

Monday, 4-11-16, Matthew 16:13-20

Early on Jesus asked Simon the fisherman, “Who do you say I am?” Simon replied, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” Then Jesus blessed Simon and said, “And I tell you, you are Peter, *Petros*, and on this rock, *petra*, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” It was Peter who first said the words, “You are the Messiah.” Naming a person a “Rock” and adding the special responsibility (the keys of the kingdom of heaven – thus our concept of St. Peter at the Pearly Gate) suggests Jesus saw a steady leader in Peter even though the disciple often seemed impetuous. From Peter’s later stories, we might infer, the name given overwhelmed him from time to time. Have you ever been named to a position that overwhelmed you from time to time? Did you see, like Peter, that the Messiah was walking with you?

Tuesday, 4-12-16, Luke 22:47-51:

When Jesus was arrested in the garden, Peter tried to defend Jesus by drawing his sword and cutting off the right ear of the servant of the high priest. (Luke doesn’t name Peter but the other Gospels specify it was Peter). Then Jesus said, “No more” and healed the ear back on the man. They led Jesus away and moments later Peter sat down in front of a bonfire in the courtyard along with some others. A girl said, “This man was with him.” And Peter said, “Woman, I don’t know him.” Peter even sat there for more than an hour with people repeatedly accusing him of being with Jesus. Two more times Peter denied Christ with indignation. The last time a rooster crowed. At that moment Jesus came into the courtyard and looked at Peter. Peter remembered Jesus had said, “Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.” Peter left the courtyard and wept bitterly. This bitterness surely stayed with Peter when Christ was suffering on the cross and died. We might call it survivor guilt. Sometimes the greatest part of grief is survivor guilt. PTSD with military personnel is often attributed to survivor guilt. If you have experienced it, know that, like Peter, you can be healed.

Wednesday, 4-13-16, John 21:2-6

In the days after the resurrection, the Risen Christ shows himself to the disciples. Jesus had spoken to them about eternal life and that they were to continue his work – teaching, healing, and making disciples. Peter was a man so solid Jesus nicknamed him the Rock. Surely he willed him to carry on. In times of loss and grief, we make vague promises to carry on. But deep inside ourselves we hide ourselves back in the old normal. Normal brings comfort. We see this happen with Peter. Peter had been a fisherman by trade. He had a family to support. Quite simply Peter went back to work as a fisherman. And once Peter started out six other bereaved fishermen joined him. Have you been in a time of grief or anxiety? And had to drag yourself to take on the new challenges that lay before you? And found yourself finding the most comfort in the old normalcy? Peter tried that too. It didn’t last long.

Thursday, 4-14-16, John 21:7-14

Immediately Jesus created a series of cosmic events. Fish massed on one side of the boat. Jesus cooked and fed them a meal, served like Holy Communion. Most importantly this was Jesus’ third appearance after he was raised from the dead. We still see the impulsive Peter, who was wearing his under garb, perhaps like a loin cloth. He put on his outer robe and jumped into the sea. He came back to help with the haul of fish. There was a cosmic interruption in Peter’s return to ordinary life. God’s interventions into our lives – especially when we’re comfortably settled – can be unnerving and uncomfortable. Maybe we need a little bit of Peter’s impulsivity.

Friday, 4-15-16, John 21:15-19

Here’s one of the best known Bible stories. “Peter, feed my lambs.” We know Peter became the greatest leader of the original disciples, an apostle on the level of Paul. Peter would go ahead to cure the lame and raise the dead. Tradition, though not the Bible, tells Peter became the Bishop of Rome. Many stories of Peter in the Book of Acts parallel the Jesus’ stories in Luke’s Gospel. What we have to remember is that only one word is key. Love. Whatever we do, we do loving Jesus. What does it mean when you say, “I love Jesus”?

Saturday, 4-16-16, Acts 2:14-36:

Peter is transformed by Christ. Peter had been a failure, a colossal failure repeatedly. Christ has restored him, and now Peter was in charge of his own failure. Peter climbs up before the crowds. Jews from every nation and dress and language have come to Jerusalem for the Festival of Pentecost. Peter notices an oddity. Though he is an untraveled Galilean fisherman, he understands the languages from Egypt and Syria and Greece and Turkey and Rome, everywhere. And Peter delivers a sermon about failure that is so shocking, we’re still talking about it 2000 years later. Here is the hope-filled truth. Failure is an event, not a personality. Failure, even repeated failures, isn’t our destiny. This is good news because everybody fails. If we’re honest, we fail over and over just like Peter. It isn’t the failure that defines us. It is what happens next.

Love: How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?

Learn: What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?

Share: What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

Serve: Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

Healing Strength: Rex Townsend, Stan Ensch, Lincoln Wallis, Mary Schmidt, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb’s daughter), Janet Coons (Donna’s daughter)

Sympathies: Family of Bucky Jordan (Tim’s Dad), Family of Houston Wooden

Homebound: Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

Military Personnel: Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark