

AND PETER

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:7; Matt. 28:7

Can you find the difference between these two passages after reading them? The Gospel of Matthew says that after the Lord's resurrection, an angel told the women to tell His disciples of His resurrection. The Gospel of Mark records that the angel asked the women to tell the Lord's disciples and Peter. Oh, the words "and Peter" cause tears to fall. All of the four Gospels record the story of the Lord's resurrection. But only the Gospel of Mark has the words "and Peter." Since John was the one whom the Lord loved, why does the Bible not say "and John"? Since Thomas was doubtful about the Lord's resurrection, why does it not say "and Thomas"? The angel did not mention the best disciples or the most needy disciples. He specifically mentioned Peter. Why? What made Peter different from the others?

What kind of person was Peter? Three days before the resurrection, Peter committed a great sin, a sin that would cause the Lord not to confess him before the Father's angels. Peter not only denied the Lord before men, he even denied the Lord before a maid who was despised by others at that time. But the Lord wanted the women to tell the disciples and Peter about His resurrection. The words "and Peter" have a very deep meaning! If any brother or sister had Peter's experience, they might think:

"Oh! I have fallen. The sin which I have committed is not a common sin. I am afraid that I cannot draw close to the Lord anymore. The Lord might have already forsaken me. I am afraid that from now on, whenever the Lord has any important thing to do, He will not take me along. I will not be able to have special experiences like I had when I was with Him on the mount of transfiguration. I will not be able to accompany Him like I did in the garden of Gethsemane. I told the Lord that I would die for Him, and the Lord said that before the cock crowed twice, I would deny Him three times. I thought that the Lord misunderstood me. When He was taken, I even cut off a man's ear with a sword, thinking that I could love Him courageously. Yet I fell. I did not fall before the high priest or before the powerful Pilate, but before the questioning of a maid. I denied the Lord once, twice, and finally I even swore in my denial of the Lord. At one time I confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. At another time I said to Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life' But eventually, I fell just as the Lord was about to be crucified. I committed the great sin of denying Him. Although I cried with regret, I do not know how the Lord is going to treat me. It would have been better if He had not known that I denied Him. But when I denied Him, He turned His back and looked at me. He knew what I had done. What should I do? I dare not come close to Him anymore. Although He loves me, I dare not approach Him because there is a sin which separates me from Him. Perhaps from now on, I cannot be close to Him. Yet, after the Lord resurrected, several women brought back word that they were to specifically tell me about it. Oh, the Lord has not forsaken me, even though I denied Him three times. He does not hate me, nor is He angry with me. His heart was thinking of me. He did not mention anyone but me specifically. It is as though He was only thinking about me. 'And Peter!' 'And Peter!' These words are truly the most beautiful music in the world, the most wonderful tidings! If the Lord had only told the women to tell the disciples, I would have thought that I was no longer worthy of being His disciple and that I was no longer one of His disciples. I would not dare to go see Him. But since the Lord said, 'and Peter,' I know that He still wants me. Although I do not have the strength to go see Him, 'and Peter' encourages me to go. The message brought back by the women is true. The Lord told the angel to mention my name specifically. The Lord did not forsake me. I can still draw near to Him. Let me rise up and go see Him!"

Here was a fallen, sinful Peter, a Peter who had denied the Lord. Yet the Lord specifically mentioned him. This is the gospel! Brothers and sisters, do you know that once the Lord saves you, He saves you eternally? Although you may be discouraged, the Lord will never be discouraged. A sinful person like you may feel shame in turning back to Him, but the One you have sinned against considers that there is nothing wrong in returning to Him. Why should you keep thinking of your failure when He is not concerned with it? If the Lord can remove the veil from your face today, you will not fear Him or be afraid to come near to Him. Peter might have remembered that he said to the Lord, “If all will be stumbled because of You, I will never be stumbled” (Matt. 26:33). He might have also remembered what he said at the lake of Gennesaret, when he saw the glory of the Lord: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord” (Luke 5:8). After Peter realized his true condition, how could he dare see the Lord again? He might have remembered the Lord’s pleading: “So were you not able to watch with Me for one hour?” He might have heard the Lord’s command in his ear: “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Matt. 26:40-41). His condition was far below the Lord’s requirements. How could he dare to go see Him? But he went to meet the Lord anyway. He dared to go because of the words “and Peter.” Brothers and sisters, if you know the Lord’s intention behind the words “and Peter,” will you still turn away from Him, instead of turning toward Him? If you realize the profound significance of the words “and Peter,” you have to come near to the Lord.

Among the four Gospels, only the Gospel of Mark records this matter. Mark was a young man who followed and learned from Peter. The Gospel of Mark was dictated by Peter and written down by Mark. The words “tell His disciples and Peter” were specifically dictated by Peter. These words might not have been important to other people, but they were very important in Peter’s heart. When the Holy Spirit was writing the Bible, He specifically wanted to show us that, even though these few words were considered unimportant by Matthew, Luke, and John, they were very unforgettable and important to Peter who dictated the Gospel of Mark. “And Peter” had special meaning for him. Each remembrance of these words was sweet. Words of grace are especially memorable to the person who receives the grace.

Brothers and sisters, when you are at the Lord’s table meeting remembering the Lord, are you still afraid of God in your heart? Is there any sin separating you from God? You may have deeply wept, repented, and admitted that you disappointed the Lord. But do you dare say to the Lord, “Lord, I come to You”? Please consider this: If He was willing to go to the cross because He loved you, would He stop loving you just because you failed, fell, and backslid? Would the love He had on the cross decrease? It may be very easy for you not to love Him, draw near to Him, or return to Him; but it is impossible for Him to forget you, forsake you, or not love you. During the three days after the Lord was crucified, Peter was silent because he had fallen. But the Lord did not forget him. Therefore, if you do not have the strength to come to the Lord, as long as you are willing to believe in His words, He will give you the strength to draw near to Him. If you fall, He can make you rise up again. Although it seems that you will not be able to draw near to Him anymore, remember in faith the words “and Peter,” and you will be able to draw near to Him. When you want to come close to the Lord, but feel that you are very far from Him and have no strength to come near to Him, you need to remember the words “and Peter.” The more Peter fell, the more the Lord wanted to remember him. Although Peter dared not come too close to the Lord, the Lord’s heart attracted him and kept him from running away from Him. May you not misunderstand the Lord’s heart. If you ever hear the words “and Peter,” you should know that the Lord has not forsaken you. The Lord did not desert Peter, and neither has He forsaken you. “And Peter” means “and you”—“you” who have failed like Peter. May you see the Lord’s heart for you. If you see the Lord’s heart, you will run toward Him.

