

Easter Sunday
March 23, 2008
John 18-20
Pastor Joe Whalen

John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness . . . calling men and women to repentance and faith in the coming Messiah . . .

John had confessed that he was not the Messiah . . . that he was just the voice of one calling in the wilderness . . . John had no aspirations of messiahship . . .

His role was to be the forerunner, the announcer, the one who pointed to Jesus . . .

And literally, that is exactly what John did . . .

John chapter 1 tells us in verse 34

READ 1:34-42 . . .

From the beginning, Peter possessed natural gifts of leadership and he is constantly listed first in the lists of the apostles in all four Gospels . . .

Peter had been a commercial fisherman . . . but he was willing to leave that to follow Jesus . . .

Because one day, Jesus said to Andrew and Peter, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. Mat 4:19-20

For the next three years plus, Peter and Andrew were disciples of Jesus . . .

At the first, the ministry was exciting . . . and powerful . . . the sick were healed . . . the demon possessed were released . . . the Gospel was being preached . . . Jesus had literally raised the dead . . . things were going very, very well . . .

Until you get to the 6th chapter of the Gospel of John . . .

B/c beginning in that chapter, the historical account takes a rather negative turn . . .

The chapter begins extremely well . . .

In the first verses, Jesus feeds the multitudes with a boy's sack lunch . . .

And the people recognize Jesus as King . . . and try to make Him their king immediately . . .

And Jesus rejects their plan and leaves . . . v. 15 . . .

That night, while Peter and the rest of the disciples are about to capture in a boat on the Sea of Galilee . . . Jesus literally comes walking on the water to them . . .

And immediately after that, John tells us, the crowds came to Jesus all the more in verse 25 . . .

Jesus is clearly giving the prophetic signs that HE is, indeed, the One John the Baptist said He is . . . He is showing by His Words and His actions that He is the Messiah . . . the King . . . the Redeemer . . .

And here is where the Gospel takes a decidedly negative turn . . .

Because Jesus preaches an incredibly hard message . . . which sent

the crowds away in droves . . .

So the exciting and growing ministry that Peter had been involved in is reduced to just a bit more than a handful of followers . . .

Jesus is hardly acting like the King Peter had expected . . .

And Jesus turns to the 12 and asks them . . . READ v. 67 . . .

And it is Peter who responds . . .

READ v. 68 . . .

What a statement of the truth . . . even in the midst of crowds leaving in droves . . . and Jesus confusing His followers . . . Peter gives the facts . . . there really is no where else to go . . . Jesus is the one and only . . .

Peter is the first disciple who understands that Jesus is not just an average leader . . .

That Jesus is the Messiah . . . the Promised King from God who would Rule and Reign in Righteousness in God's Kingdom . . .

In fact, Peter is the first disciple to confess that Jesus is the Messiah . . .

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. Mat 16:13-17

So the crowds are leaving in droves . . . and Peter finally understands that Jesus is the King . . .

And the rest of the Gospel of John is so confusing to Peter . . .

B/c in chapters 7 & 8, the religious leaders reject Jesus . . . this King . . . the Messiah that John pointed to . . . the one who is doing these miracles . . . is rejected by the religious leaders . . .

In chapter 9, Jesus heals a man who had been blind since birth . . .

And instead of the crowds flocking to Jesus . . . the miracle of healing the man of his blindness is yet another excuse for the people and crowds to reject Jesus . . .

Wow . . . not the reaction Peter was expecting . . .

In chapter 10, Jesus claims to be the unique Son of God . . . the Messiah . . .

And the people take up rocks in order to stone Him to death . . .

READ 10:31-32 . . .

In chapter 11, Jesus raises a man named Lazarus from the dead . . .

And you guessed it, that event is doesn't lead the nation to receive Jesus as Messiah . . .

In fact, So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. (Joh 11:53)

In John 12, in an event that was just dripping with irony, Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey . . . fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9 . . .

He is presenting Himself as the King . . . and for Peter, this was good news . . .

Until chapter 13 . . .

READ 13 . . .

Explain what is going on . . .

READ vv. 36-38 . . .

In chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17, Jesus gives His last instructs to His disciples and prays to His Father a beautiful and stunning prayer . . .

And if you are at all familiar with the crucifixion account, you will remember that Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane . . .

This is still completely and utterly confusing to Peter . . .

B/c he understands that Jesus is supposed to be the King . . . to be the Savior . . .

READ 18:4 . . .

Jesus goes out to met His betrayer . . .

And Peter jumps into immediate action . . .

vv. 10-11 . . .

READ vv. 15-18 . . .

He probably said he was not associated with Jesus in order to get past the door . . .

But it was a lie . . .

And it was a denial . . .

Look at verse 25 . . .

READ THIS: Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

John 18:25-27

In chapter 19 Jesus is crucified and died . . .

And the last thing Peter did before Jesus died was deny Him three times . . .

Thankfully, the story doesn't end there . . .

READ chapter 20:1-9 . . .

Peter sees the empty tomb . . . and doesn't believe that Jesus has raised from the dead . . .

Twice in chapter 20 Jesus appears to His disciples in His glorified resurrected body . . .

READ 20:19-20 (DO NOT READ V.21!)

READ 20:24-31 . . .

But what about Peter . . . this leader of the 12 . . . the one who had followed Jesus from the beginning . . . who had realized that Jesus

was the Messiah . . .

And then denied Him three times . . .

What about Peter?

What about us?

We, like Peter, are sinners . . . who are good at making promises and failing to keep them . . .

What does Easter mean for us?

Let's pick it up in chapter 21 . . .

READ 21 . . .

What Easter Means

1. **Easter Means Jesus Is the King . . . Who Died on the Cross for Your Sins . . .**
 - a. Peter was far from perfect . . .
 - b. Peter had promised to lay his life down for Jesus . . .
 - c. He failed and failed miserably . . .
 - d. And while it might be easy for us to point at Peter and mock Him . . .
 - e. The truth of the matter is, we are all sinners . . . everyone of us . . .
 - f. And no matter what promises we make ourselves about the future . . . and how we are not going to sin . . .
 - g. Or how we are going to do right . . .
 - h. Just like Peter, we fail and fail on a regular basis . . .
 - i. Romans tells us unapologetically, "there is none righteous, no not one . . . for all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God . . ."

- j. The truth of the matter is . . . your best efforts are doomed for failures, just like Peter's . . .
- k. Because like Peter and the rest of us . . . you are a sinner . . .
- l. You cannot love God the way He tells you to . . .
- m. You cannot obey Him . . .
- n. He says do not steal . . . if you have ever stolen anything from anyone, then you broke God's Word . . .
- o. And all the promises about how you will make amends and be better are all just smoke and mirrors . . .
- p. The cold real truth is this . . . Jesus came to save sinners . . . and only sinners . . .
- q. And your best efforts to live life are, frankly, not good enough . . .
- r. Jesus' said – You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect – Mat 5:48
- s. And that, if we are honest with ourselves, is far from true . . .
- t. We must agree with what God says about us . . .
- u. That He does love us . . . but we don't love Him . . . and we are sinners . . .
- v. Jesus said the Greatest Commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself . . .
- w. And the truth is, we've not done that . . .
- x. As much as we might think we could . . .
- y. We are sinners . . .
- z. There is none righteous, no not one . . .
- aa. There is none that seeks after God . . .
- bb. We have all gone astray . . .

- cc. God's Word is true . . . we are enslaved to sin . . . we love ourselves supremely . . .
- dd. And the wages of sin is death, Romans 6 tells us . . .
- ee. And the great news of Easter is this: God knows all about you . . . and loves you anyway . . .
- ff. He knows all about your sins . . . and He wants to forgive you . . .
- gg. In fact, that is why Jesus came . . . He didn't come just to be born in a manger . . . or to heal people . . . or walk on water . . .
- hh. No . . . He came to die on the cross for our sins . . .
- ii. He knew no sin . . . yet He became sin for us . . . so we might stand with Him and in Him and be completely forgiven . . .
- jj. Going to heaven is not by good works . . . or being a good person . . . or by being baptized . . . or reading the Bible . . .
- kk. John tells in this very Book . . . "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. – John 3:16-18
- ll. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast – Ephesians 2:8-9
- mm. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the

- goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life – Titus 3:3-7
 - nn. Forgiveness for God is not earned . . . it is a gift from God . . .
 - oo. For the wages of sin is death . . . but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .
 - pp. For with the heart a person believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made until salvation . . .
 - qq. If you want to be forgiven by this God who knows you and loves you, you can be . . .
 - rr. Because Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead . . .
 - ss. And if you come to Him and ask Him to forgive you, He will . . .
 - tt. Easter means God knows everything about you . . . and stands ready to forgive you . . .
 - uu. The apostle Paul puts it this way . . . The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost – 1Ti 1:15
 - vv. So what does Easter mean? It means God knows all about you . . . and loves you anyway . . .
 - ww. But it also means . . .
- 2. God Can Use You Now, in the Present . . .**
- a. Jesus clearly says to Peter that now is the time to serve Him . . .
 - b. Three times he says feed my sheep . . .

- c. Peter's old way of living, fishing for fish, and living for himself, are ended . . .
- d. Jesus is calling Peter to a better way of living . . .
- e. Peter is to now live a life of sacrificial giving . . .
- f. For him, that meant leading his wife and family into full-time ministry . . . which you can read about in the book of Acts . . .
- g. Maybe for you, God is not calling you to full-time service . . .
- h. But He certainly is calling you to service . . .
- i. Husbands, love you wife, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it . . .
- j. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered – 1Peter 3:7
- k. Husband, you wife wants you to be the spiritual leader in the home . . .
 - i. That means, you lead your family to church . . .
 - ii. That means you come even when she is not here . . .
 - iii. That means you bring the children . . .
 - iv. That means you take the charge in witnessing to the world . . .
 - v. Any godly woman would be thrilled to follow a man who loved God and loved Her and demonstrated that love for God and that love for her in his daily life . . .
 - vi. The time of being a coward for God is ended . . .
 - vii. Man, please, take the lead and actually lead . . .
 - viii. That means, your wife should not be talking

- ix. Well, pastor, she won't follow . . .
- x. Hey, you take care of obeying God and see what God has in store for you . . .
- xi. Easter means you can love your wife . . .
- l. Wives, submitting yourself unto your husband . . .
 - i. And I realize he doesn't deserve it . . .
 - ii. But Peter didn't deserve
- m. Singles . . .
 - i. It means serving God now . . . and being more concerned about the things of the Lord then seeking a mate . . .
 - ii. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife – 1Co 7:32-33
 - iii. Easter means you can love and follow your husband . . .
- n. Children, obeying and honoring your parents is never going to be a piece of cake all of the time . . .
 - i. But it still is God's will for your life . . .
 - ii. And you can do it . . .
 - iii. Easter means that you can honor and obey your parents . . . even when they are far from perfect . . .
- 3. Easter Means Your Future is Secure . . .
 - a. Your earthly future . . .
 - b. Your eternal future . . .

My friend, easter means you can't be perfect . . . it means that

Jesus is the one and only perfect one . . .

And if you come to Him . . . He'll give you the victory He won on that cross . . .

And your sins will be forgiven . . .

Your life will have meaning . . .

And your future will be eternally secure . . .

Jesus said, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

(Joh 10:27-29)

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes [on me] has eternal life.

(Joh 6:47)