

# Tell His Disciples, and Peter

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[0:00] Matthew chapter 28. We'll read the first ten verses. After the Sabbath, at dawn, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

And the guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here. He has risen just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.

There you will see him. Now I have told you. So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid, yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

[1:19] Suddenly Jesus met them. Greetings, he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see me. Christ is risen. Amen. He has risen to me.

Let's try that again. Amen. Christ is risen. He has risen to me. All four accounts of the gospel give us a record of that fact.

Now they don't give us a theological analysis of the resurrection of Christ. They don't explain to us the significance of that resurrection for our salvation and for our daily life, and indeed for our own resurrection.

No, that kind of analysis is found more in the rest of the New Testament, in the book of Acts, and in the epistles. But what the four gospels are concerned to give us is a historical account of the resurrection.

[2:32] Their concern is to establish its factuality by eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. And so it gives us a much more personal view of the resurrection as it impacted the followers of our Savior.

So on this Resurrection Sunday, I would like for us to consider the resurrection of Christ through the eyes of the apostle Peter. And as we consider Peter, we will be led inexorably to Peter's risen Lord. Now the last time we saw Peter, he was saying for the third time, I don't know the man. And this time he even added blasphemous curses, calling down God's curse on his head if he was not telling the truth.

And no sooner had the words tumbled out of his mouth, but that the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and looked directly at him. He remembered the words that the Lord had spoken to him just hours earlier, that before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.

And so Peter went out and wept bitterly. And we hear nothing more about Peter until after the resurrection. Three days of hidden silence.

[4:00] We don't find him at the foot of the cross with the apostle John and Mary, the mother of Christ. How could he stand there and meet his Savior face to face and look into his eyes as he hung on the cross when he had sworn that he didn't even know him?

Was he among those who stood at a distance and watched their Lord being crucified, as Luke says? Probably so, because he does write in his first letter, Peter does, and refers to himself as a witness of Christ's suffering.

And he says in Acts, as he preaches, that we are witnesses of these things. What things? You killing the Christ and hanging him on a tree. So it's probable that from a distance he saw his Savior crucified.

But again, we do not see Peter at the burial. He's not mentioned anywhere at the cross. And we don't see him at the burial of Jesus, along with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

No, Peter is lost somewhere in the background, not the place where this leader of the twelve is usually found. And what transpired in his heart over those three days, we can only imagine.

[5:18] Surely they were the darkest days of his life. Bad enough just dealing with the death of his master. I mean, we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem us.

But add to that his own desertion and his threefold denial with blasphemies. It must have made it unbearable for Peter to live with himself and his guilt.

We wonder how much sleep he got during those two nights. How his mind must have played back over and over. The temptations and his denials.

The rooster's crowing. The Savior's look. And the remembrance of his words. And then the cruel cross. His eyes had met Christ that fateful night.

But there had been no telling his Lord just how sorry he was for what he had done. No forgiveness sought and found. And now it's too late because he's dead.

[6:21] And I can't go back and undo the things that I've said. And so he's left with bitter regret and tears of sorrow for his unfaithfulness to his dead Lord.

But now it's the morning of the third day. And Peter is found, met together with the other apostles and followers of Jesus.

And several of their women came from the tomb with unbelievable news. They had gone there early to anoint Jesus' body with spices and perfumes. And they were back now with the amazing news that the massive stone had been rolled away from the door.

And an angel was sitting there and told them, Do not be afraid for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He's not here.

He is risen just as he said. And the angel then gave them a message from the living Lord Jesus. Go quickly and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.

[7:27] There you will see him. Now I have told you. And as they hurried off to tell the disciples, suddenly Jesus appeared to them. And he said, Do not be afraid.

Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee where they will see me. Now don't miss the encouragements here that the Lord Jesus gives in these first messages that are sent to his fallen disciples.

The angel is told to say, the angel is told, Go, I'm sorry, the women are told by the angels, Go tell his disciples.

And Jesus now says to them, Go tell my brothers. And that's what they brought to the twelve. Did you hear that, Thomas? Did you hear what he said, James and John and Andrew?

He's still claiming us as his disciples. He's still speaking as if he's not done with us. And though we all deserted him in his hour of need, he's not ashamed to call us brothers.

[8:32] Go tell my brothers. He hasn't disowned us. He wants to meet us as if there's forgiveness and a future for fallen disciples. And yet for all these assurances, the apostles did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Too good to be true. And there's Peter sitting there. He had gone so much farther in sin than the rest.

He didn't know either what to make of this claim that Jesus was risen. But even if he was alive, would he want to have anything to do with me?

Maybe he doesn't want to, maybe he does want to meet with the other eleven, the other ten. But surely not me, not after what I've done.

But there were two words that would not let Peter go there. And I want you to see those words. Only Mark records them for us. Turn to Mark 16. And throughout this gospel, Mark seems to be heavily dependent upon Peter's testimony for his material.

[9:51] And so Mark preserves these two words that Peter obviously never got over from his Lord. And here in Mark 16, Mark also tells of the women coming to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week.

And the massive stones rolled away from the door and an angel inside who told them he is risen and sends them back to the disciples with a message from the Lord. And we have that message recorded in verse 7.

But go, tell his disciples and Peter. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.

I'd like to camp on those two words. And Peter. Or even Peter. Go tell his disciples and Peter that he wants to see you.

Why the additional two words? Even Peter. Certainly Peter was included in the earlier word disciples. For he too was one of the disciples.

[10:56] Indeed he was on the inner band of three that were found most close to the Savior. Yes, he was a disciple.

That would have been enough. Or was he? He had been a disciple, but that was before. That was before he denied three times that he even knew him. Is he now excluded?

Has he been disqualified from future service, having betrayed his trust? But notice how the Lord Jesus anticipates his, even the doubts of his fallen disciple Peter.

Since Peter had fallen farther than the others in sin, the Lord knew he would need special reassurances, and so he adds Peter's name specifically to his message sent through the angel. Go tell his disciples, even Peter. Don't miss Peter. He needs to hear these words.

[12:05] Now that breathed new life into Peter, I believe. There was no other disciple named Peter. He means me. He's not given up on me. Could there really be forgiveness and a future for me?

It held out hope. A flicker of light is breaking into Peter's darkness. And though, as Luke says, that the apostles did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense, the very next words tell us, Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb.

Peter, however, got up and ran. The reassuring words had given him some hope, hope enough to run, and so he runs to see for himself.

John also ran and he outran the older Peter, getting to the tomb first but waiting outside. Peter arrives second and goes busting right in.

And he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves and he went away wondering to himself what had happened. So Peter goes to his home with plenty to think about that day.

[13:18] And then it happened. Sometime between his visit to the tomb and later that night when he was gathered together with all the disciples, the risen Lord appeared to Peter.

alone, just the two of them. What a meeting it must have been, the fallen disciple with his loving master face to face, first time since those words had crossed his lips.

Though a curtain of silence remains over this private meeting, the New Testament assures us of it in two different texts that it really did take place. Luke 24, you remember on the first day of the week when Jesus arose, he drew alongside those two disciples that were walking on the road to Emmaus, from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

And when they finally realized who it was that was talking to them, he immediately disappeared. And their hearts were so full of joy and excitement that though it was evening, they immediately turned around and retraced their steps seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples, we've seen him, he is alive.

And so when they come back to Jerusalem, they find the eleven and those with them assembled together and they are telling the two who've just come back, it's true, the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.

[14:49] Simon. It's all we know. He's appeared to Simon Peter. The other text, 1 Corinthians 15, 5, Pastor Jason read from where the Apostle Paul says, for what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to Scripture and that he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve.

Before meeting with all of them that night of his resurrection, he had first already appeared to Peter. And so it happened.

Of this we're sure. But what passed between our Lord and Peter we're never told. Perhaps it was too precious to even reveal. Did Peter over and over fall at his feet and confess his sin and tell his Lord how sorry he was only to have the Lord tell him, Peter, they're gone.

All of them. I died for all of your sins. I've paid for them all. They're gone. They're buried in the depths of the sea. This certainly was the good news that Peter went on to preach with the rest of his life.

Did you find him in the book of Acts? It's what he wrote about in his first letter to the saints. He himself bore our sins in his body to the tree. And there Christ died for sin.

[16:28] Once for all. The righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God. Dear Christian, dare to believe in the full forgiveness of your sins this Easter Sunday.

All my iniquities on him were laid. He bore them all to the tree. The resurrection now proclaims them forgiven. The father was satisfied with the sacrifice and raised his son from the dead to prove it to the whole world.

So, we're not told what passed between Peter and his Lord in that meeting, but we don't even need to guess what was said. It's enough to know that the meeting happened.

The fact that he sought out Peter to have this one-on-one meeting teaches us so much about Peter's Lord. Notice three lessons about our risen Lord Jesus. First of all, our risen Lord has a personal relationship with each of his people.

Peter's not lost in the crowd to his master. He's singled out by name. Go tell his disciples and Peter what intimate knowledge the Lord has of his individual disciples.

[17:49] He knew all of his disciples were sad and sorry for deserting him in his hour of need, but he knows that Peter's especially full of regret and sorrow for his sin and full of doubt and fears and guilt and shame, and so the Lord has words specially suited to set him at ease.

Tell them I want to see them and make sure you mention Peter by name. And yes, they will all need to see the risen Christ, but Peter has special needs, and our Lord could have just waited to appear to Peter along with the others all at the same time, but no, before that meeting he first seeks out, the Lord Jesus seeks out Peter and meets privately with him.

Again, there are special needs in Peter and our Lord stoops to meet them, special words and a special meeting from our risen Lord for just one fallen disciple.

This is your risen Lord, dear brothers and sisters. You're not just a number to the risen Christ, Christ. You're not just one of the flock.

Oh, yeah, that's just one down there in that group at Grace Fellowship. Oh, no, he knows you by name. His interest in you is personal.

[19:15] He died for your sins. He rose again for your justification. He knows all about your special trials, your specific sins and temptations, your heartaches.

He knows what keeps you up at night. And he knows the word to sustain the weary. And he comes to meet you right at the point of your need, all that he is for all that you specifically need.

And sometimes we too, individual me, individual you, need special reassurances of his love, special reassurances of his forgiveness, of his help and his presence.

And our living Lord has stooped to our weaknesses, has he not? Brought a verse of scripture to us with special power at just the right time. Answered a prayer in such specific ways, worked in our circumstances such that we knew it was the Lord.

His fingerprints were all over it. We couldn't miss it. This was specifically for me. And we knew afresh that he had not forsaken us.

[20:32] He was still with us. He was still for us. Oh yes, the Lord Jesus is a great shepherd with many, many, many sheep. And yet he does not lead them with a herd mentality, but with individual interest, individual involvement, such that David can say of him, the Lord is my shepherd.

And we tug at David's sleeve, now wait a minute, he's our shepherd too? No, I said the Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. And on he goes through that psalm with personal pronouns.

Yes, he's got many sheep to lead, but he leads each one with such personal involvement as if we were the only one he had to watch over. And when we roam like Peter, he leaves the ninety and nine behind and comes out looking for us with grace and restores us and brings us back home. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart and he gently leads those that have young. Lambs need one treatment here close to my heart.

[22:00] Those with young need another treatment gently leading them. He knows each sheep. He knows what they need and he comes to us in our time of need with such personal interest in us.

Believers, this is your Lord, your risen Lord, no less than Peter's. But then secondly, our risen Lord has grace for his fallen disciples.

Not only does he have intimate knowledge of them and have a personal relationship with them, but he has grace for his fallen disciple. Peter fell far and fast.

Consider though the aggressive grace of our Lord in seeking him out and restoring him. Our risen Lord does not wait for Peter. to come to him, but rather seeks him out and finds him with his words first and then his private meeting.

And in this we have a picture into the tender heart of our Lord for his fallen disciples. He's full of grace for repentant disciples that have failed him.

[23 : 12] Did Peter blow it? big time we say. Was he put on the shelf for the rest of his life without a second chance? Never.

John 21 records another appearance of the resurrected Lord with his disciples where in front of the rest Jesus recommissions his servant Peter.

Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep. Tend my flock. You mean Peter was given a second chance?

Yes. And a third and a fourth and a fifth and a hundredth. Now in baseball and in some state prisons on the third strike you're out.

Or in for life whichever it is you're doing baseball or prison. But aren't you glad our Lord doesn't have a three strike policy? Amen. How many of us would still be in the game if that was the way he dealt with fallen disciples?

[24 : 14] No our risen Lord is plenteous in mercy. Do you know he even delights in mercy? He takes pleasure in forgiving sin.

It gives him sweet joy to not treat us as our sins deserve or to repay us according to our iniquities but to do us good when we have deserved evil.

I wonder if we get that. just how happy our risen Lord is to forgive sin. May he meet us on this resurrection Sunday and convince our hearts of it again.

You know he tells us to forgive those who sin against us seventy times seven times if they repent. Would our Lord do less than what he demands of his disciples?

no. No. The point is he's not counting neither should we. He is so full of grace and from his fullness of all we received. Grace upon grace upon grace like the waves of the sea just beating on our shore every day with more undeserved grace.

[25 : 23] grace. Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be. Let that grace now like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee.

grace. It's grace that seeks out the fallen disciple and our risen Lord is still as full of grace for us as he was with Peter.

So Peter fell far and fast. Why is there a recovery after Peter's fall? It's not because of anything in Peter but rather because of Peter's risen Lord who takes the initiative and pursues his fallen disciple with restorative grace who loves him with an everlasting love and will never let him go. It's because of Christ's commitment to his disciple. It is unchanging. Are you still a disciple of Christ? After all your falls?

Well it's because your Lord has recovered you in grace after each fall not letting you go. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed you yet my unfailing love for you will never be shaken he says.

[26 : 41] George Matheson was in love with a young woman and very happily intending to marry her. But then one day strangely and unexpectedly he went blind and she broke off the relationship saying I could never be married to a blind man.

And feeling rejection deeply he got alone and wrote the familiar hymn in praise to his Lord. Oh love that will not let me go I rest my weary soul in thee.

Yes man's love may fail but Christ's love never. It is unfailing love from everlasting to everlasting. his love for even his fallen disciples.

What's more melting than the undeserved love of Jesus who does not deal with us as we deserve but always meets us with open arms a loving welcome and readiness to forgive.

We see that in Peter. Aren't you glad the Bible shows us Peter not only at his best but also at his worst because it's Peter at his worst that enables us to see the gracious heart of Jesus towards his fallen disciples.

[28 : 07] And how we need to be convinced of this. Too often when we fall our thoughts of Jesus are unworthy of him. You may think of him as standoffish as reluctant to forgive you who wants to make you pay and feel sorry for a week.

But our Lord's dealings with Peter teach us that nothing could be further from the truth. he's compassionate and gracious precisely when we fall slow to anger abounding in love and faithfulness maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness rebellion and sin. And he comes after us to do us good and to restore our souls to save us from our sins and does not despise a broken and a contrite heart such that Peter brought to him. So if the risen Lord Jesus has grace for fallen disciples then the third lesson is simply fallen disciples ought to go at once to Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. I'm not sure that Peter went at once. It says he went out and wept bitterly but he didn't run to Christ as soon as he had denied him. [29 : 25] I wonder shouldn't he have run to Christ even on the cross? John and Mary found their way there and had personal dealings with him. Peter could have drawn near and unburdened his heart at once.

After all the Lord was showing such mercy from the cross that he prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies. Surely he would have forgiven his fallen disciple. But instead he stays away and he waits three days until Christ comes searching for him. Yeah, maybe he thought himself unworthy. How could I after what I've done? But we would do well to remind ourselves that we are always unworthy of forgiveness and there is nothing that we can do to make ourselves more worthy of it. So let us come at once. Sorrow for sin is never meant to be an end in itself. It's always meant to chase us to Jesus. When we're convicted of our sin, we're not just to sit and soak in our remorse away from Jesus. Could my tears forever flow? All for sin could not atone. Thou must save and thou alone. Everything we need at that moment is found in Jesus and we cannot get to him too soon. [30 : 37] So we come and we confess our sins to him and we cast ourselves upon his mercy and we trust in to receive the forgiveness that he freely offers.

So lost or saved, whether you're coming to Jesus for the first time or the thousandth time, come at once. Come just as you are. Don't clean yourself up first and never let the greatness of your sin stop you or slow you down from coming to Christ. When you're really dirty, do you wait until you're somewhat cleaner before going to the shower? You say, no, that's why the shower exists. It's there to clean me. And so you come with all your dirt and filth and you wash and you're made clean. Even so Christ is there to cleanse us. He's there for filthy, dirty sinners. He's there for his people when we fall into filthy, dirty sins. And when we come to him, what do we find? [31 : 47] A willing and an able savior. We find that he's full of grace, more full of grace than we are of sin. We find that where sin abounds, my sin abounds, his grace super abounds.

We find a fountain, a fountain filled with blood, drawn from the savior's wounds, the savior's side. sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. The fountain of Christ is open for sin and uncleanness because the blood of Jesus cleanses from every sin, even Peter's blasphemy the night of the betrayal. Peter found it so, and so have dozens here. One and all, we need to get to Jesus with our sins. Now he's no longer here physically with us on the earth. He's no longer on the cross, in the tomb. He's no longer walking the streets of Jerusalem or Galilee. He's in heaven, as we sang earlier. And you now come to Jesus by prayer. [32 : 54] Do you know he's only a prayer away? He's that close. And he invites us to come. And he's able to save completely all who come to God through him because he always lives.

There it is. He always lives. He's not dead. He always lives to intercede for us. He's there, a living Christ, and he's able to save anyone who comes to God through him. He's not here, but is risen as he said. Now quickly go and tell his disciples and Peter. And Peter. What a difference the resurrection makes. What difference did the resurrection make in the life of Peter? We don't need to speculate.

It made all the difference, as you can see in the book of Acts, as Peter himself tells us in his two epistles at the end of our New Testament. In 1 Peter 1, 4, he barely gets out his opening greeting before he immediately starts talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[ 34 : 08 ] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It's like the first shot out of his mouth. The living hope that comes from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You know what hope is. It's that confident expectation of future good.

And Peter is saying we have a confident expectation of future good through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What is that future good? He goes on to tell us in that first chapter, it's an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, reserved in heaven for you.

That's what the resurrection has accomplished. And praise be to God for it.

It's mercy. That's all it is. It's mercy. We didn't deserve it. But we have a living hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Peter's saying our hope of heaven died when he died and was buried.

[ 35 : 19 ] but with the resurrection of Christ our hope rose again and revived so that we have a living hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

By his death, burial, and resurrection he has opened up a way into heaven for us and because he is there everyone united to him by faith will one day be with him as well.

our hope of heaven is alive and well because our Lord and Savior is alive and well. What good news then we have for ourselves for the needy world around us.

Nothing is the same because Jesus lives again. I challenge you to have some time to think today how the resurrection has changed every aspect of your life brothers and sisters.

what difference would there be in every detail of your life if Christ was still in the tomb? Nothing is the same. Not a day of my life is the same.

[ 36 : 28 ] I wake up every day to a risen living person Jesus Christ and he lives with me and he lives for me.

He teaches me he prays for me he strengthens me he defends me so that nothing can pluck me out of his hand. He lives and that changes every day and it changes surely the day of my death doesn't it?

For in Christ I have nothing to fear. It's he who was once dead but is alive forevermore who promises to be with me in the valley of the shadow of death and to lead me straight through that valley and out on the other side of heaven.

By dying for my sin and rising victoriously he's taken the stinger out of death so that death is now my entrance into glory. His resurrection guarantees mine and though worms destroy this body yet in my flesh I will see God I myself will see him with my own eyes I and not another no guilt in life no fear in death this is the power of Christ in me the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the ground of my confident expectation of eternal life beyond the grave and then the day of judgment will not be the same because he lives for my risen Lord will answer for me in that day father I was punished for her sins because he lives he is able to keep me from falling and is able to present me before his glorious majesty and presence without fault and with great joy there's no terror in judgment for those who appear with the risen!

Lord in that day and then there will not be one day of the endless ages of eternity that will be the same because we will live it with the risen Lord himself whom to know is eternal life and in whose presence is fullness of joy and whose right hand are pleasures forevermore this is the living hope that is ours in Christ through the resurrection of the dead do you have that hope that no matter what else is happening to you I have this sure confidence of heaven in his presence to come and the sure confidence of him with me the living savior every day living with me and for me that could be your hope if you will come and take this savior who offers himself freely to you he's a gracious gracious master as

[ 39 : 34 ] Peter and we who know him have come to find out let's sing of it shall we you've already sung your hearts out let's turn to number 15 in our grace hymns and sing in Christ alone my hope is found number 15 in our grace hymns let's pray father we have come to worship you today and it has been our joy to sing in your presence and in the presence of your risen son at your right hand with the help of the Holy Spirit helping us to worship to have no confidence in the flesh but to glory in Jesus Christ alone we do rejoice in his death and resurrection and the difference that that has made in our lives thank you Lord Jesus for being such a!

personal savior to us and having so much grace for us grace that will bring us safely home through your merit through your grace and so we pray send us on our way rejoicing and quickly going to tell

others who are still living this life without any hope beyond the grave or others who have hopes but false hopes groundless hopes help us to point them to the savior his death burial and resurrection and his present life for his people thank you we offer our praise and thanksgiving in Jesus our mighty Savior's name Amen