of us ran a wide range of emotion and action.
 - From great bravery to embarrassing cowardice
 - From the height of great honor to the low of crippling shame
 - From undisputed leader to a self-exiled emotional outcast

Peter is also, by his actions and what happened to him as a result, a representative of each one of us.

What is important for us to see, however, is not only did Jesus not forget about Peter or dismiss him because of what he had done but went out of His way to restore him.

READ – Mark 16:1-8

- Notice what the angel says
 - First, know that angels act as messengers of God and not of themselves
 - They only do and say what God tells them to do and say
- Look at verse 7 again - *But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.*
 - What is strange about what the angel says?
 - Tell the disciples...and Peter
 - Why was Peter singled out?
 - Because at that time Peter was at the lowest point of his life
 - He was filled with shame, humiliated, and embarrassed
 - Why?
 - Because he had done exactly what he told Jesus he would never do, betray Him
 - Not once but three times!

What makes Peter's failure in this situation so prominent is who he was for the previous 3 years of Jesus' ministry?

1. Peter was the most vocal and intense of the 12
 - a. Peter was always the first to speak up
 - b. He could be considered the spokesman of the group
 - c. We know this through the culture of that day
2. It was Peter who said, "*Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.*" **Matt 26:35**
3. He was also a part of Jesus' inner circle

- a. Peter was present with James and John at the transfiguration (**Matt 17; Mark 9; Luke 9**)
 - b. Peter was the one who recognized and identified Moses and Elijah
 - c. Peter was closest to Jesus when He prayed in the Garden and saw Him at His most human moment (**Matt 26:37-38**)
 - d. It was Peter who walked on the water on the Sea of Galilee (**Matt 14:29**)
 - e. And it was to Simon (Peter's birth name) that Jesus said, *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.* (**Matt 16:18**)
 - i. In the Greek Peter means "rock"
 - f. But Peter was also a man of great insecurity
 - i. We see this by his actions during after the crucifixion
4. The slide for Peter toward the betrayal begins in the Garden of Gethsemane
- a. Soldiers come led by Judas
 - b. *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.)* (**John 18:10**)
 - i. Why did Peter even have a sword with him?
 - ii. Had he not been with Jesus for the past 3 years?
 - iii. When did Jesus ever advocate force for anything He stood for?
 - 1. Jesus' ministry was never about coercing people to follow Him
 - 2. Not physically, emotionally, mentally
 - iv. Peter was already beginning to rely on the flesh rather than the Spirit
5. It then escalated when he, with all the other disciples, fled from the garden
6. It finally culminated with Peter denying Jesus 3 times when asked if he knew or associated with Jesus
- a. This would be the moment of greatest regret for Peter
 - b. Was what Peter did really that serious?
 - c. **Matt 10:32-33** - *Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.*
 - i. Means to disclaim association with; totally reject
 - ii. Same word in Matthew as what describes what Peter did to Jesus
 - iii. Peter did it not once but 3 times
 - d. But watch now what Jesus did

READ – **John 21:15-19**

7. When we recognize the magnitude of what Peter did we can then better understand why Jesus asked Peter 3 times in the same conversation the same question
- a. Jesus was first, telling Peter that He was aware of what happened
 - b. We also note that Jesus is calling Peter by the name of his old nature (Simon)
 - c. Second, He restored Peter (in front of the others)
 - d. Third, for 3 denials, Jesus forgave each one

As we see this concept more clearly, look now at a quick comparison between Peter and one other disciple.

- Perhaps the last one you would select to compare with the undisputed leader of the 12
- But let's look at Peter and Judas – not only to compare what they did but how it ended so differently for them

Both men did the exact same thing – they betrayed Jesus

- On the one hand Judas' actions were deliberate and planned
 - He went and sought out the high priests- (Matt 26:14)
 - He then waited and watched for an opportunity to betray Jesus – (Matt 26:16)
 - Now it involves not only planning but scheming
 - Spying with evil intent
 - He returned to the high priests with the location
 - He led the priests and soldiers to Jesus in the Garden – (Matt 26:47)
 - He performed the act of betrayal – (Matt 26:49)
 - He conceived, planned, and acted out each stage
 - Through each and every one of these steps, Judas could have stopped at any time
 - That same statement is true for each of us – it is never too late to turn from sin
- Peter's actions, however, were not planned but, like most things in Peter's life, on the spur of the moment
 - Peter spontaneously tried to defend Jesus in the Garden (John 18:10)
 - He fled the Garden with the others (Matt 26:56)
 - But followed Jesus after His arrest (Luke 22:54)
 - He wanted to see what was happening but not get too close
 - How many Christians live their lives in the exact same way?
 - They want to call themselves followers of Jesus
 - But they don't want to get too close meaning give up too much

The aftermath, however, was very different

- Both men were filled with remorse and regret at their actions
 - Peter wept bitterly (Matt 26:75)
 - Judas was filled with remorse (Matt 27:3)
- But only Judas tried to make things right (Matt 27:3-4)
 - He returned the money
 - He spoke on Jesus' behalf calling Him innocent blood
- Peter was also very upset but never sought forgiveness or confessed what he had done
 - He told none of the other disciples what he had done
 - He kept it all to himself

This is exactly what Satan wants you to do when you sin – keep it to yourself

- He uses our pride to get us to justify that action
- If we keep it hidden (we even think we hide it from God) then it is never dealt with
- The light of revelation exposes the darkness

What were their outcomes?

- Judas killed himself (**Matt 27:5**)
 - He too never went to the others to pray with and for him
- Peter was restored
 - Could Judas have been restored?
 - I believe so
 - Will we see Judas in heaven?
 - A fellow pastor said “no” immediately
 - My question: was that remorse and action a confession that resulted in forgiveness?

I John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Peter’s forgiveness of sin is available to each of us this morning

- Was Judas’ sin greater than Peter’s because it handed Jesus over to be crucified?
- Was Peter’s less so because there were no immediate ramifications?
 - Peter, it could be argued, hurt no one other than himself
 - Does that make it any less of a sin?
 - Were they just “white lies” and no big deal?
- Sin is sin
 - Big – small
 - Public – private
 - Known – unknown
 - If it is contrary to the Word of God it is sin!
 - Regardless of how you justify it to yourself, what the culture of the time says, or any other group declares regardless of their size
 - Sin is sin
- But sin committed by one who knows Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior can be forgiven
- Again, **I John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
- There is a bit of Peter in every one of us
 - The capacity to falter in the face of trouble
 - The right intent that is swept aside by wrong action
 - The overwhelming sense of self-preservation or entitlement
- But there is hope that when that moment comes you will not be drawn in by the temptation to act in a way that is, like Peter, self-serving
- It takes thought, commitment, and a willingness to lay down your pride – but there is hope
- Not because of what we do but because of Jesus Christ!