

Peter and His Epistles

Lesson 4: After the Resurrection

I. Introduction: Who was at the cross?

Matt 27:55, Mark 15:40-41, Luke 23:49, John 19:25-27, 1 Peter 5:1

II. The events on Easter Sunday morning

John 20 and Mark 16:7

- A. Mary Magdalene, Mary and Salome came to the cave to anoint the body of Jesus.
- B. The stone was rolled back and one of the two angels spoke to them. “He is not here – He is risen. Go tell the disciples and Peter He is going ahead of you into Galilee.”
- C. He appeared privately to Peter.
 - 1. Consider the report by the two disciples who met Christ on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:34)
 - 2. Consider Paul’s report in 1 Cor. 15:4-5
 - 3. What did Peter say to Jesus? (Psalm 51 or Luke 15:18-19)

III. Jesus’ farewell on the seashore – John 21

- A. Peter’s attitude: “I am going out to fish.”
- B. There was a similar encounter in Luke 5:1-11. On the first occasion: a call to be fishers of men. This time, it is a call to be a shepherd. He swims/runs to Jesus.

Jesus asks Peter three distinct questions:

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| 1. Question #1: Jesus uses “agape” | Peter answers with “phileo” |
| 2. Question #2: Jesus uses “agape” | Peter answers with “phileo” |
| 3. Question #3: Jesus uses “phileo” | Peter answers with “phileo” |

Agape: a selfless kind of love

Phileo: a love that could be characterized by friendship

“Too much has been made of the differing words. John uses the different words in order to capture the varying tone of their exchange. Almost certainly they did not

speak Greek anyway. Peter's word (phileo) was also used by John in recording Jesus' statement of His Father's love for Him (see John 5:20) so how could that be categorically seen as inferior to agape." (Fragile Stone, p. 123)

- C. Three denials – three affirmations to be a shepherd. Peter became focused on being a shepherd of God's people.

1 Peter 2:25 *"For 'you were like sheep going astray,' but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."*

1 Peter 5:2-4 *"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."*

IV. The early days in Jerusalem

- A. Timing: 6 weeks later (some 40 days)
- B. Peter – the passionate preacher

There are four "sermons" in the book of Acts

Note: his first comments are addressed to the believers regarding the replacement of Judas (Acts 1:15-25) and are really not a sermon

1. Sermon #1: Acts 2:14-40. The explanation of Pentecost (celebration of the grain harvest. Occurred 50 days after the exodus. It was one of the three festivals that required Jewish men to travel to Jerusalem). This is his longest message. The crowd heard the message in at least 16 different languages. The 120 who huddled around in the upper room now became 3000!
2. Sermon #2: Acts 3:12-26 Occurs at the temple (Solomon's Colonnade). As a result, Peter and John were arrested.
3. Sermon #3: An interrupted sermon – Began in Acts 4:8-12 and resumed in Acts 5:29-32. Delivered the next day (after sermon #2) to the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem.
4. Sermon #4: An interrupted message – began in Acts 10:34-43 and interrupted by the Holy Spirit in Acts 10:44.

- C. Peter – the early church leader “In the first twelve chapters of Acts, once again Peter is clearly the star and the leader of the church, the first preacher, the first apologist and the first healer.
- We see him presiding over the appointment of Matthias (chapter 1).
 - He explains to the crowd the mystery of the Pentecost event and gives the first sermon (chapter 2).
 - He performs the first healing in like manner to Jesus (chapter 3).
 - When Peter and John are seized, Peter alone explains their actions. John is completely silent (chapter 4).
 - It is Peter who handles the tragic case of Ananias and his wife.
 - Though Luke tells us the apostles healed many, it is Peter’s shadow the crowd desires to have fall on them (chapter 5).
 - When Peter and John are confronted by Simon the sorcerer, only Peter speaks and rebukes him (chapter 8).
 - Peter heals Tabitha and Aeneas (chapter 9).
 - It is Peter who first reaches out to the Gentiles (chapter 10).
 - When he is criticized for breaking the rules, he articulates for the first time this new dimension into which God is taking the church (chapter 11).
 - And finally, in chapter 12, Herod arrests Peter, after having killed James. An angel rescues Peter and he – we are simply told – left for another place.
 - Though he will reappear briefly one final time at the Jerusalem in chapter 15, chapter 12 effectively marks his exit as character and prime focus of the narrative. (Fragile Stone, p. 132-133)

V. So what?

Peter was restored to a most lofty role in the early church. His failures, once forsaken, were “scaffolding” that God used to make him into the great New Testament shepherd.

The same process can be true for us....”It is never too late to be what you might have become.” (George Eliot)

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it was so significant for the women to be told to go tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus was resurrected?
2. What do you think Jesus’ three questions were meant to provoke out of Peter?
3. How had Peter’s job evolved from fisherman to shepherd?