

Eastertide 2021

Some thoughts on Simon Peter

Simon Peter was a disciple of Jesus, a close companion, possibly his right-hand man.

He was a fisherman by trade and a man of action; maybe not a deep thinker but he expressed his emotions and showed feelings we can recognise and appreciate as we relate to them.

From Singing the Faith, **Hymn 262**, All glory, laud and honour
<https://youtu.be/eBfJyjDolwA>

On **Palm Sunday** Hosannas rang out loud and clear in Jerusalem as the disciples walked beside Jesus riding on a donkey. Let us pray: **Hosanna**

Holy Father,
Our God eternal,
Saviour of the world
Alpha and Omega,
Never changing in your love,
Neither now, nor in the future.
Amen. [MC2021]

Let us join Jesus and the disciples on **Maundy Thursday** as they celebrate the Passover meal. We now call this occasion, "The Last Supper." Jesus took on the role of the lowest servant, possibly a slave to wash their feet. Simon Peter got hot under the collar and did not want Jesus to wash his feet. However when Jesus explained he must have his feet washed, he then wanted to be washed all over, like taking a bath. He was horrified that someone was going to betray Jesus and vowed never to leave Jesus even if it led to death.

Jesus had told them many times that he would die and rise again, but they didn't understand. He also told Simon Peter that he would betray him three times before the cock crowed.

They left the room where they had eaten the meal and went into the **Garden of Gethsemane**. A small group, including Simon Peter went with Jesus further into the Garden where he asked them to watch and pray with him. They had eaten well and drunk wine and fell asleep.

When Jesus was arrested the disciples fled, but Simon Peter followed at a distance to see what was happening. However, when he was confronted and accused of knowing and following Jesus he denied all knowledge of him. At that moment Jesus emerged from a room and looked at Simon Peter as the cock crowed.

Events quickly took place and Jesus was crucified. Was this the end? Simon Peter and the other disciples had spent three years with Jesus. Had that been

a waste of time? What would happen to them now? And so we find them **behind locked doors**, confused and afraid.

Lockdown has found many behind closed, locked doors, frightened to leave the security of their own homes. They were prevented from leaving home by the threat of the unseen but dangerous virus. Possibly they were self-isolating for medical conditions which could make the virus even more devastating. Many felt lonely and uncertain of what lay ahead.

Some women went to the **tomb** to anoint the body of Jesus but when they arrived the stone had been rolled away and they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side and they were alarmed. They were told not to be afraid but to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus was risen just as he had told you. We read that Peter and John ran to the tomb and that Peter went in.

What did it all mean? Was it at this point that Peter remembered how Jesus had foretold that he would be betrayed, that Peter would deny him and that he would be killed but rise again? Well Jesus had been betrayed and Peter knew that he had denied Jesus and Jesus had been killed brutally on a cross. Maybe... just maybe Jesus had risen, he certainly wasn't in the tomb.

Singing the Faith, **hymn 316** When Easter to the dark world came
<https://youtu.be/RV58YPdfKV8>

Huddled together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews, the disciples and followers were discussing the events and wondering what to do when Jesus appeared and said, "Peace be with you", "Shalom."

Nothing can stop Jesus. He was with them and with us in our Lockdown situations and he will be with us as we begin to emerge from those closed doors.

At some point Peter and the disciples went **to Galilee** and needing to be active, Peter said "I'm going fishing". Some of them went with him and although they fished all night they caught nothing. I guess that is not unusual for amateur fishermen but these men were professionals. They had made a living fishing before they followed Jesus, if they could not do this, what was to become of them?

Meanwhile Jesus was waiting for them on the beach. He prepared breakfast for them on an open fire. Sometimes this event is called the BBQ on the beach.

Read John 21: 1-19.

This reading is sometimes entitled "Breakfast on the beach," but in my NIV version the heading is, "Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish".

For my thoughts on Peter verses 15 to 19 are very important. The heading is Jesus reinstates Peter. Here Jesus asked Peter if he loved him three times. This was a momentous event for Peter. Here he finds true and full forgiveness and is given a mission which he will go on to ably and willingly accomplish. Often called the Big Fisherman by the early Christians, he certainly stepped up and fulfilled the potential that Jesus had seen when he called him Peter, the rock.

As we meet with the Risen Lord may we fulfil all that he asks of us.

Hallelujah,

Holy God,
Almighty Father,
Lord of all creation,
Life sustaining.
Everlasting
Love of the Father, given
Unto us all and with
Jesus, saviour of the world.
Amazing peace.
Hallelujah, He is Risen! He is risen indeed! [MC 2021]

Singing the Faith, **hymn 309** See what a morning
<https://youtu.be/6xM-fpXayUg>

May the peace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us for the rest of our earthly lives. Amen.

Maureen Crilley.