



## What Does It Mean to Us?

Three days seems like an eternity when you are reliving a bad decision. Maybe you mailed a letter with some things in it that you shouldn't have said. Or you send a text or email to someone with some words that were not nice and you regret it. The time spent contemplating those bad choices can be excruciating. This is what Peter must have been going through except that Peter's torment must have been many times worse. He had denied his own Savior and not once by three times. He also had messed up over and over again during the two days that lead up to the denial. 72 hours must have felt like an eternity.

Like Mike Anderson in the story I started with in this study, Peter had to have been looking over his shoulder wondering what happen because of his failure. Mike waited 13 years, Peter waited 3 days. I am sure that both of these men wondered if and when the time would come that they would have to "pay the piper" for their failures.

After the long three days and nights spent wondering what happened and what was coming prophesy is fulfilled. There are two things that we can read in the Gospels that are very interesting concerning Peter right after the resurrection. First, in Mark's writings we see that the angel told women to go and tell the disciples about what had happened. Then they were told something that makes me believe that God was sympathetic to what He knew Peter was going through. The angel then said to tell the disciples and Peter. Peter was the only one of the 11 that was named specifically, as if to say, "Make sure Peter knows." This shows that the restoration and redemption of Peter was already in the planning before he had even denied Jesus.

Mark 16:5-7

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. <sup>6</sup>But he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; see, *here is* the place where they laid Him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell His disciples and Peter.

The second thing that we see happen in John's account is that John and Peter run to the tomb when they get the news of the empty tomb. John gets there quicker than Peter and stops outside the tomb, Peter runs right past John and right into the tomb.

John 20:3-6

Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. <sup>4</sup>They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. <sup>5</sup>Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. <sup>6</sup>Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there

Peter seems to have temporarily forgotten about his bad choices and wants to be with Jesus. I get the feeling that Peter knows that Jesus loves him enough to offer forgiveness. Peter wants to be close to Him. However the excitement of Jesus having been resurrected was a most likely bitter/sweet situation for Peter. Jesus had certainly conquered death as He had promised that this was a great victory. However, Peter was carrying a heavy load of guilt and regret. How could he ever show Jesus how deeply



sorry he was? I am sure that he had to question if Jesus would ever feel the same way to him now after Peter had denied even knowing. We've all been there, having hurt something and wishing to restore the relationship we've lost.

When Jesus and Peter finally have a chance to intimately talk, Jesus takes great care in redeeming Peter.

John 21:15-17

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'

'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep'"

I'm not sure if Jesus does it for effect but notice that He asks Peter if he loves Him once for every time he denied knowing Him. Each time Peter responds that he does love the Lord, Jesus directs and encourages him to care for His sheep. This is Jesus' extremely loving and redeeming way, of telling Peter that his failure hasn't disqualified him from his role as Christ's trusted ministry partner.

There are many testimonies of Peter's ministry throughout the New Testament and there is no doubt about the fact that he did go on to become what Jesus had said he would, "the rock on which I will build my church." Shortly after Christ's ascension into heaven we see an amazing transformation of Peter.

Peter, along with John had been arrested and locked for preaching about Jesus, His life, death and resurrection. Shortly after being arrested the elders and teachers brought them before the group to question the two disciples. Peter doesn't hesitate and immediately preaches to them about Jesus.

After speaking of evidence of Peter finishes by telling them, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Luke the writer of the books of Acts then writes, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

These leaders of the day had seen Peter when he was walking with Jesus. They knew that he was a common uneducated fisherman. What they saw amazed them and frightened them as well. Here was Peter, the fisherman, preaching and teaching like one that had many years of formal training.

There is only one answer to the question of these religious leaders that is that Peter had been with Jesus. Jesus had taken the damaged parts of Peter and redeemed him so that he would be used in miraculous ways.



The story of Peter's restoration and redemption is no different than what Jesus wants to do for you and I. We'll all have times where we will fail miserably in life, but we see in Peter's life that through our relationship in Jesus there is always a way back. God is continually working in our life to restore and redeem us, making us into the person He wants us to be. The giant of the Bible, like Peter, were no different people than you or I. If God would gladly redeem them, He will lovingly do the same for you.

Each time we sin we turn our back on Jesus. We deny His lordship in our lives. But even when this happens, we can see in these scriptures that He loves us unconditionally. We can know that our sins are "removed as far as the East is from the West" (Psalms 103:12). There is nothing that can stand between the love of God and us, when we wish to be redeemed and confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness.