

sermon

discussion guide

April 8, 2018

“Finding Easter: New Beginnings”

Pastor Steve DeNeff

Luke 22:24-34; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Opening Prayer:

*“O Lord, you are righteous,
and your regulations are fair.*

*Your laws are perfect
and completely trustworthy.*

*Your promises have been thoroughly tested;
that is why I love them so much.” (Psalm 119:137-138, 140)*

Discussion Starter:

What is something precious to you? What is so precious that no amount of money could cause you to give it up?

Sermon Summary:

Review the sermon as a group.

- *What key points or ideas from this week’s sermon stood out to you?*
- *How did the Spirit stir you to action or change?*
- *What other Scripture passages came to mind during the sermon and why?*
 - **Other Scriptures referenced: Mark 16:7; Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Matthew 16:21-28**

Key sermon points:

- *We often think of denial as an act of malice. Denying someone is acting in a way that isn’t consistent with that person. What are some ways we might deny Christ?*
- *When Peter denies Jesus he says, “I don’t know even know him.” If we understand that Peter misunderstood what Jesus was doing when he gave himself to the guards, how does this change our perspective about Peter?*
 1. *Have you ever thought God would do something and was then surprised when it didn’t go the way you thought it would? Have you ever felt like you didn’t know who God was based on what you thought he would do?*
- *Peter’s denial teaches us 3 things:*
 1. *We never see it coming. We’re sure we won’t deny him.*
 2. *Whenever denial happens, it is a violation of a relationship not a violation of a law.*
 3. *Whenever we fall like Peter, it’s not what happened that matters, it is what happens next. Will we respond like Peter or like Judas?*
- *Signs that we might be on the same trajectory as Peter:*

1. *Un-self-awareness. Peter is constantly overestimating himself.*
 - *What friends help you see those weaknesses you can't see in yourself?*
 - *Are you asking God to show you what you don't know about yourself?*
2. *Peter follows at a distance – when there is a separation between us and Jesus, other things become more important.*
 - *How are you staying close to Jesus?*
3. *Peter joins another company around the fire.*
 - *What group of people is helping you follow the way of Jesus?*

Next Steps:

- *If you have fallen like Peter, resurrection is coming! Jesus is looking for you even when you are done looking for him.*
- *Stay in it!*
 - *Stay in Christian community – don't separate yourself out of guilt or shame or fear. Stay connected.*
 - *Stay in the means of grace – keep praying and reading the Scripture, and receiving the sacrament.*
- *Christ will appear again, stay in it until he does!*

Prayer:

Spend some time sharing ways you can pray for each other. Pray about how you will respond to the sermon.

As you, O Lord, have loved us before and after our failures, may we now go and offer your love to a broken world. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer based on Romans 8:9-11

But we are not controlled by our sinful nature. We are controlled by the Spirit if we have the Spirit of God living in us. And Christ lives within us, so even though our bodies will die because of sin, the Spirit gives us life because we have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in us. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to our mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within us.