

69Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." 70But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away." 74Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

This morning we embark on just 7 verses that finish the 26th chapter of Matthews gospel. Last week we looked at a lengthy section of the arrest and trial. 21 verses. This morning, just 7, but what a story they contain!

This story of Peter is a sidebar. A parallel story, and it has been paralleling along with the gospel of Jesus for the entire time. These things didn't happen independently from the bigger story. They've been building up for this man Peter, over a 3 year period.

So what I hope to do this morning is a little different than my usual. I want to take the time to create a biographical sketch for you of this man, Peter, and having done that, our 7 verses will fall in place with little or no interpretation from me.

So, then, let's start at the beginnning. Andrew. Andrew is Simon Peter's brother, and we quickly learn that Peter is never Andrews brother, it's always the other way around. The power of the personality has already accomplished that. Andrew, as large as he is, is always dwarfed by his brother, Simon Peter.

We've all met those people who are just . . . special, by power of presence. Bigger than life personalities. And that's how Peter gets painted. Gifted people.

First of all he's a big guy. I picture him as a big burly outdoorsy kind of

guy with a friendly outgoing personality. People are drawn to him and he's a natural leader.

Is there any evidence that he was a big muscular guy? Yes, in John 21 which we'll look at later, we see Jesus tell him to go get the fish that were caught. We can estimate 280+ pounds of fish in that net, and the others are struggling to get the net dragged onto the beach. Peter just goes and finishes the job for them.

But, beginning at the beginning, we meet Peter in John chapter 1. Just after John the baptist has revealed Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:35 Again the next day John (the baptist) was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Never Peter, Andrew's brother.

In vs. 42 (*42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" . . .* the word translated "looked" where it says Jesus looked at him is a special word in the original language. From the Greek dictionary;

emblépō (from 2 words; *en*, "engaged in" and *blépō*, "look") – properly, stare (look) at with a "locked-in gaze"; look at in a sustained, concentrated way, i.e. with special "interest, love or concern"

Jesus didn't just look at Peter, He looked inside Peter's soul. And connected with that idea is the next one. *"You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). Petros. Rock*

You're Simon, but I'm re-naming you after what I see inside you. Cephas, which means Rock.

Jesus sees something in Peter, in spite of all the evidence as we watch him put his foot in his mouth over and over, that is solid. Peter is a rock.

Peter didn't follow Jesus that day. He's a fisherman. And the next incident we want to consider is his call to change professions. And it's in Luke's gospel, chapter 5;

1Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; 2and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

At this point, Peter and likely Andrew, and their business partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee were still engaged in their chosen profession. Fishermen.

3And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat.

Jesus uses the boat as a stage to separate him from the pressing crowd, so that He can teach. The fishermen are almost incidental to the story. Washing their nets. Peter's boat is handy. Jesus uses it. They are familiar with each other. But Jesus is a preacher, and Simon is a fisherman.

4When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will

do as You say and let down the nets.”

Here, Peter says, you're a preacher, I'm a fisherman. I'll leave the preaching to you. You should leave the fishing to me.

You catch fish at night. We worked hard all night long and came back empty. It happens. The nets are clean. We were thinking on something to eat and then some sleep so we can give it a go again tomorrow night.

And you want to go fishing. Deep sigh. But there's something about this Jesus that's hard to say no to. If Jerry Seinfeld showed up at my house and wanted to go get coffee, it'd be hard to say no. He's a rock star. I'm just me.

Peter has that same problem. Jesus is a rock star. The crowds are pressing in on him. He asked me to take him out fishing. Even though I know good and well we won't catch fish, mid day, after slugging it out all night, and I'm tired, I've got to put that aside and defer to His wishes. Sure, I'll take you out.

6When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; 7so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

This is a miracle of creation, and Peter knows it. Just like the fish that were eaten by the 5,000 and then the 4,000. These fish didn't exist, 10 minutes ago. Now the nets are tearing and the boats are sinking there's so many.

8But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; 10and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." 11When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. (Andrew is never mentioned, but he's there.)

This is the encounter with Jesus that made Peter a believer. He left his boat, and John and James also left theirs, and from that day forward, Peter counts the minutes, impatiently, that he isn't with Jesus.

That's all Peter wants is to be with Jesus. We'll see it over and over. When Jesus comes walking on the water, Peter can't wait for Him to get to the boat, he asks if he can come to Him. On the water. And out he goes.

There is something about Peter. A single mindedness that only wants one thing. Jesus.

Our next scene with Peter is in John 6, and it's one of the most endearing pictures you'll ever see of this man.

Let me set the scene. 3 years have passed. We're at the sea of Galilee, and Jesus has healed everyone for many miles around, and He has just fed the 5,000.

The crowd is getting close to capturing Him and forcing Him to be King. He heals the sick. He creates food from nothing. We want this guy to be our King! Not gonna take no for an answer. Healthcare and welfare!

And to get some distance, Jesus has the guys with the boats take Him 7 or 8 miles away to the other side of the lake. Evening comes and Jesus sends the disciples back across, without Him. The storm comes and the disciples are in peril of sinking and drowning and Jesus comes, walking on the waves.

The next day, the crowds catch up again, and Jesus launches into a teaching that is so difficult for these shallow believers that they bail out and leave.

He tells them you just want me because of the free bread. You need the spiritual bread. Spiritual sustenance that brings eternal life, not physical bread that gets digested and is gone. From John 6:

48 *"I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

And the fickle, shallow crowd bails out. This speak is too weird. Eat His flesh? Drink His blood? They're creeped out. We just want bread for our bellies. The other stuff is just weird.

60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"

66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Peter the rock. Where would we go? We don't get it either, but where would we go.

Peter the spokesman. Peter who blurts out before anyone else. Peter who says when Jesus asks, who do people say that I am? *Thou art the Christ. Son of the Living God.*

Peter who is taken up on the mount of transfiguration. Who sees His Lord glorified and blabbers something about building tabernacles. And God tells him to shut up and listen to His Son. More or less.

And that brings us to the events of our verses this morning. Jesus, beginning in the Matthew 16 passage where He says Who do men say that I am, and Peter blurts out the answer. And Jesus at this point begins to drive home the point that He is going to be crucified and will rise again from the dead on the third day, and return to His Father in heaven.

And marvelous as that is, if somehow they could understand it, the only thing Peter hears is . . . Jesus saying He's going somewhere where Peter can't immediately come, and every molecule in Peter is fighting against that untenable thought of not being with Jesus.

You'll recall Peter pulls Jesus aside and rebukes Him. You will NOT be crucified. This can't happen. And you remember Jesus response. Get thee behind me Satan.

This is the most difficult thing in the world for Peter. He cannot get beyond the awful thought of being separated from Jesus. But on the other hand he doesn't ever want to hear those words again. Get behind me Satan. It's a quandry and he's taking it a day at a time, and this week in Jerusalem where those who would murder Jesus are nearby has been Peter's worst nightmare.

Then comes the passover meal. And the teaching, the wonderful teaching. For those of you who are familiar with your Bibles, all of the phenomenal teaching in John 13 - 16, and Matthew 24, the Olivet discourse, all has happened on this night.

Then Jesus says that awful thing. All of you are going to flee from Me. It's in scripture. The Shepherd is crushed. The sheep are scattered, and that's like a breaking point for Peter. Remember his premise. The only thing more important than time with Jesus is more time with Jesus. He just wants to be near Him. That's all He wants.

And He's been forced to listen and try to digest the death and resurrection stuff. He doesn't begin to understand it, but he is powerless to try to stop it. And now this? You're going to flee. And Peter, impetuous Peter it just comes out of every gland in his body.

*31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.' 32 "But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 33 But Peter said to Him, "**Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.**" 34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 35 Peter said to Him, "**Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.**"*

In his heart, death is more tolerable than being separated somehow from Jesus. Jesus makes life worth living. Jesus is the investment of his life. Without Jesus, truly, he'd rather be dead. So if it comes to that, he will fight to the death.

It's not so different from Paul's statement in Phillipians. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Because here, now, we're here and He's in heaven, and we have the downpayment of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, but OH, we long for the day when we can be with Him. Face to face.

Peter's like, I'm prepared to embrace death rather than separation from You, Lord. And he means it. Those are not empty words.

In the arrest in the garden, Peter gets out his broad sword and he was willing to live by his words. No Jesus! I'll fight to the death not to lose Him. But Peter is powerless against the plan of God.

Jesus stops it, heals Malchus ear, and tells Peter to put the sword away, and tells His captors to accomplish their deeds.

You know what Peter's problem was? He is so single minded in what he's going to do to preserve Jesus, there's no plan B. And plan A is selfish. It is separate from the plan of God. Evidence what Jesus says to him in the arrest scene. Put your sword away. It has to happen this way. Your plan is counter to God's plan.

So Peter is in a vulnerable place. His plan is to either be with Jesus, or

die trying, and he was going for it, and God comes along and crushes it. Now what do you do? He's just left hanging out there. Vulnerable. Outside of God's intended plan. Heartbroken that his Lord is being taken away by angry captors. The other disciples are running away, and since God has dis-allowed dying alongside Jesus who he loves, Peter takes flight.

Let's look beneath the surface. We are afforded a rare privilege just here. A rare look, just this one time, and that makes this case our model for the future. But just here we get let in on a conversation behind the surface at the level of God and our adversary, Satan. Let's look at it in Luke 22

28“You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; 29and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Notice first that Jesus addresses Peter's main concern. Be with Jesus. Must be with Jesus. At any cost, up to and including death. Must be with Jesus. And Jesus is trying to tell him, Peter, you will be with Me in my Kingdom.

Still, the idea of a separation until that Kingdom time comes, is impossible to Peter. Patrick Henry said give me liberty or give me death. Peter has said, give me Jesus, or give me death. But that is NOT God's plan for Peter. He's not going to get what he wants. Not in the short run. He will in the long run though. Peter can't get past the short run though.

Vss 31“*Simon, Simon*, notice that outside of God's will, Peter the rock is no longer Peter the rock. Jesus calls him by his old name. Simon

behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

There you have it. Under the surface where we can't see, there is a

struggle between God and our adversary, Satan. This is identical to the beginning of Job. Satan coming before God and asking permission to mess with someone.

What happens when you sift wheat? The usable stuff falls through the screen and the unusable stuff remains.

We can almost picture a scenario just like with Job. God says, what do you think about my guy Peter. Peter the Rock. He belongs to Jesus. I've given him to Jesus. And Satan saying, We'll see about that. Let me at him and we'll put him through the sifter and I don't think anything's going to be left afterwards. And God says he's yours. Sift away.

Peter's vulnerable. His selfish plan has failed. No plan B. He's run away with the other disciples. No idea what to do next. Dying with Jesus is over-ruled. Satan's got him. Right where he wants him. In the sifter. Except one thing.

32but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

This is true of every saint. Every person who God has quickened from the dead and made alive together with Jesus. We are His possession. And no matter how difficult the sifting, this prayer is for us, just the same as it was for Peter.

You hear and read these gut wrenching stories of christians who lose little ones. That's the bottom for me. Losing a child. Nothing terrify's me more than having to face that. And you read of christian people who testify that through the sifting, they cling to God's sovereignty and believe in His love and concern, and they come out the other side, intact. The perseverance of the saints.

Why? Why does God allow such sifting. Such difficulty?

This is a parallel universe in America these days. In America we have the buttercup generation. They can't even listen to a trigger word that might pop their little bubble for a second.

Who wants a God that allows Satan to put you through a sifter. Just the thought of that might be a trigger for a buttercup. We have the emerging church that is painting a god for these buttercups who would only make their bubble better if they'd give him a chance. A better bubble.

That isn't the God of this book. This God is terrifying. He allows Satan to sift His people. Horrible things happen to God's people. All the time. Christianity isn't a vacation in the bahama's. With a God who comes out of his bottle like a genie to make your life exactly how you envision it. Except even better. A god who makes all your dreams and fantasy's come true.

Look again at vs. 32. . . *but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*”

God sustains His own in the trial, and when you come out the other side, you are useful to the Master to strengthen others who belong to Him.

Peter says, I've got a better plan;

vss. 33 *But he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!”* Peter's plan. 34 *And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”* God's plan to get Peter back on His plan, not Peters. Sifting is involved.

Now, since time is fleeting, let's look at John's account. Probably, besides Jesus, I'm guessing nobody knew and loved Peter more than John, his old business partner and homeboy. And I think John's insights into Peter are the deepest.

John is the master story teller and the events about Peter are woven together inseperably with the other events of that dreadful night.

The disciples have fled. But just far enough to be out of reach of the

captors. They watch and follow. At least Peter and John do. The others aren't mentioned again. Reading from John chapter 18: the arrest and trial

12 So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, 13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. 14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. 15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple.

This is typical of John. He never speaks in first person about himself. He always speaks humbly in third person. The disciple who Jesus loved. The disciple who reclined with Him. Or as here, simply, another disciple.

Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, 16 but Peter was standing at the door outside.

James and John's mother, Salome, was a cousin of Elizabeth, mother of John the baptist. So John was a shirt tail cousin or nephew of Zecharias who was one of the priests. John had an inside contact. He was known in this circle. Peter was not.

Interesting too that John must have been associated with some if not many in this group as a disciple of Jesus. He makes no bones about it. Doesn't go to any effort to hide that. It is what it is and John's watching the plan of God unfold before his eyes. Peter, not so much.

So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

John, who everybody knows is a disciple of Jesus, goes and asks the doorkeeper, a slave girl, if he can get entrance for his friend Peter. He brings Peter inside the courtyard of the high priest. Big burly Peter who

chopped off the ear of Malchus, the high priests slave.

And the girl at the door says, are you also a disciple of Jesus, like John here? And Peter says *I am not*.

Why Peter. No one was putting hand cuff's on John. Why did you go there Peter?

Now, I'm not speaking to you as someone who is incredibly brave. Who charges into confrontive situations. I'm a wimp. About as non-confrontive a person as you'll ever meet. Meek and mild. But I can tell you this about me. There is synergy with 2. With a second person there, I can surprise myself how brave and confrontive I can be.

Peter on the other hand is brave. He's a giant. And he has that second person. And an 80 pound girl asks him if he's a disciple of Jesus like John who had gained him entrance, and he says; NO. Why? Where'd that come from?

Let's review. Peter's plan is not God's plan. Peter has boasted about himself and his ability to follow his plan no matter what the others do. Peter engages. Cuts off Malchus ear. And the Son of God shuts him down. Satan has requested to sift him like wheat. God said, he's yours. Jesus said, to the Father, OK but I get the broken pieces when you're done. His faith must ultimately, not fail. And here we go.

No, I'm not one of this man's disciples. Don't you wonder if John at this point doesn't take a step back and look at Peter with eyebrows raised and think, "Where'd that come from?"

18Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

19The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. 20Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 "Why do you

question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

Peter's standing right there. 10 feet away. Go ask him what I said. What I taught. Peter, who is already one denial into this deal hears these words from Jesus. Go ask Peter. He'll tell you what I taught. Doh! Not good. This isn't coming together good.

22When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?" 23Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?" 24So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

What a moment! What incredible tension. Peter's gut has to be turning inside out. The abuse of Jesus, the slapping, the dreadful abuse has begun. And Jesus says, ask my guys what I said. Some of them are standing right there by the fire.

25Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

It's almost as if the officers of the court have taken Jesus suggestion seriously. The **they**, where it says *So they said to him*, is a pronoun from the last paragraph, making the ones who ask, the very officers who just slapped Jesus. *So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?"* And Peter says; I am NOT.

We've picked John's account, partly because he's such a wonderful story teller. But if you combine all of the accounts, because all 4 gospels cover this incident, Peter may have actually denied he knew Jesus about 6 times. The descriptions of the denials are different. You've got slave girls and officers and they's and them's coming at Peter from different directions. NO. No. No. No. No. No, I don't know Him. It wasn't me!

Once you start down that road, it's hard to get the truck turned around.

Peter's going down that road like a UPS semi with three trailers. Not gonna get this thing turned around.

26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

Now we've got eye witnesses who are related to Malchus who Peter tried to kill. This really isn't going well for Peter. A semi with three trailers barreling down a road towards a train wreck is what we've got here. Satan's got Peter in the sifter.

27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

Maybe John gets the prize for best written, but Luke gets the prize for most devastating account. From Luke 22

*56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 **The Lord turned and looked at Peter.***

There's our word again. The word for looked, where it means more than an outward look. This is the soul look. The piercing gaze of Jesus who can look inside.

We don't know who the author of the book of Hebrews is. Some have argued Paul, some Appolos, and some even argue for Peter. There's a verse in chapter 4 that would make me argue for Peter.

Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The Lord turned and looked at Peter.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62And he went out and wept bitterly.

What a heart breaking account of failure. How do you come back from that?? It's like one of those pictures from steam train era where there was a head on collision and there's nothing identifiable left. Just twisted steaming bits of metal in indistinguishable shapes. Total destruction.

Except. Except, this man belongs to Jesus and Jesus has prayed that his faith not fail. Jesus wants those broken pieces.

You watch those people who hang around the church, and the train wreck comes, and they're gone. A lot less of a wreck than this, and they're gone. You never see them again.

That's because they weren't His in the first place. He didn't pray for their faith not to fail. He doesn't own them. They get in the sifter, nothing comes through. You never see them again. How many times have I seen that, even in Tonopah.

We get to witness the wreck. But we don't get a blow by blow of Peter after this. Just a few clues. And finally, the very final words in the epilogue of John's gospel.

John Mark, the amanuenses of Peter, in his gospel account has these hopeful words. The scene is after the crucifixion.

1When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. 2Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. 5Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. 6And 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; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. 7“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.’”

go, tell His disciples and Peter, There are 10 cowering confused dismayed crushed disciples somewhere. And Peter. He wasn't even included in that group. Tell the disciples, and tell Peter.

Peter's very much been through the sifter, but he's not outside of the plan of God any more. Go tell the disciples, and Peter.

From John 20: 1Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. 2So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved,

I can't help but ask. Why is John with Peter here. Was it John's care and concern that wouldn't let Peter completely self destruct. He goes to his friend, and just hangs out? We don't really know. Maybe some day we'll get an instant replay of those awful hours where Peter is destroyed and Jesus has prayed for him. Perhaps John was used in that capacity. You're not going anywhere Peter. I'm right here.

In any case, they're together when Mary brings the news.

and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” 3So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. 9For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10So the disciples went away

again to their own homes.

And finally, the last chapter of this story. From John's epilogue. Full restoration.

We're out of time, so just a couple of verses.

The scene is Galilee. The sea of Tiberias. And Jesus told them to meet him at a mountain there. Perhaps where the sermon on the mount took place.

But Peter, being Peter, and still feeling like he has abandoned the Lord irredeemably, says, I'm going fishing. Gotta make a living. Going back to something I can do and not screw it up. Jesus is gone. It's not like it was before. Risen, but missing. And I abandoned Him anyways. Gonna get the boat and do something I know how to do. Fishing. Plain old hard work I can't make a mess of.

And six others of them all say, good idea, Peter, me too. Such is the leadership, even when it's mis-directed. Pete's going fishing. We're fishermen. We'll do likewise.

Outside of the plan of God. He told them mountain. They're on the lake.

And Jesus shows up on the shore a few football fields distant and He shouts, how's the fishing working out for you, boys? Bunch of fishermen who can't catch fish. And Jesus shows up and says, how's that workin' out for you??

No fish. Nothing. And Jesus says, you're doing it wrong. Throw the net on the right side of the boat instead of the left.

Now I have to interject here, there's nothing political about what Jesus just said. Just saying. Try switching to the right side of the boat.

God tells us to do idiotic stuff. Why would there be fish on the other side of the boat? The boats only 4 feet wide. What difference could it

make. Pull those nets in and throw them right back into exactly the same water but on the other side of the boat.

There's only one reason anyone would do that. Is there an echo in the room? We've heard this before. Right? Only one person tells us we don't know how to do something we've done every day since we were 5 years old. Maybe? Maybe.

So they do what this person on the shore has suggested, and bam!

And John says, *It is the Lord*. And the difference between John and Peter. John says that, but Peter gets his cloak and puts it on and jumps in the lake and starts for the shore.

Remember. Peter only lives for one thing. Be as close to Jesus as he can get. So John says the obvious thing, but Peter's already swimming for it.

Then, after a broiled fish breakfast, that Jesus has made for them, the restoration comes.

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?"

More than what? Jesus isn't re-introducing the Who's greatest in the Kingdom argument where they all fight with each other about who loves Him the most. The question is about things. Do you love me more than your boat. More than these fish. More than being something you're good at that's well defined. More than your old profession that you've returned to, and oh by the way, failed at until I showed up and created 153 fish inside your stupid net.

That's the question. Do you love me enough to obey my clear commands. I told you mountain. I found you here, on your boat. Fishing. Something you figured you could manage yourself.

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son

of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

There's more to it. Someday we'll take it apart word for word because the way that Jesus goes about this, these three times He asked, once for each denial, is pretty brutal. And Peter gets the point, believe me.

Finally Peter appeals to Hebrews 4:13 which is not yet written. You are omniscient. You know all things. Look inside me with those eyes of yours. You know that I love you.

Fine Peter. Put the boat away. Take care of my lambs Peter.

And the rest, as they say, is history. Pinch yourself. Here we are. Thanks for that, Peter.