

STUDY ON PETER

Unlikely

April 9, 2023

OPENING QUESTION

As a kid, what was something that you had to wait for that was worth the wait?

Can you remember anything that *wasn't* worth the wait?!

In this series, we've been studying the life of Peter as shared in the gospels, and instead of a superhuman hero of the faith, we have found him to be as variable and fallible as we are ourselves: bold and confident in Christ and his faith at times, other times clumsy in his understanding, and occasionally a full tilt failure. Here in the resurrection story, we are comforted to discover that God's work in the world has never depended on our strength or perfect faith, but always on His power. Through Peter's trials, God was shaping him into a rock of faith He could use in His church.

READ Luke 24:1-12

As you take a moment to read the story of Jesus' resurrection slowly and with care, what stands out to you or surprises you?

- Verses 24:9-12 cover Peter's role in this story. From what we know of Peter, why do you think he is the one who ran to the tomb? (For clarity, John 21 adds that John ran with him.)
- After seeing the empty tomb, Peter was left wondering (NIV) or marveling (ESV). What experiences of faith have left you wondering? (Even if those wonderings have since been resolved!)

Luke 24:34 and 1 Corinthians 15:5 disclose that Jesus appeared to Peter at some point on Resurrection Day before He appeared to the rest of the disciples.

- Imagine yourself into Peter's situation. What would this meeting have meant to you? (Especially in light of Mark 14:66-72 from last week)

READ Mark 9:2-10

What do you notice in this story? What stands out to you or surprises you? (The transfiguration is also recorded in Matthew 17 and Luke 9, if you'd enjoy slightly different perspectives!)

- Does knowing of this experience change how you read Luke 24:12?

It seems that the events beginning when Jesus was taken to the Sanhedrin up through the empty tomb were surprising, confusing, and cause for discussion among the disciples (see Luke 24:13-14).

- When has God confounded you?
- Peter knew Jesus' words and had experience with Him, but was still confused about the *how* and *why* of what was happening. Is that a comforting or discouraging idea to you? Why?

Peter had followed Jesus for about three years by the time we reach the resurrection. What truths about Jesus do you think were rolling around in his mind as he tried to make sense of Jesus' death, and now the empty tomb?

- If you run out of brainstorm, consider these verses: Matthew 4:17, Matthew 5:10, John 6:38-39; Mark 2:3-12, Mark 8:31, John 14:6. Mark 10:44-45, John 10:10-11
- What truths about God the Father or Jesus do you find most comforting when you're struggling to make sense of His good purposes in your circumstances?

DAILY TIME

1 Peter 1
1 Peter 2
1 Peter 3
1 Peter 4
1 Peter 5
Acts 1-2

As you read each day, consider:
What does this show me about God and His character?
How would I say this in my own words?
How should I respond? (Thanksgiving, confession, asking, praise, change, etc)

EVENT

Date and Time

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NOTES AND QUOTES

Luke 24:9-10: "...knowing the good news about Jesus will always compel us to tell others."

Moses and Elijah are thought to represent the law and the prophets, respectively. They are also associated with high mountains (Sinai/Horeb), and they experienced transformation (Exodus 34:29-35, 2 Kings 2:11). (Harper)

"Announcements that God's reign advances through death of the Messiah ... surround the Transfiguration. Jesus' appearance, bathed in divine glory, attended by the great saints of old, and heralded by the voice of God, may take away the sting of these announcements about suffering by offering assurance of ultimate vindication, but it does not remove the necessity of travail for Him and all those who follow Him."
Garland, p 346

FROM THE MESSAGE

As we read the resurrection account from Mark 16:1-8, we looked at the emotions described in these women: trembling, bewildered, astonished and afraid. Jesus' closest followers were surprised and confounded by His resurrection! It is a good reminder that we don't have to have everything figured out to believe.

Does the story of Jesus' resurrection surprise or astonish you? How so?

- How does this story strengthen your faith in Jesus?

Dirk shared the story of a grieving husband whose faith was strengthened when he considered how Jesus' resurrection gave him hope for his wife's future resurrection.

- How does the reality of Christ's resurrection give you hope or courage?

EXTRA

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9, focusing on verses 6-7

Although Peter is writing these words to encourage the believers, how do you see his own story in these verses, especially the description of trials and faith in 1:6-7?

- Where does your own faith story share a similar encounter, when your faith was strengthened *through* trials?
- Where do you need prayer and strength in a current trial to trust that God is growing your faith in this way?

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Spend time in prayer for one another, about the needs in your lives, asking God to be at work forming you into an unlikely follower, transformed by Christ.

PRAYER AND CARE

Reminders for the week ahead:

Luke 24:1-12 1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." 8 And they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, 11 but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

Luke 24:34 - 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

1 Corinthians 15:4-5 - 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

On 1 Peter 1:3-9

Trials here refers to temptations: situations or people or things that entice us into sin or a "lapse from the faith and holiness." (Thayer, G3986) These are the moments of life where we have to make a decision to choose God and agree with His pathway, or choose the way of the world. Any kind of affliction or adversity that might loosen our grip on our faith: perhaps we forget that God is bigger and we lean into self-sufficiency or worry, perhaps we forget that God's ways are higher and we slip into complacency and compromise with this world, or perhaps we simply neglect the cost of our willful sin and actively choose a path we know is not His. Or maybe we stand firm when we are invited to slide: we sense worry growing, and we pray for faith; we feel drawn to the world's way, so we get into the word and pray for strength and seek encouragement from other believers; or we recognize willful sin before choosing it, and turn in the other direction.

In a similar vein, Peter encourages us that when we are faced with temptations and enticements to sin, we need to fix ourselves firmly on the hope we have in our salvation. Whatever is in front of us might be enticing in this moment, but this moment will fade; eternity will not. Our hope is in our inheritance (v 4), our salvation (v 9).

Acts 2:22-24 - 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

1 Peter 1:3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.