*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

May 10 - 15

Peter

**Monday, May 10 John 1:35-42**

*“You are Simon – you will be called Peter”*

When Jesus sees two of John the Baptist’s disciples following him, he asks them, “What do you seek?” What an important question! If we are to follow Jesus, we need to be clear what it is that we are looking for. Do we seek security or a new cause or a deeper spiritual experience, or do we seek what Jesus offers: a relationship with himself and, through him, with our Father in heaven. The two disciples come back with their own question: “Where are you staying?” If they could just spend some time with Jesus they would get to know what he offers them.

Jesus meets them were they are and issues an invitation, “Come and see.” Come and spend time with Jesus and he will help you find out who he is. At least one of the two seekers, if not both of them, became an evangelist out of that first encounter. Andrew went out on a special mission to his brother, that of bringing him to Jesus. Jesus looks at Simon and sees what Peter will become. This blustering, erratic fisherman will become a leader, the first among the apostles, and finally, a martyr because of his love for Jesus.

*Show me who you are, Lord, as I spend time with you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, May 11 John 6:66-71**

*“Lord, to whom would we go?”*

The casual, superficial disciples, those who have not counted the cost, find what Jesus has said to be too hard for them. The truth is always hard for those of us who thought Jesus would settle for less than he demands. If the acts and teachings of Jesus thus far offend these loosely attached disciples, what will happen when he comes to the climax of his ministry – being lifted up in death and resurrection and ascending to where he was before? It is better to have a handful who will remain with him to the end than a crowd who will simply observe curiously from afar.

But what of the twelve? Jesus gives them the chance to leave. This is the time to decide! It is Peter who speaks for all of them. There is no one else to whom they can go. They know there is eternal life in his words. Then Peter confesses: We believe and we know! It is in hearing and trusting that certainty comes, that the mind and heart are enlightened and the will is moved to decide. And what do they know? That he is the Chosen One of God, God’s Son, the promised Messiah. They will stay with him for the rest of the journey.

*I will remain in you, Lord, for there is no one else worthy of my trust. Amen.*

**Wednesday, May 12 John 13:1-11**

*“Wash my hands and head as well”*

As the supper ends, Jesus acts out the significance of his own death. His washing of the disciples’ feet is far more than a courteous gesture by which he is attempting to give them an ethical lesson in serving. This is an act of incredible humility in which the Son of God voluntarily does the menial work of a slave, but far more, it is a parable in action of the sacrifice of his own life. In his death, he will humbly serve all who by faith believe in him by ensuring the forgiveness of their sin.

When Jesus comes to Peter, he draws back in embarrassed pride and emphatically refuses to let Jesus wash his feet. But if Peter will not accept the washing, Jesus says that he will have no part with him. Peter’s rejection of the gift of relationship with Jesus is infinitely more significant than refusing the offer to have his dusty feet washed. He is spurning Jesus’ personal gift of cleansing through his death. If Peter refuses this small gift of having his feet washed, then he will not be ready to accept the greater gift of the cleansing of his soul.

*I humbly and gratefully accept the gift of forgiveness, Lord. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

May 10 - 15

Peter

**Thursday, May 13 John 13:31-38**

*“I am ready to die for you”*

Jesus’ band of followers are not to live in isolation, clinging to some memories after he is gone. They are to “love one another” as Jesus has loved them. The distinguishing mark of discipleship is not a program or signs or eloquence or power, but Christ’s love in us that allows us to love one another. This does not mean these men were to become a self-centered, ingrown clique. Rather, as they love one another, their love will overflow into the relationships they have with those outside the faith, and the world will come to know the love of God.

One wonders if Peter heard this radical command of Jesus. He is still brooding over where his Lord is going when he leaves. Jesus again states that Peter cannot follow him now, but afterward he will. But Peter, who does not understand, insists that he will lay down his life for Jesus’ sake. Little does Peter realize that at the very outset of the struggle to come he will deny Jesus, not once, but three times. How well Jesus knows him, as he does us. And he still loves us with a love that will not let us go.

*Strengthen our love for one another, Lord, that others may see your love. Amen.*

**Friday, May 14 John 18:15-18, 25-27**

*“Again Peter denied it”*

Peter follows the crowd that has arrested Jesus and taken him to the house of the high priest. The intimate details which tell us how Peter got into the courtyard from the outside indicate that, although he doesn’t mention his own name, John was present and had some influence with the high priest’s officials. The servant at the door, a girl, asks Peter if he is not one of Jesus’ disciples. She phrases her question in such a way that a negative answer will be quite natural. The temptation to deny Jesus is often so easy and straight-forward that we hardly notice what we have just done.

Peter, who is warming himself by the fire in the courtyard, is given two more chances to confess he is one of Jesus’ disciples. A second and then a third time Peter denies any affiliation with Jesus, and immediately a rooster crows. This has been Peter’s trial, the first opportunity in alien territory since his promise to confess Jesus’ name. But Peter has failed, choosing the warmth of the fire over the cost of the witness.

*Keep me alert to temptation, Lord, which lures me to deny you. Amen.*

**Saturday, May 15 John 21:15-19**

*“You know I love you”*

Jesus draws Peter aside. This is a searching time of healing and restoration. The “backslider” is not only welcomed home, but commissioned by the great Shepherd to care for his sheep. The mission is not only to evangelize, to catch fish, but to disciple, to feed the sheep. The question that Jesus addresses to Peter is concerned with Peter’s heart, “Do you love me more than these?” Does Peter love Jesus unselfishly and unconditionally more than he cares for fishing with all of its trappings, or anything else? Peter’s immediate response is that he does love Jesus, but words are not enough. There is a mission: lambs are to be fed.

Twice more Jesus asks Peter the question, “Do you love me?” Finally Peter responds, “Lord, you know all things.” Jesus knows Peter’s heart, whether his act of repentance has truly brought him back in undying love. Jesus is focused on the mission of caring for the sheep, and Peter needs to understand the depth of what he is being commissioned to do. For only through his deep, deep love for Jesus will Peter be able to love and care for the sheep.

*As I love you, Lord, I will be able to love others. Amen.*