

The Resurrection of Peter
I Corinthians 15:3-8
The Source: April 22, 2015

Show video from A.D. about Thomas

Read I Corinthians 15:3-8

I am fascinated with Jesus' attention to individuals after the Resurrection: Mary, the 2 men on the road to Emmaus. Thomas in the video from the TV mini-series *A.D.* and of whom I spoke about several weeks ago. And then, the list in I Corinthians 15.

From this list, Jesus paid special attention. Let me read it again. (A side note: did you notice who is missing in this list?)

Who is Cephas? Yes, Peter. Of course, when we think of Jesus appearing to Peter we think of the famous breakfast on the beach and Jesus asks Peter three times "Do you love me?"

But the passage says Jesus appeared to Peter before he appeared to the disciples. Jesus appeared to the disciples the night of the Resurrection. So, did Jesus appear to Peter before he appeared that night to the disciples?

Let's take a look:

Mark 16:7 a young man appears to the women at the empty tomb and says, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee." Jesus is alive and wants to see Peter.

Luke 24:33-34 Jesus walks with 2 men to Emmaus. They eventually recognize Jesus at a meal. "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed and he has appeared to Simon!'"

Isn't that interesting?

Apparently, Jesus and Peter had a private conversation. Why? (ask people)

Jesus and Peter needed to talk. It's a private talk initiated by Jesus. What do you think happened? Jesus wants to re-establish the relationship with Peter, to restore Peter himself.

We don't know if Peter ever talked about that conversation. Perhaps it was too private. I can imagine the conversation included forgiveness.

Christianity abounds with forgiveness.

Peter has been forgiven, and now, Jesus is going to take the forgiveness one step further with Peter. He is going to restore Peter's ministry...publically...after the private restoration.

And this takes us to the famous breakfast on the beach. Now do you understand why is why Peter was so eager to jump out of the boat to see Jesus...they have already talked.

Jesus restores Peter publically in a very interesting way.

The catching of the fish is a familiar story; it is how Jesus and Peter first met (Luke 5).

There are similarities between Peter's first calling to follow Jesus and this account:

- Both occurred on the Sea of Galilee
- Both times Peter couldn't catch a thing
- Both times Jesus told him to throw his nets into the water
- Both times there is a miraculous catch.

The first time it happened, it was the starting point for Peter's and Jesus' relationship.

Here Jesus is going to offer Peter another starting point. He is about to reinstate Peter's leadership as "the Rock." But it is going to hurt to get there because Jesus has to remind Peter of his failure even though the forgiveness has been extended.

Let's go to those questions that Jesus asks Peter at the breakfast on the beach after the resurrection. The questions are: Peter, do you love me? They sound simple enough, but they are hard questions:

1. Jesus calls Peter – Simon. Not Peter, the Rock, the name Jesus gave him. Peter isn't ready for that name yet. (If you have a nickname, you may notice that people don't use it when they have serious business with you.)

2. The 3 questions: Simon, do you love me? Which of course coincides with Peter's 3 denials. Peter had denied him in front of a coal fire, and now he is reinstated in front of a coal fire. (the details of scripture are so interesting!)

3. The first question is worded differently: Do you love me more than these?

More than what? Fishing? The disciples?

What Jesus is asking: Do you love me more than these men love me?

That hurt. Before he denied Jesus, Peter had inferred that he loved Jesus much more than they did. "All men will forsake you, Lord, but I will lay down my life for you." He regarded himself as more faithful and more committed to Jesus than the others. So, Jesus reminds Peter of his ego.

4. There is an interesting word play going on here that we miss in the English language.

It is for the word "Love"

Talk about the different words for love in Greek:

- Eros – erotic come from; physical and sexual love.
- Phileo – brotherly love. Used when you like someone.
- Agape – unconditional, self-sacrificing love. It's when you commit yourself wholly to another person.

When Jesus asks his first question: Do you love me?, he uses agape. Do you love me unconditionally, Peter? Are you willing to sacrifice yourself for me? And Peter answers honestly, the word he uses for love is Phileo. Yes, Lord, I love you as a brother. Peter wasn't at the level of love that Jesus was requiring.

The same thing happens the second round of questions. But the third time Jesus uses phileo. He descends to Peter's level. And it hurt. But Peter is reinstated and given a new task/a new ministry – to take care of the sheep of Jesus.

In our service to God, forgiveness abounds. Jesus forgave Thomas and Peter.

In our service to God, the motivation is love. Peter was reinstated through the question of love.

We have a God who cares where we are at and loving brings us to where we should be. Amen.