

## New Faith John 20-21

*TV ES PETRVS ET SVPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM.*

(You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church. -Matthew 16:18)

These words are inscribed around the inside of the dome of St Peter's Basilica in Rome. According to tradition Peter became the first Bishop of Rome and is buried beneath the Basilica. Whether this is historically accurate or not, we do know that Peter became a leading figure in the early church. At the end of the previous study we left Peter as a broken man, weeping bitterly having denied his Lord. How did this transformation happen? The events of Pentecost were vital but it all started in the passages we are looking at tonight.

### **Resurrection John 20:1-9**

Try to put yourself in Peter's shoes. What would Peter have thought when he heard the report from Mary in verse 2? What was his reaction on arriving at the tomb?

v.8 Seeing the evidence of the empty tomb and folded grave clothes he (presumably John) believes.

v.9 Their understanding at this stage is still very limited.

### **Restoration John 21**

The disciples have now returned to the familiar surroundings of Galilee.

V.15-19 Three times Peter denied Christ and three times Jesus asks him "do you love me?"

Throughout the Gospel he is referred to as Peter or Simon Peter. Here Jesus calls him by his former name Simon son of John. What is the significance of this?

The question Jesus asks is searching. In many ways it is the ultimate question.

v.15 Peter's response to the first question reveals a great degree of humility. He doesn't claim to love more than the other disciples.

v.16 Peter answers the second question in the same way, again focusing on the Lord's own knowledge.

"Feed my lambs." "Take care of my sheep". -Speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepard and also of Peter (along with the rest of the disciples) being commissioned to carry on the work that Christ started.

v.17 Peter is hurt (other translations say grieved) that Jesus asks a third time.

*"Peter's pride is cut to the quick. Here we see the Great Physician performing painful but necessary surgery."* - IVP commentary.

*The key qualification for this task, as this chapter indicates, is a love for Jesus that is characterised by humility, dependence and obedience. Peter already had a devotion to Jesus, but he was still full of self will and was thrusting himself to the front. Such a proud attitude of heart would spell disaster for the community, as had already been evident in Israel's history... and as has sadly been just as evident in the history of the church. - IVP commentary.*

v.18-19 Following Jesus may take us to places we don't want to go to. But we must obey the command "Follow me!".

There is an important point that this passage makes that we can easily overlook. There can be a tendency among Christians to write themselves off from active Christian service due to past sins and failings. - God couldn't use someone like me... This passage reminds us that we should never disqualify ourselves. Remember that Moses was a murderer, David an adulterer, Jacob a liar, Abraham was too old, Paul persecuted the church. Peter the denier became Peter the rock.

### **Prayer Points**

That we would follow Christ with humility, dependence and obedience.

Sizewell House party