

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 21 (May 21-27, 2017)

As we concluded last week's devotions, Peter is sitting in the Upper Room with Jesus and his fellow disciples. He is quite confident that the Lord is wrong in His prediction that Peter will deny Him three times before the rooster crows in the morning.

Sunday, May 21 (read Luke 22:39-46)

When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. (Luke 22:45)

Peter and the other disciples (minus Judas) follow Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus tells them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation" (v. 40). The Lord then goes about a stone's throw away and prays, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (v. 42). He is in agony, not because He is going to die, but because His Father, who cannot look upon sin, must turn His back on His Son while the debt of sin is paid. Only Dr. Luke records the blood oozing from His veins (v. 44). Jesus would have died from this agony had not an angel come from Heaven to strengthen Him (v. 43). What are Peter and the rest of the men doing? They are fast asleep (v. 45)! Dr. Luke points out that their extreme sorrow and depression cause this lapse, but Peter has, once again, failed His Master in a critical moment. After mildly rebuking His disciples (v. 46), Jesus sees the men coming to take Him away. We will continue this account in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, May 22 (read Luke 22:47-53)

And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. (Luke 22:50)

Judas arrives and uses a kiss to identify Jesus as the one they are seeking to arrest (v. 47-48). Luke does not name the one who strikes the servant of the high priest, but John is quick to identify Peter as the culprit (John 18:10). Obviously, Peter intended to kill the man, but he hit only an ear. Jesus then does His final physical miracle as He attaches Malchus' (John 18:10) ear back on his head (v. 51). The Lord reminds His disciples that if they live by the sword, they will also die by the sword (Matthew 26:52). He asks the officers of the temple a rhetorical question, because He already knows that His time has come and that darkness will reign until He is crucified (v. 52-53). Peter probably thinks his night couldn't get any worse, but the Lord's prediction about him is about to take place, as we will see next.

Tuesday, May 23 (read Luke 22:54-62)

The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." (Luke 22:61)

Those who try to follow the Lord at a distance will, like Peter, someday disown Jesus, no matter how sincere they may be (v. 54). Peter had been so confident in the Upper Room that he was ready to die with the Lord (Luke 22:33), but now he denies Him to a servant girl (v. 55-57). (Spiritually speaking, you cannot warm your heart beside a fire that is kindled by someone else.) In this text, two others try to identify Peter with Jesus, but he vehemently denies it (v. 58-60). The fisherman reverts to his old ways and calls down curses upon himself as he states (Matthew 26:74), "I don't know the man!" At this point, Jesus turns and looks at Peter (v. 61). Whatever the Lord's look says to Peter, it breaks his fragile heart so he goes outside and weeps bitterly. Have you been there? Have you ever done something that you swore you would never do? Have you felt the pain of rebuke or chastisement in your heart? If so, there is redemption available to you in Christ Jesus.

Wednesday, May 24 (read John 21:1-6)

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize it was Jesus. (John 21:4)

Simon Peter had left his boat as well as a whole boatload of fish to follow Jesus (Luke 5:1-11). Following the death and resurrection of the Lord, he returns to the occupation he knows, taking with him seven other disciples. They fish all night and catch nothing (v. 1-3), just as they had done in the passage recorded in the 5th chapter of Luke. Unknown to them, Jesus is watching from the shore (v. 4). He calls out to ask if they have caught anything (v. 5). Then He tells them to throw the net to the **right side** of the boat and they will find some fish. When they obey, they net so many fish that they are unable to haul them in (v. 6). Still today, it is imperative that we fish where Jesus tells us. Being a conservative, I fish on the right side of the boat too. In other words, I take Jesus at His Word and present His truth to my listeners (see John 5:50). God has honored that, because His Word will never return void (Isaiah 55:10-11). When we go where He sends us and say what He tells us, we will accomplish His will.

Thursday, May 25 (read John 21:7-14)

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. (John 21:9)

John always identifies himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (v. 7). It's not that Jesus loves him more, it's just that John feels so loved by the Lord that he thinks he must be His favorite. I hope you feel the same way. After John identifies Jesus, Peter wades ashore while the other disciples follow in the boat (v. 7-8). They discover that Jesus has already prepared breakfast featuring fish and bread (v. 9). He allows them to contribute to the meal from some of the 153 fish they have just netted (v. 10-11). He still invites His followers to contribute to His ministry. Even though He owns the cattle on 1000 hills, He asks us to participate (see Psalm 50:9-10). Most of the disciples enjoy the breakfast, but I am sure Peter is dreading the inevitable confrontation because of his denial of knowing Jesus (v. 12-14). We will continue this story of redemption in tomorrow's devotion.

Friday, May 26 (read John 21:15-19)

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." (John 21:15b)

This is the Lord's third appearance to His disciples following His resurrection (v. 14). He had not addressed the subject of Peter's denial on the first two visits, but now, He asks Peter (v. 15), "Do you truly love me more than these?" These what, you may ask? These boats and these fish would be at least a part the answer! Peter responds, "You know I love you." Jesus commands him to "Feed my lambs." A lamb, of course, is a young sheep. Jesus wants Peter to know that he must make the gospel plain, even to the youngest listeners. Likewise, churches in our generation must make sure that young children and teens are able to understand the message. We need to ask God how to make His Word come alive for them. Churches that are not reaching the youth are doomed to close their doors later on!

Saturday, May 27 (reread John 21:15-19)

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." (John 21:16b)

More intensely, Jesus asks, "Do you truly love me?" Peter reaffirms his love for Jesus, prompting the Lord to say, "Take care of my sheep." I have often said, "They won't care how much I know on Sunday if they don't know how much I care the other six days of the week." The sheep get wounded as they live out their faith in a hostile world. They need someone who is willing to bind up the hurts and teach them to walk with the Chief Shepherd. Peter must realize that he is to be more than just a preacher. Jesus set the example by caring for physical needs as well as spiritual needs. Today, many churches are "social justice" churches, meaning that they spend their time and resources providing for the poor. As important as that is, it pales in importance to the third calling that the Lord is about to assign to Peter. We will see that in tomorrow's devotion.