

PETER'S PRIVATE ENCOUNTER

Friday, October 23

Reading: Luke 24

Luke 24:33 *They...returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together*
34 *and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."...36* *While they were still talking about this,*
Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

The death of Jesus shattered the disciples. They were so fearful that none of them but John were present at the cross and His burial arrangements had to be made by "secret disciples" who now boldly declare their devotion to Jesus (see John 19:28-42). When the women return on Sunday morning talking about angels and the empty tomb, they refuse to believe their message until Jesus Himself appears to them.

In the midst of these exciting events, we often overlook Peter's encounter with Jesus. In Mark 16:7, the angel at Jesus' tomb tells the women to specifically tell Peter the good news. This command may be why he and John are the only disciples to visit the tomb (see John 20:3-10). Sometime between this tomb visit and His appearance in the upper room that evening, Jesus makes a private visit to Peter. When the two disciples from Emmaus show up the disciples inform them that Jesus has appeared to Peter. Paul also confirms this encounter in 1 Corinthians 15:5.

We have no details about what happened at this meeting. Perhaps Jesus made a special appearance to Peter because of the disciple's feelings of unworthiness over his denials. Did Jesus give him the same forgiving look He had in the courtyard that night? I suggest that we are given no details because Peter never spoke about it! It was far too personal. It is probable that the issue of Peter's denials was dealt with in this personal encounter. Whatever happened, it changed Peter. Now longer was he the remorseful disciple who wept bitterly. When he next sees Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, he is anxious to be with Jesus instead of being hesitant to face the Lord he had denied. (More on this in tomorrow's devotions).

LESSON ONE: Have you had a deeply personal experience with Jesus? One that would be difficult to share? If not, maybe you need to go deeper in your walk with the Savior. Like Peter, there are times of trial, doubt, and guilt that can only be remedied by a personal touch from the Lord.

LESSON TWO: The gospel of Luke contains my favorite account of the Great Commission. While the other gospels give us the STRATEGY (Matt. 28:18-20), SCOPE (Mark 16:16), SOURCE (John 20:21), and STRENGTH (Acts 1:8), Luke gives us the SUBSTANCE of the message Jesus gave us to preach to the world.

- It is firmly grounded in Scripture (24:44-45)
- It focuses on the death and resurrection of Christ (24:46)
- It requires a life-changing faith (24:47a)
- It is for all the world (24:46b)
- It is spread by witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit (24:48-49)

What part do you play in God's plan to reach the world with the gospel?
To reach your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your lost family?