



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



HG34: Living With Jesus (4/5) *Old Fears*

Mark 14:27-34 & 66-72

Home Group Study Notes

11th July 2010 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and
other resources that might be helpful.*



Welcome/Ice Breaker (10 mins)

Paul begins his talk by referring to 'TV Bloopers' - when actors or presenters get their lines wrong in a very humorous way! Share with your Home Group a situation when you've said the 'wrong thing' which has resulted in hilarious consequences, or, when you have been present when it has happened to someone else.



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise, or listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers; etc.





Looking Upwards (40 mins) *Bible Study*

Read through the text for this study, Mark 14:27-34 & 66-72, and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss your answers with your Home Group.

1: Have you, like Peter, only heard the negative of what someone has said to you rather than the positive? Share with your Home Group an example of how this may have affected your Christian life.

2: Paul spoke about how Peter followed Jesus at a distance. Share with your Home Group why this could be: a) a positive experience; and b) a negative experience.

3: Is it possible that if the High Priest (rather than the servant girl) had asked Peter whether or not he knew Jesus, Peter would not have denied it? Was Peter so focused on showing faithfulness in the 'big' things that he neglected to show it in the 'little' things?

Just because Peter Failed, does not mean he was a Failure!

Before these events took place, Jesus had promised Peter special authority and responsibility in the church (Matthew 16:18: "On this rock I will build my church"). Even then, Jesus knew of Peter's weaknesses, but, it seems to me, that Jesus' action of promising Peter such responsibility is entirely deliberate – it meant that the church could only be built on the basis of forgiveness. From his own experiences, Peter would come to know that he was not lost without God's forgiveness. And neither are we. Even while Jesus knew Peter would deny him, he had a work for Peter to do. And Jesus has a work, a ministry, for each of us to do who, as Romans 8:28 tells us, are "called according to his purpose." There's an interesting part of this story in Luke's Gospel, 22:61, when Luke writes that when Peter denied, cursed, and swore, Jesus turned and looked at him. I wonder what Peter saw in Jesus' eyes. What do you see in the eyes of Jesus? When I look into the eyes of Jesus I see love!

*I don't see eyes of anger: I see eyes of acceptance!
I don't see eyes of bitterness: I see eyes of benevolence!
I don't see eyes of criticism: I see eyes of compassion!
I don't see eyes of guilt: I see eyes of grace!
I don't see eyes of hostility: I see eyes of hope!*

When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, it's as though Jesus is saying, 'Peter, I'm disappointed, but I want you to know: Just because you have failed, that doesn't mean you're going to be a failure!'

All of us have skeletons in the closet! All of us have dark, ugly sides about us. There's not one of us here, who haven't made mistakes in our lives. There's not one of us here who haven't caused harm to ourselves and to those we love the most. All of us have been there, haven't we! We've all left casualties behind us through our journey of life. But just because we've failed, doesn't mean we are a failure! God knows our weaknesses – he knows that we will 'get it wrong'. Yet he still continues to call us. If Jesus doesn't regard our weaknesses and capacity for getting it wrong as barriers to a relationship with Him, why should we?

Each one of us can know the forgiveness of Jesus and the restoration of our lives as we will see with Peter in the closing part of our series in a couple of weeks time.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended to the dead.

On the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father;
And He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church;
The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Peter responds: “Jesus? Jesus who? Ha! I don’t know of a Jesus! You’re crazy, woman! You’re crazy! I don’t know the man!”

About an hour later those standing around the fire looking at Peter said, “Haven’t we met? We know who you are. You’re one of them. You’re one of the disciples, aren’t you? You’re a Galilean!” In the Matthew passage, it says, “Surely you must be one of them for your accent gives you away!” (I can relate to that!) Somebody else says, “Yeah, I know this guy. I saw him in the Garden just a while ago. He’s the guy who cut off the ear of Malchus. You’re one of the Jesus followers.” And Peter gets angry and upset and begins to curse and swear and says: “You’re crazy!. I don’t know a Jesus! What are you talking about?” All of a sudden, again in the background, a cock crowed and Peter remembers the words spoken by Jesus: “... tonight, before the cock crows twice, you yourself will disown me three times.” And Peter broke down and wept tears of remorse and repentance.

I don’t how you feel, but when I read this story I get a little aggravated and disappointed at Peter. Do you? Perhaps you, like me, want to take hold of Peter and shake him and say: “What in the world have you done? You’re a disciple for goodness sake! For three years you walked with Jesus! You heard the sermons and you saw the miracles!”

“You were there in Capernaum when Jesus walked into your house and healed your mother-in-law. You were there at the house of Jairus along with James and John when Jesus raised his daughter from the dead. You were there! What’s wrong with you, man?” You were there at the sea of Galilee, when Jesus said, ‘Come.’ And you got out of the boat. You’re the one who walked on water. Peter, what’s wrong with you? You saw all of these miracles and you were there.”

We want to challenge at Peter, don’t we? At least, that is, until we realise we’d probably do exactly the same if we were in his shoes! but I think it’s safe to say that this was the deepest, darkest hour of Peter’s ministry - of his relationship with Jesus - whom he loved so much. The fact that Peter denied Jesus three times is highly significant. In first century Middle Eastern culture, if something was stated three times it was legally binding. Peter’s threefold denial is, therefore, an utterly comprehensive denial.

How did such a great man come to do such a thing? Peter was a faithful giant among faithful giants. Few before him and few after him could stand shoulder to shoulder with him. He was a man strong in faith, firm in conviction, bold in preaching and unrelenting in his zeal for Christ. Peter was eminent even among the apostles, a leader among leaders, an example among examples. But this man, great as he was, was just a man. Like you and me, he was a man whose heart, by nature, was full of sin, and whose flesh was weak. Not only had Peter denied Jesus he had denied his identity.

5. Peter Denied his Identity, vs 70, 72

But, even when Peter denied who he was, there was something about him that told others who he was identified with. Now I don’t know about you, but I count on that every day of my life. And I find such comfort and encouragement from this part of the story. Peter had been with Jesus for three years - he was following Jesus - trying to be what he could be for Jesus, and even when he messed up, people knew he was Jesus’ follower. Something of Jesus’ teaching and values and ethics and spirituality had taken a hold in Peter’s life and, even though he was at a distance, denying who Jesus was, denying his very self, he couldn’t deny the visible and tangible difference Jesus had made to his life. Peter denied his identity, but his identity remained. (For a ‘fuller’ summary of this point, please listen to, or download, Paul’s sermon on our website!)

4: Even though Peter had denied Jesus, he wasn’t able to deny his own Christian identity. Are you able to share an experience of how this might be true in your own life: either in your daily witness as a child of God; or when you’ve experienced hard and difficult times in your faith and times when you have wanted to walk away?

5: Jesus knew of Peter’s weaknesses, but His action of promising Peter special responsibility in the church (Matthew 16:18) was deliberate, in that it meant that the church could only be built on the basis of forgiveness. How, like Peter, might you need to know God’s forgiveness in your own life? Are there situations and/or people that you need to forgive? (If you feel able, allow your Home Group to pray with you, and for you, about any difficult situations in your life).

6: Say the words of the Apostles Creed together (on page 7), then allow a few moments of quiet in which everyone can reflect on what they have said. Ask God to help you show what you believe about him and how this can be shown in the way that you live.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



HG34: Living With Jesus (4/5) *Old Fears*

Mark 14:27-34 & 66-72

Home Group Sermon Notes

11th July 2010 - Revd Paul A. Carr

Introduction

I don't know if you ever watch programmes such as 'It'll be all right on the night' with Dennis Norden or TV Outtakes – you know programmes which show us what happens when actors and TV presenters get their lines mixed up and burst into fits of giggles. The nature of outtakes is that what we see is not what we were meant to see. They give us a glimpse of what happens when things go wrong. In the case of making films and TV programmes it can be very amusing when things go wrong. However, when we get things wrong in real life it can be anything but funny.

The playwright and author, D. H. Lawrence said: *'If only one could have two lives. The first in which to make one's mistakes ... and the second in which to profit by them.'* But there are, unfortunately, no dress rehearsals for life; we are on stage straightaway. If we make mistakes, we have to live with them. We only get one life. As we continue our series into Peter's experiences of living with Jesus, we're going to be looking a little closer at what happened when one of Jesus' closest friends got it so wrong and went back to his old ways and his old fears.

1. Peter only heard the negative, vs 28

In verses 27 & 28, Jesus said that everyone would desert him but after he was raised from the dead, he would get to Galilee before them and he would meet them there. Peter only heard the negative part of Jesus' statement - he only heard that everyone would desert Jesus and Peter took it personally - he didn't hear the part about Jesus meeting them in Galilee - none of them did, otherwise they would have understood that they would see him again, and perhaps, just perhaps, their grief wouldn't have been as deep and their fear wouldn't have been as intense. And we do that too, don't we? Someone says a statement to us, and we hear the negative, especially if it is something we perceive as negative comment about us. And we respond, or react to that, instead of hearing the whole message. Peter couldn't believe that he would desert his Lord, so he made a statement based on the negative part that he heard - the part that most affected his ego. So, secondly, we see that:

2. Peter's words were full of Pride, vs 29, 31

The words that Peter spoke in verses 29 and 31 were full of pride, vs29: "Even if all fall away, I will not!" Is it just me, or does that sound like a rather boastful statement? "These other guys, Lord - these other guys that have been following you for the same amount of time as I have, they might break down and desert you, but you can count on me. I'll be there. I'll even die for you!"

"Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will." There's that old 'I' word that gets us into so much trouble. I'm sure he didn't really mean to insult his brothers - his fellow disciples with his words, but they came pouring out, and he even said he would die if he had to, before he would desert Jesus. And sometimes, we mean well with our words.

We don't mean to insult our brothers and sisters, but in our passion, the words pour out and we make promises that others may know, and Jesus does know, we will never keep. And 9 times out of 10, when we speak words that hurt others, no matter how well-intended they may be, we speak them from our own fear and pride.

I'm sure Peter loved Jesus so much he didn't want to lose him - and he certainly didn't want to even think that he, himself, might desert his closest friend and teacher and Saviour. But as soon as Peter gave in to that passion and pride and fear. As soon as he made those bold statements, he was on a slippery slope away from keeping the very promises he had just made.

Jesus, however, knew in advance that Peter would behave like this. And this knowledge wasn't just because of some purely 'supernatural' aspect of Jesus' divine identity. Jesus knew Peter well. After three years together, Jesus knew Peter's tendencies, habits and personality. Jesus knew there had been several occasions on which Peter's actions were characterised by 'speaking now, thinking later'. So when Peter says he will never fail Jesus, Jesus knows Peter more than Peter knows himself. In the interim period between verses 34 and 66, Jesus and the disciples go to the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is arrested and put on trial. All the disciples disperse, except Peter, who ...

3. Peter followed Jesus at a distance, vs 54

Peter followed Jesus at a distance, vs 54. And that could apply to so many people couldn't it? There are so many folk who claim to be Christians yet follow Jesus from a distance. So many folk 'hedge their bets' don't they? They say: Jesus seems a good guy, he's done some good things but I don't want to get too near to him – it could be a bit embarrassing or life changing if I did, so they follow Jesus from a distance. They won't deny Jesus but they won't acknowledge him either. The Bible refers to people like this in Revelation 3:15-16: "... you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm ... I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

But for Peter, even though he was following at a distance, he still went right into the high priest's courtyard. Yes, he followed at a distance, but what we need to remember is that Peter was a fisherman. Peter wasn't acquainted with the lifestyle or the political arena of the high priests, and yet here he is at the high priest's home! And here's this fisherman - dressed like a fisherman, walking and talking like a fisherman - and he goes right into the courtyard of the cultural elite – and that takes some courage. Vs54: "There he sat with the guards, and warmed himself by the fire".

Peter is now getting himself deeper and deeper in a hole! After his bold statements, his false, but well-meaning promises, his limited hearing - he now finds himself following at a distance and hanging out with the wrong crowd. He's warming his hands by the fire of the enemy!! And folks, if we're not careful - if we don't listen to the whole message that Jesus has for us - we'll find ourselves sitting right where Peter was. We'll be warming our hands; we'll be getting our pleasure and satisfaction; we'll be having our needs met - by the fire of the enemy. And of course, this began a sequence of events, when:

4. Peter Denied knowing Jesus, vs 68, 70, 71

In just a few short hours, Peter's words went from one end of the scale to the other. Within hours, the man who said he would even die if he had to in order to stay beside Jesus, has a conversation with a servant girl who looks at Peter and says, "I know who you are. You're one of Jesus' followers." Peter responds: "I don't know Jesus! What are you talking about? You're crazy!" A few minutes later, the same servant girl passes by and says, "Hey. Haven't we met? I know who you are. You belong to the Jesus gang."