

“The Incredible Lightness Of Grace”

I Peter 5: 6-11

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This past week I focused on the lives of two followers of Jesus - Peter and Judas. Both saw God’s power and and hoped in the salvation of Israel. Both betrayed their Lord and God. Both were told by Jesus ahead of time they would betray him. Judas committed suicide; Peter was crucified upside down. Judas is known through the centuries as a traitor; Peter is known as a saint. What made the difference? Was it destiny or choice? Was the shame and sorrow in one greater than the other when they saw what they did?

I don’t really know the answer to these questions. Both made choices. Judas hung himself; Peter shamefully ran away. What we do know is Peter stayed alive long enough to encounter the greatest miracle of all - God’s restoring grace. If you remember, Peter went back to fishing when the resurrected Christ met him by the lake. Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” in response to Peter’s three time denial of him. Then Jesus restored Peter’s life back to him in a stronger way and gave him his future direction.

God’s grace has a way of healing like nothing else can. It produces a lightness inside our spirits and emotions that makes us see clearly and takes away all the heaviness of guilt, shame, sin, and sickness. Grace does not remove the past. It takes away the pain of the past and helps us take God’s lessons from the past into the future. God’s grace is His alone to impart; however, Scripture says it is always available if we humble ourselves and ask.

Knowing Peter’s experience, we can understand why he said what he did in his letter. *“If you will humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in his good time **he will lift you up**. Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you...After you have suffered a little while, our God...**will come and pick you up**, and set you firmly in place, and make you stronger than ever....”* There is no hurt, sin, or betrayal that God’s grace cannot take away and make us light, “see the light”, and light-hearted again. Have a week of lightness.