

AND PETER, Watchman Nee

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:1-7

<sup>1</sup>And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. <sup>3</sup>And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

<sup>4</sup>And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. <sup>5</sup>And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. <sup>6</sup>And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

In the closing chapter of Mark's Gospel we are told that very early on the first day of the week several women came to the tomb where Jesus had been buried bringing with them spices to anoint Him, when they were greeted by an angel who said: "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here ... But go, tell his disciples and Peter." The tears start to our eyes unbidden when we read these last two words "and Peter".

Why does the Lord not single out John, the beloved disciple, for special mention, or Thomas the doubter? Why single out Peter from all the others? Because Peter had denied Him. Peter was guilty of an offence so grave that he might well question his standing with the Lord. Had not the Lord Himself solemnly warned His disciples: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"?

Suppose you had been Peter, how would you have felt if you had denied the Lord? Might you not have thought thoughts like these? -- I've actually committed that awful sin. I, Peter, who was a companion of the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration; I, Peter, who was a companion of His in the garden of Gethsemane; I've denied Him. There's no more of the Lord's company for me, I'm done for! And to think the Lord warned me beforehand and I didn't believe Him! I didn't believe I could ever have done such a dastardly deed. I, Peter, a close companion of the Lord, have denied Him -- and before a servant-girl! How could I? And I've not just denied Him once; I've denied Him three times; and I've denied Him with oaths and curses -- I, Peter, who had known and confessed Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; I, Peter, who had protested that I could never forsake Him and would even willingly lay down my life for Him. And He knew that I had denied Him; in the judgment-hall He turned and looked at me. How I have wept since! But what's the use of tears? They can't undo that sin. I, Peter, have denied the Lord.

How active Peter's memory must have been recalling the grim events of the past day or two! And in the lurid light of the recent past, how many details of the less recent past must have shown up in dark relief. Could he ever forget? No, never. Peter could never forget; but the risen Lord could dispel all his fears and forebodings with a word. Yes, Peter had sinned, but the Lord had sent a special message to assure him that he was still the object of His tender love.

"Go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him." The disciples were going to see the Lord, and Peter was going with them. Peter was going to look into the face of the One he had denied, and without any lurking shadow from the past to dim his vision. That short, simple message from the Lord had transformed the whole outlook. It told Peter that the yawning gulf between him and his Lord had been spanned by Love.

Only one out of the four Gospels records the words "and Peter". Have you noticed which Gospel records them? Mark. Yes, Mark recorded them; but Mark was closely associated with Peter, so closely associated that some think he was Peter's amanuensis. Mark had learned much from Peter concerning the Lord, and in all probability it was from his lips that he heard these words, for they must have been indelibly written in Peter's heart.

Brothers and Sisters, when you approach the Lord's table does the memory of past shortcomings sweep over you and fill you with fear? You have confessed your sins; you have wept bitter tears of remorse; you have truly repented; but an awful sense of distance between you and the Lord still remains and threatens to engulf you. Don't try to bridge the distance; leave that to Him Whose love could reach out to Peter and draw him out of the chilly solitude of his sin-consciousness into the warmth of intimate fellowship with Himself. Peter might have remained out in the darkness weeping bitterly had not the Lord sent that special message of love -- "Go, tell my disciples and Peter."

The word concerning Peter has been put on record for you who are conscious of sin as Peter was. Do not let your lack of love for the Lord keep you at a distance from Him, but open your heart to His love that knows no distance. Do not spurn His grace by yielding to the temptation to remember your sins, but listen to His loving plea that you remember Him.