

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

March 8, 2009

“And Peter”

Peter was a broken man. He had always seemed to be so strong and so full of courage. After all, he was the only one of Jesus' disciples who had the courage to actually step out of the boat and onto the surface of a restless, tossing sea (Matthew 14:28-29). He was the one who spoke up upon the Mount of Transfiguration and suggested that a tent for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah be erected (Mark 9:2-7). He was the one who rebuked Jesus Himself for speaking of the things that He was to suffer at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes (Matthew 16:21-22). He was the one who drew his sword and struck off the ear of Malchus at Jesus' arrest (John 18:10), disregarding the fact that he and his fellow apostles were facing a large band of trained soldiers and apparently quite outnumbered (John 18:3). More than all of this, he was the one who said to Jesus, **“Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death”** (Luke 22:33).

What do you suppose went through Peter's mind when His Lord and Master, the One he had devoted so much time and energy to, the One he loved above all others, responded by saying, **“I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me”** (Luke 22:34). Peter's thoughts at that time are made apparent to us from Matthew's account of the events in Matthew 26:35. Jesus had just told Peter that he was going to deny his Lord and Peter fired right back with, **“Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!”** Stubborn, impetuous, fiery Peter could not fathom a situation in which he would deny Jesus. There can be absolutely no doubt that Peter meant every word he said and, at least for that moment, was prepared to die for the Lord. Of course, it is so much easier to show courage in words than it is in deeds. While Peter had been very courageous in the past, his courage was about to be tested as it had never been tested before. Peter would fail the test, stupendously so.

“Then they seized him (Jesus) and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, ‘This man was also with him.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘Woman, I do not know him.’ And a little later someone else saw and said, ‘You also are one of them.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I am not.’ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, ‘Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about.’ And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:54-62). Yes, Peter was a broken man.

One can only imagine the anguish of spirit that Peter must have experienced in those days leading to the Lord's resurrection. Yet there was One who did not have to imagine for He knew precisely what Peter felt and that One was Jesus. Thus, He sends a special message of comfort to Peter through a messenger in Mark 16:7-8. **“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”**

Perhaps Peter no longer felt worthy to be considered among Jesus' disciples. Perhaps his denial of Jesus prevented him from even feeling as though he could step into the presence of the other disciples. Luke indicates that Jesus may have appeared first to Peter in Luke 24:34. While Peter was a broken man, Jesus was prepared to forgive him and help him to become better than he had ever been before. How Peter's heart must have soared when Jesus appeared to him and forgave him. How his spirits must have lifted to the heavens when Jesus informed him that He still had such tremendous plans for Peter.

Practically, what may we take from this account? The answer is simple: our Lord is merciful and He is forgiving. Suppose that we were in Jesus' position. Would we have been so quick to forgive one who was so adamant in his willingness to die right along with us and yet deserted the moment we needed him the most? I fear that I would not. Yet Jesus did. How wonderful it is for man that each of us may be forgiven provided we meet the conditions for that forgiveness. Do you stand forgiven before Jesus Christ? If not, He stands prepared to forgive and save you if you will but do what He asks. Jesus is ready. Are you?

Congregational Information

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Remember Ron Tirey as he recovers from his surgery. Let's be sure that we ask he and Sharon if there is anything that we can do for them during this period of recovery.</p> <p>We always need our brethren to pray for us but occasionally someone needs special and specific prayers. As I continue to learn the names and faces of the members here I will need your help in knowing who needs our prayers. I will usually have completed the bulletin by Friday morning. Please give me a call at the building or on my cell before that time to let me know who needs what. Thank you very much!</p>	<p>There will be a men's meeting this afternoon followed by the congregational information meeting.</p> <p>I do not have a land line but you can reach me at any time of the night or day on my cell. The number is 513-373-2796. I have also posted this number up in the back.</p> <p>Please feel free to use any of my books back in the office. However, if you wish to take one home with you, please let me know which one you have taken and how long you intend to use it. Also, please remember to return it when you've finished with it. Thanks!</p>

