

Friday Evening Service

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Date: 27 August 2011

Preacher: Rev Dr Malcolm Maclean

[0 : 00] We can read two passages from the New Testament, the first from Mark chapter 16 and the second from John chapter 20. Mark 16 and we can read verses 1 to 8.

When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? And looking up, they saw the stone had been rolled back. It was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

And he said to them, do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you. And they went out and fled from the tomb for trembling and astonishment and seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. And then in John chapter 20, and we can read verses 1 to 10.

Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him. So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going towards the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloth lying there, and the face cloth which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with linen cloth, but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes. And may God bless these two readings to us. We can sing again from Psalm 51, this time from the Scottish Psalter, on page 281. We'll sing verses 11 to 17, and we'll stand to sing.

Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away. Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit we stay. Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, and those that sinners are, shall then be turned unto thee. We'll stand and sing verses 11 to 17.

[4 : 09] Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit we stay. Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, lean, ye thy palsy, with thy spiritual wellbeing domine.

Then will I teach thy resc true believers, ■■■■ mort communions to teach an spiritual basis for a 100% e-mobt sonlime Missouri Lord of my salvation, Lord, be from the guilty end.

Let me then, child, might of God, sing of thy righteousness.

My close lips, O Lord, by me, let them be opened.

- [6 : 09] Then shall thy praises by my might a broadening ambition.
For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee.
Nor will thou with burnt offering that all delighted be.
A broken spirit is to God, a pleasing sacrifice, a broken hand, a contrite heart, nor thou wilt not despise.
If we would like a text for our sermon tonight, it's found in Luke chapter 24.
- [8 : 00] Luke 24 and at verse 33 and 34. But I want to refer to the two passages we read.
But Luke 24, verses 33 to 34. And they, that's the two from Emmaus, and they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.
And they found the eleven, and those who were with them gathered together, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. Simon Peter is a very remarkable character.
He's remarkable in all sorts of ways. He's remarkable in the sense that somebody from such a low background, as it were, became so prominent, not only in, amongst the people he knew, but so prominent that he affected the whole subsequent history of the world.
If somebody had seen Peter walking around Bethsaida, in the year AD 25, if somebody had said about him, that in roughly 2,000 years time, in a town 2,000 miles away, people would be thinking about him, his neighbors would have said, that will never happen.
- [9 : 52] But here we are. And of course, we are not the first to think about Peter. Right down the centuries since his life on Earth, people have been thinking about him.
Books have been written about him. So Peter is an interesting character, just from his prominence.
But he's also an interesting character from his experiences. Whatever we want to say about Peter, we can never say that his life was always even, can we?
One minute he's saying the right thing, and saying it wonderfully. As for example, when he said, when Jesus asked the question, who do people say that I am?
Peter came back with the answer, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. A marvelous expression of his insight, and his understanding faith.
- [11 : 08] A few minutes later, instead of worshiping Jesus, he starts to disagree with Jesus, and ends up being told by Jesus, get behind me, Satan.
He goes from one, the heights we might say, down to the depths. And he does it often. Chronologically, the previous time that he has seen in the Bible, before the chapters we read, he's denying Jesus.
He's denying Jesus. And he's not denying Jesus quietly, or kind of defensively, but he's denying Jesus vehemently.
We know what happened to him, when these three people, round the fire in the high priest's house, said to him, you know Jesus. He denied it with oaths and courage, oaths and curses.
We want to put it this way, we can say he denied Jesus, with as much enthusiasm, as the occasions when he served him.
- [12 : 38] Peter did nothing half-heartedly. And that makes him a very fascinating character. Because people who are enthusiastic, well, they become leaders, don't they?
Peter here is obviously in a very difficult situation spiritually.
And what happened to him on this first Lord's Day, has got lessons for us. Because we may find ourselves in dark situations.

Peter's denial of Jesus, he didn't deny Jesus, because he was necessarily afraid.

Because shortly before he denied him, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Peter was quite prepared to fight the soldiers.

[13 : 53] And we know that he had a sword with him, and he was using that sword, and he actually was, as we know, he was waving it about, and waving it about so erratically that he cut off the high priest's servant's ear.

But whatever we say about him, we can't say he was afraid, can we, there in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was quite prepared to take on the soldiers.

And yet, as we know, when he's sitting round a fire, when the servant girl and the other servants speak to him, some or other his courage leaves them.

And he denies Jesus. But, he didn't merely run away. He did go out.

But he went out weeping. He went out weeping bitterly. And of course, the reason, as we know, why he was weeping, as Luke tells us, is because when he denied Jesus the third time, Jesus turned and looked at him.

[15 : 13] And as he saw the eyes of Jesus, looking at him, Peter wept. And I'm sure the, the days between that Friday evening, and the next Sunday morning, sorry, the Thursday evening, and the Sunday morning, Peter's soul was in a sad way.

Evidently, he made his way to go to John. And there's some lessons in that, and we'll think about that later on. So when the Lord's day comes, he's in John's house.

The ladies, who we meet first of all, beginning of Mark 16, they know he's with John. Because they don't ask the angel, where is he?

When the angel says to them, go and tell Peter, they don't ask, where is Peter? So they know where he is. So at some stage, during these three days, Peter has, he retained contact with the disciples, and he's with John.

And he's with John. What marks them all, of course, the woman, and the, James and John, and no doubt the other disciples, what marks them all, as that first Lord's day dawns, is that they're not expecting anything.

[16 : 54] It's quite remarkable, isn't it? They're not expecting anything. The woman, they're going to the tomb.

And they're going to the tomb to complete the anointing of the body of Jesus that had been done rapidly when he was taken down from the cross.

They're not going to the tomb expecting to find him alive. They're going to the tomb expecting him to be still there, and to be still dead. Their faith.

Well, judge from our perspective, and of course, we've got to be very careful about our perspectives. But judge from our perspective, their faith is almost gone.

But there's something in these ladies that's still alive. And it's very important that this was alive in them. And what was alive in their souls was love to Jesus.

[18 : 18] Circumstances had happened to them that they couldn't understand. They found themselves in a predicament that their faith couldn't explain. If they had listened to Jesus properly, of course, they'd have known what was going to happen.

But who are we to point the finger at them regarding listening to Jesus? Do you not have to say to the two on the way to Emmaus?

They said in a very gentle way, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. And could you not say something similar to us?

And what comfort can we get in such situations? Because there is comfort in such situations. And these ladies here show us what it is. And it is love.

And that was their love. And what does Jesus look for?

What did he ask Peter? We know what he asked him. Three times. Do you love me? What is a Christian? What is a Christian?

Just as much as when everything is bright. Love. Love. In the heart of a believer. Cannot die. And here come these ladies. And they're going to do something for the one they love. And because they did something for the one they love.

and Mik¹ oportunos thrions, the risen Christ appeared and blessed them. Love, choose children, and we will, zot's friends. Never love, choose children, and Lord's Say!

[22 : 21] Is that not what we're doing this weekend? What is a communion season? A communion season is an opportunity to express love to Jesus Christ.

And he says there in verse 7 of Mark 16, Go tell his disciples, And Peter. I wonder why the disciples said, And Peter.

Because the other three gospel writers don't tell us this. Only Mark says these words, And Peter. One reason may be that The belief that's been around since the days of the early church, That behind the gospel of Mark, Is Peter himself.

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And include in it And Peter. What is the message of the gospel of Mark?

When authors come towards the conclusion of their books, They try and summarize what they've been saying. So what does Ann Peter tell us About the theme of Mark's book?

[25 : 41] Well, the theme of Mark's book is it not That the one he's writing about, That's Jesus. That he is good to failures.

Who's the biggest failure In the book of Mark? It's Peter. It's Peter. After all, Peter's the one who said, I'll never deny you.

What does the author of the gospel Of the good news about Jesus Have to say about Peter the failure?

Well, what he's got to say about him is That Jesus Is good to failures. I wonder who's the biggest failure here.

I hope each one of us When answer to that question Just looked in the mirror. But as we look at the mirror And see ourselves And we see our failures, How are we to see ourselves In the sense of how Jesus looks at us?

[27 : 08] You know, pride can show itself In all sorts of ways. And one of the most common ways In which pride shows itself Is its reluctance To accept the wonder Of God's attitude Towards failures.

Peter fell badly. There's no doubt about that.

But his fall, His failures Didn't stop Jesus loving him.

And throughout these three dark days Between Peter's denial And this first Lord's day Whatever Peter thought And we'll think about that in a minute Whatever Peter thought Jesus loved him.

Jesus loved him. Jesus loved him. Jesus loved him. For his failing followers Is not built upon their loyalty.

[28 : 39] When they are loyal He does bless them. But he blesses them When they're loyal Because he loves them.

When they fail He works to bring them back to himself And blesses them And he blesses them For the same reason Because he loves them.

Earlier we asked the question What is a Christian? He's one who loves Jesus.

We can ask another question What is the Savior? He's the one who loves sinners.

Who loves failure. And maybe some of you Are saying to yourself Perhaps a lot of you Are saying to yourselves I've failed Jesus again.

[30 : 01] Well if that's the case That's normal In the Christian life. We all fail.

But what's important When we do fail Is that we remember What Jesus does. There's no Christian merit In us squirming In unbelief.

But when we find ourselves Having failed again And when we sense All the disappointment That goes along with that. We have to remind ourselves That Jesus is the same Yesterday, today and forever.

So as we come to this communion weekend Who's it for? It's for failures. Who was at the first Lord's table?

Well we know who they were Peter and Andrew And James and John And Philip And the rest of them And what marked all of them On that first occasion?

[31 : 17] Which one of them Was full of Intelligent zeal For their master On that evening? Not one of them What did Jesus say to them?

With desire Have I desired to eat this Supper with you Before I suffer? He knew all of them Perhaps apart from John We're going to deny him Yet The loving heart of Jesus Wanted to be with them He wanted to be with those Who had failed him And you may say to yourself Would Jesus want to be with me Having failed him again?

And you may conclude Well Probably I don't know But the answer in God's word is Jesus will be with you Because In one sense There's something that we share With that first Lord's table None of us are apostles But there's one thing that we share with it They were failures We are failure So there's Peter And Peter Now Peter I'm sure spent these three days Repenting He would have been Thinking over what he had done And no doubt He was very sad

How could I Says Peter to himself How could I Have said such terrible things About Jesus?

And rightly so That should have made him sad Should have made him more than sad Should have made him ashamed And no doubt he was ashamed As he sits there in John's house And John it seems Hasn't denied Jesus I mean John went into the high priest's house And he didn't deny Jesus there John remained at the cross When the others had run away And there's Peter And he's got to look at John all the time In this Three days And he looks at John And he sees somebody who hasn't failed The way that Peter has failed And no doubt Poor Peter felt the shame And perhaps we can look at others And we can say Well they haven't done what we've done But you know If they make us feel small There's something wrong with them

[34 : 37] I don't think John Made Peter Feel small Peter Perhaps Got comfort From what Jesus said to him Because after all Jesus had said to him You know you're going to go through A very sifting time Peter The devil's desire to have you That he may sift you as wheat And poor Peter's Being sifted But perhaps he remembered What Jesus had also said In that occasion When you're restored You'll strengthen your brothers Can Peter the failure Strengthen his brothers Well of course he did Because As the verse we took for our text says When the two of me and me

Got back to the To the upper room Where the disciples were They found all these disciples happy They had left them that morning And they were all sad and depressed And they were saying Some women have said he's alive But we don't believe them But they come back Later that day And they see the disciples And the disciples have changed And they're now full of enthusiasm About The risen Resurrection of Jesus And they haven't The disciples of the group Haven't yet seen Jesus But they now believe He's alive And why do they believe He's alive?

Because of the change In Peter The failure The Lord has appeared To Simon And even on that first Lord's day Peter who had failed so badly Already begins To fulfill the promise of Jesus That he would strengthen his brothers And you may say to yourself What can I do for others?

I've made such a mess of things Do you know what the answer to that question is? Stop looking at yourself But instead Look to God's promises God's promise to Peter was Yes, you're going to be sifted Yes, you're going to fail But yes You're going to strengthen your brothers One very good way Of strengthening your brothers Of course This weekend Is to go to the Lord's table Not just to strengthen yourself But to strengthen your brothers So Peter's No doubt Repenting Very deeply And as he's in the middle Of his repentance A knock comes to the door Well perhaps

She didn't even knock She probably burst in Mary Magdalene Arise at their house And she's full of enthusiasm They've taken away Him of the Lord She says There in John chapter 20 They've taken the Lord Out of the tomb We do not know Where they have laid him You know Verse 2 of John 20 Tells us that she ran She's running To convey a message And yet When she comes To utter the message She says I don't know where he is But why does she run To tell Peter and John that Well she ran No doubt Because the angel Had told her to do it And love Recognizes

[38 : 55] Authority It recognizes The authority Of God And if God Says to do something And in saying To do it There will be a benefit To those who will be The recipients Of the message Then whether or not We understand The message Is irrelevant Our task Is to pass on The message And that's what Mary did here She Passed on this message To Peter and John Saying The tomb is empty She ran No doubt Because she loved them She loved Peter And sensed There was some way Somehow or other That this message She was conveying This message of encouragement That she was giving to them Would somehow Help them Although she didn't know How it would help them

And of course The communion season Is a time for Mutual encouragement You see If one of you Doesn't encourage Someone else You're failing If you don't intend To encourage Other Christians What are you doing?

Mary Magdalene Wanted to encourage And she ran To pass on this message And when Peter And John And when Peter and John Heard it They started running And they ran To the tomb Wasn't much of a race Was it?

Because John The younger one He ran Peter Outran Peter And got there first There's something There's a very nice Picture here Of who failures Should run with We would say Wouldn't we In everyday life That those who Make a mess of things Well it's probably Not best for them To be put beside The person That doesn't Make a mess And as we Mentioned earlier John has been Faithful Through it all And yet Peter the failure Is able to run Alongside John The devoted Disciple And I think There's a very Important lesson There And I think

It's stressed In verse 2 Of John 20 Where John Is described As the one Whom Jesus loved John also loved Jesus And when A Christian Finds himself Making a mess Of things The person That he should Go closest to Is the one That clearly Shows They love Jesus It's a very Challenging question To ask ourselves Do failures Like to walk Beside you Do failures Like to walk

[42 : 57] Beside you Peter Had no problem Running beside John He would have had a problem Running beside Thomas Thomas Because Thomas Well We know What he was like This first Lord's day He was Disagreeable And finding Fault In everything It would not Done poor Peter much Good to run Beside Thomas He ran Beside John And they get To the tomb And It so often Happens Doesn't it The one Who we think Needs the blessing The most Doesn't get it We would have

Thought well Here's Peter And John The one Who should get The blessing Here at the tomb Should be Peter They both See the same Things They both See the empty Tomb They both See the Cloth lying There They both Look in And see it And we're told About John In verse 8 That when he Went in He saw And believed The one Who we might Say Didn't need As much Help As the other As Peter He got it And poor Peter Well He has to Go home Again Was Peter

Discovered I don't Know As John Walks home Beside Peter And John Says I see it All now And poor Peter Saying to Himself Well I don't See anything Perhaps You came to Church last Night Somebody Else Who has Came outside And said They enjoyed It greatly You may Have said To yourself I don't Know what They mean What did Peter have To learn From this Situation He had to

Get beyond Men He had to Get beyond John John It had Been very Wise of Peter to Go to John's House It had Been very Wise of Peter to Stay with John But there Comes a Moment we Have to Get beyond John And what Happened to Peter when he Got beyond John I read it in Our text from Chapter Luke From the Gospel Luke So in Chapter 24 He had a Meeting with Jesus The Lord Appeared to Simon We're not Told a Single thing About that Meeting And of Course that Tells us That it's Quite Appropriate Not to Go into Details About what Meetings with Jesus are Like There are

Secrets Between Jesus And his People Of course One Reason Perhaps Why we're Not told About it Is Because Words Can't Describe It What Words Can Possibly Describe The Meeting Between A Complete Failure And a Perfect Saviour No doubt Peter In his Enthusiastic Way Would Pour out Words Of Repentance And Jesus In his Own Loving Manner Would Give to Peter Far More Assurance Than he Needed And Peter Came away From that Private Meeting With Jesus A Forgiven A Changed Man

[48 : 14] But where Did he Go Where did Restored Peter Go He Went To the Disciples If Peter Had Been Restored By Jesus And Decided To go Off By Himself He Would Have Been Committing Another Act Of Failure That Peter Having Experienced Personally The Restoring Grace Of Jesus Went To the Other Failures And By Doing So He Brought Blessing To the Other Failures

And His Assurance Somehow Rather Help Them Has The Lord Been Good To You And Are You Keeping It To Your Cell That's Wrong If The Lord Has Saved You Your Responsibility Is To Tell That He Has Done It If The Lord Has Restored You Join The Other Failures John Bunyan In One Of His Books Says That It's A Great Blessing For The Church To Know That Someone Has Been Restored Herman■■■■■

When we sing Psalm 23, He restores my soul, we are telling others that Jesus is gracious.

When we do it the first time, we tell them that He's gracious. When we do it for the umpteenth time, we tell them that He's gracious.

This weekend, we've got an opportunity, not of saying anything about ourselves, apart from the fact that we're very like Simon Peter.

[51 : 04] We've got the opportunity of saying to one another, how gracious Jesus is. And that's what the Lord's table is for.

May God bless these thoughts to us. Thank you. We'll conclude by singing from Psalm 65.

Psalm 65 from Sing Psalms on page 82. We'll sing verses 1 to 4.

Psalm 65 on page 82, verses 1 to 4. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near.

You hear us when we pray. We'll stand and sing verses 1 to 4. When Zion praise awaits you, Lord. When Zion praise awaits you, Lord.

[52 : 22] To you our vows will pay. To you our vows will come near.

You hear us when we pray. When we met man, O Lord. You are vows away.

and filled the water stream. You pardoned all our trespasses and watched our till our way.

I bless the cross to choose and bring within your course of grace.

We're filled with blessings in your hearts, in your most holy ways.

[53 : 36] With awesome deeds of righteousness you answer us, O God, our Saviour, hope of fire the seas and all the earth have brought.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.