

**It Was a Dark and Stormy Night.
It was a Bright and Glorious Morning!
(as told in the voice of the Apostle Peter)**

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
March 31, 2024

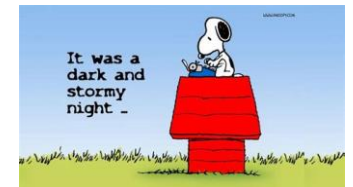
Text: Isaiah 53:10-12, Luke 24:1-12

Purpose: The story of who Jesus Christ is through the voice of the Apostle Peter.



I don't know if you are familiar with the newspaper cartoon Snoopy. I love some of the antics of this dog as he interacts with Charlie Brown, slips a kiss occasionally to Lucy, his interactions with his bird friend, how he steals Linus' blanket, and is always banging on the door wanting more food in his dish.

One of the prevailing themes I will always remember with Snoopy is when he is sitting on top of his dog house, with a typewriter, writing out some manuscript for a story he is writing. If I ever wrote a book, I believe I would be tempted to start it out with the often repeated phrase of Snoopy, "It was a dark and stormy night."



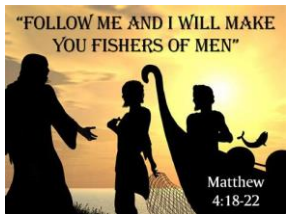
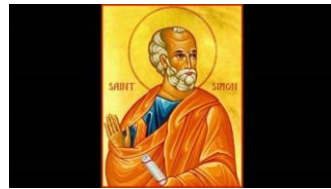


This morning, I want us to look at some of the events of Jesus' life through the eyes of the Apostle Peter to help us catch a glimpse of some of those "dark and stormy nights" of Jesus. Peter was involved in many of the events in and around Jesus' life. This morning, I wanted to do something just a little different. I wanted to tell the story of Jesus – fresh and new – from the vantage point of Peter. I want you to imagine my voice – for a few moments this morning – is the voice of Peter speaking.

IN THE VOICE OF PETER

(Put on Jewish prayer shawl and head covering)

It was an ordinary day, just like all the other days I had experienced. During those days my family called me Simon. I was out on the water fishing with my brother Andrew when all of a sudden, a man came up to us and said, *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*



I looked at Andrew and Andrew looked at me. We had been fishing for fish all of our lives and now we had an invitation to make a difference in other people's lives and fish for men.

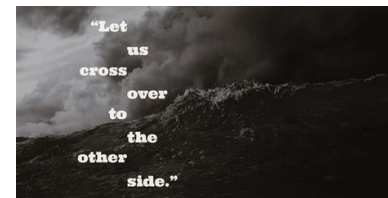
Immediately we turned and followed Jesus, leaving our family and businesses behind. Along the way, Jesus gathered other disciples to himself and slowly we began to understand the path Jesus was leading us on – or so we thought.

Jesus began teaching and preaching throughout Galilee. I was an eye witness to the transforming words of Jesus. I was an eye witness to the power of his touch as hundreds were healed – physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

I sat in awe as Jesus gave us the Sermon on the Mount. How the Old Law was reinterpreted. Yes, I heard the call to follow Jesus there along the Sea of Galilee, but my heart was drawn further in as I began to understand more and more who Jesus really was.



Jesus called us to love our enemies, turn the other cheek when abused, go the extra mile, and render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Jesus taught us about forgiveness and prayer. I continued to struggle with this idea of forgiveness when I asked how often we should forgive someone. I learned that genuine prayer comes from the heart, not prayer recited from rote memory. Jesus taught us that life is more than the accumulation of things, food, drink, or wealth. Life – Real Life – is only found in the One that created us. Such transformative words!



One dark and stormy night, Jesus issued the command for us to go across to the other side of the water. Jesus was tired and went fast asleep in the bottom of the boat. The clouds came up, the wind began to whip our little boat, we were afraid. We woke up Jesus and you know what he did, He rebuked the winds and the sea and

then there was calm! This man, this Son of Man, was Lord and Master over all creation.

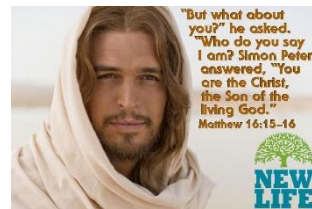
Another time I even witnessed Jesus walking across the water towards us as we were traveling ahead on the Sea of Galilee. On that dark and stormy night, I stepped out on the water myself to be with Jesus. When fear began to overtake me, I began to sink. If it wasn't for the hand of Jesus reaching out and rescuing me, I may have drowned that night.



The twelve of Jesus' closest disciples witnessed Jesus feed 5000 men, not counting the women and children, at one time with five loaves of bread and two fish.

I knew there was more to this teacher than met the eye. Could this be ... the Messiah our people have been hoping and waiting centuries for?

As Jesus and his disciples came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked us a question, *"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"*



I could not contain myself; I stood up and boldly said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Finally I said it. I was sure Jesus was the one we had been looking for as spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus responded that this was not revealed to me through normal means. Jesus knew that it was the Father in Heaven



that spoke to my heart to confirm this truth. It was then that my name was transformed from Simon to Peter. Jesus said to me, *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* Jesus went on to say to me, *"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be loosed in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* That must be why every time you see a picture of me I am holding a set of keys.

The excitement built in all of the disciples of Jesus. This is the Christ – the Messiah – the longed for one of Israel – living, walking, talking, among us! Then and there, I was determined to stand with Jesus no matter what!

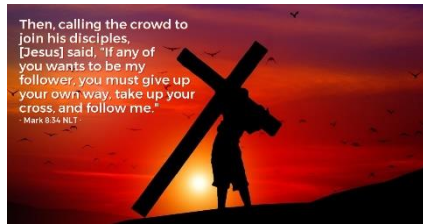


But Jesus began to tell us something we did not want to hear. Jesus began to talk about some foolish idea of going to Jerusalem to die. Jesus began to tell us that the elders, chief priests, and scribes were going to cause his death and then He would rise from the dead three days later.

No – No – No – Our Messiah was not supposed to die like that! He was supposed to bring about David's kingdom once again. He was supposed to bring glory once again to our nation. He was supposed to vanquish our enemies and rid our land of these foreign invaders – the Romans.

I told Jesus that this should never happen!

But Jesus quickly put me in my place – He called me Satan! He said I was not mindful of the things of God! Maybe Just maybe ... I did not have it all figured out after all.



Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, [Jesus] said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me." -Mark 8:34 NLT

Jesus told us If we were to come after Him, we were to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. If we are to follow Jesus ... we need to deny ourselves ... take up

our cross ... and follow Him ...

And follow Him I did!

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN: "Man of Sorrows" – Hymn 175

And Peter Continues:

It was six days after Jesus told us of his plans to go Jerusalem, suffer and die.



We were still unsure of how all of this would happen. Jesus wanted me, James, and John to witness something unique and special. He led us to the top of a mountain and there Jesus was

transfigured right before our very eyes. His face shown bright like the sun and His clothes became white as light. Joining Him there on the mountain top was Moses and Elijah.

Suddenly a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" This only

confirmed what I had already known – this Jesus, Our Messiah, was none other than the Son of God!

Why would God allow His Son to go to Jerusalem knowing death awaits Him? Why would Jesus be willing to endure the impending suffering and death?

I let Him know I was ready to go and die with Him if that's what it took to prove my devotion and loyalty to Him.

So, we turned our face towards Jerusalem. Jesus sent two disciples to get a donkey so He could ride into Jerusalem. It was a grand celebration of people praising God and saying Hallelujah – God Saves! "Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"



We watched as Jesus flipped over the merchant's tables. We watched as He verbally sparred with the scribes and chief priests. We listened as He taught parable after parable related to the Kingdom of God. Two days before Passover, Jesus told us clearly how he would be crucified. Our scriptures say, "Cursed is the one that dies upon a tree." How could this be? Why? I just didn't understand!



On Thursday night, we gathered there in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover meal together. As we were talking, Jesus got up, took off his outer garment and wrapped the servant's towel around his waist. Jesus came to us individually and washed our feet. I could

not stand it – Here was the Son of God washing my feet?! I refused. But Jesus said, *“If I do not do this, then you will have no part in me.”*



I boldly replied, *“Then wash not only my feet, but my hands and my head.”*

But I quickly learned this was not about bathing – it was about identification with Jesus – the way of Jesus – the way of being a servant to others – not about being served – but serving others.

Jesus taught me who I really was.

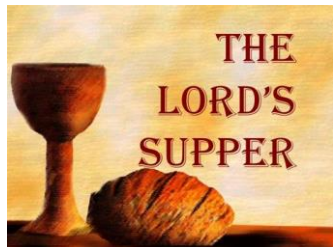
I am broken and I need mending.

Jesus taught me about grace.

I can do nothing to earn His love, it comes freely.

Jesus taught me about justification.

I learned that my healing comes from identification with Him.



I saw Jesus lift up the cup and say this was symbolic of a New Covenant written in the blood of Jesus – the Lamb of God.

I saw Jesus lift up the bread and break it telling us that His body

would be broken sealing the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is now complete in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. The covenant of the Lamb of God is written in His own red blood. All that call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. All that reject the Lamb of God and turn away from

Jesus Christ have no other way to find peace with God. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Today, you can become a follower of God!

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN:

“Grace Greater than Our Sin” – Hymn 329

Peter Continues:

It was a dark and emotionally stormy night!



After we finished in the Upper Room, we went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. I could not keep my eyes open and focus on praying. I kept remembering what

Jesus told me when I said I was willing to die with Him.

Jesus said I would deny him three times before the rooster crowed the next day. How could He say that about me? I had been there from the beginning. I told Him I would be willing to die with him! But now there in the quiet of the garden, I was so sleepy!

Before I knew it, Judas, one of our very own, brought soldiers and betrayed Jesus with a kiss. I later found out Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver – the price of a slave.



We put up a fight but Jesus rebuked us. In my haste to defend Jesus, I cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant ... but Jesus reached out and healed it and told us that this was all part of the Master’s plan.

I watched from a distance as they put Jesus on trial. I was scared of being identified with Jesus – they may put me on trial. I pulled away – denied knowing him and eventually ... I am ashamed to admit I denied him three times – just as Jesus said. That was a dark night and I wept bitterly.



They beat Jesus, they mocked Jesus, they spat upon Jesus, and on Friday morning, they nailed him to a cross. There our Master, Savior and Redeemer, hung between two thieves. The sign over the cross

said, “*The King of the Jews*” – written in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. He spoke words of forgiveness. He spoke words of compassion towards his mother, Mary. He spoke words of welcome and offered forgiveness to one of the thieves. The sky turned dark from noon to three that afternoon. Then Jesus cried aloud, “*It is finished!*” The earth shook, the graves were opened, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom.

It seemed as if I had betrayed Jesus and was just as guilty as those that cried “*Crucify Him.*” Our hope was gone. The Messiah was dead. Even the Chief Priests had more faith than we did, because they posted a guard over his grave to make sure no one stole his body during the night.

For three years we listened and now it was all finished.

We felt as if our world ended. We were despondent.

But then ... Sunday morning came ... What a bright and glorious morning!

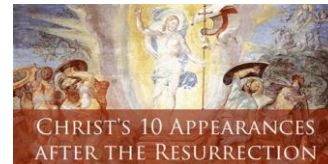
Our darkness had turned to dawning, and dawning to noon day bright!



The women had already been to the tomb where Joseph of Arimathea had laid Jesus’ body and they reported it was empty!

We ran to see for ourselves! It was empty. The linen clothes that wrapped Jesus body on Friday, were laying there folded up together on Sunday.

It must be true ... Jesus accomplished what He said. On the third day, He rose from the dead! He said he had power to lay it down and he would also raise it up again!



Since that bright and glorious morning, we have seen the resurrected Lord numerous times! For forty days, Jesus made his appearance to many people. Reminding them that He was victorious over our last enemy – death.

All that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

He is worthy to be praised – Halleluiah!

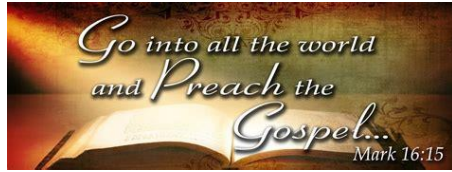
He is Lord!

**CONGREGATIONAL HYMN:
“He Is Lord” – Hymn 178**

Peter Continues:

It has been years since I saw Jesus.

I remember it like it was yesterday.

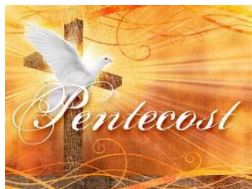


Jesus gave his disciples some last instructions to go and tell the world the good news about forgiveness for our sins and salvation for our soul. We were commanded to go into the world and tell everyone, beginning at Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even to the ends of the world.

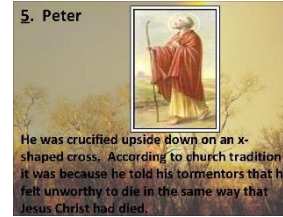
And then Jesus was taken up into the clouds.



Ten days later, filled with the Holy Spirit, I testified to the saving power of Jesus Christ and three thousand were saved that day called Pentecost. Since that day, I have preached and proclaimed Jesus in Antioch, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Asia Minor.



Jesus reminded us that if we really took his words seriously, we may even face the same death Jesus had. The day Jesus was crucified I was powerless and cowardly. Jesus assured me there on the Sea of Galilee after to His Resurrection, that I was forgiven and that my task was to feed the sheep. A good shepherd should be willing to deny themselves, take up the cross and follow Jesus.



I took that word of Jesus very seriously and found myself facing the cross as well there in Rome. I accepted the sentence of death but requested they place me upside down on the cross since I felt I was not even worthy to face the same death as our Lord.

Today, His followers are still being hated by the world.

Today His followers face the same challenge of denying self, taking up the cross, and following Jesus.

How is the Lord leading you this day?

Today is the day of salvation – repent for the end is near!

Today you can live eternally – because Jesus lives and intercedes for you this very day, this very hour before our Heavenly Father. Receive Him while there is still time!

It was a dark and stormy morning.

But it was a bright and glorious morning!

LET US PRAY



