

Sermon Series: "Easter Stories for Modern Times"—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN— 4/25/10

Text: "Time to live in your forgiveness and up to your calling"

Text: John 21:15-19

Intro.: *Illus.: Grace-encouraged Well-lived Life*

Theme: When confronting our fallenness, we must stand in the power and forgiveness of Jesus' resurrection and allow it to embolden us to press forward with clear conscience.

### ***If Jesus never rose from the dead and was the Lord of past sins. . .***

- We would live in regret over our past – which is literally killing us—physically and eternally
  1. Peter jumps into the water, coat and all
  2. What at-risk things do we do because *we think transactionally not transformationally*
  3. *"For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death." 2 Corinthians 7:10*
- We would live with no peace in the present
  1. Peter was trying to re-find his life—even by going fishing again—but was not at peace
  2. *If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. . .but now Christ has been raised from the dead. He will become first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again."*  
*1 Corinthians 15:17, 20*
- We would live with agonizing fear of the future
  1. **ILL.: LIVING IN THE PAST**
  2. I am sure that Peter thought that he had forfeited his future apostleship because of his past denial
  3. What is the bottom line of your fears—failure of the past—the great equalize=death=no respecter of what you did or accomplished---fear of no lasting legacy (why we pour selves into jobs, kids, etc.)

### ***If Jesus is the Lord of our past. . .***

- We can live "guilt free" by his death and resurrection
  1. **ILL.: OVERCOMING YOUR PAST**
  2. Three times Jesus revisited the denial so that Peter was assured Jesus did the reconciling and nothing left
  3. We can stop trying to master our past and let Jesus be Lord because God does the declaring for Jesus' sake
  4. *"He was handed over to death for our sins, and he was raised so that we might be declared "no guilty." Romans 4:25*
  5. When we live in the confidence of God-given grace, we can stop manipulating (lording) others with guilt
- We live for Jesus as a response not as an obligation
  1. Interesting word exchange between Jesus and Peter (vss. 15-17)
    - a. Jesus says, "**Are you committed to me (Love) more than these friends** (disciples)?" and Peter says lukewarmly, "**You know that I am your friend (like)**"
    - b. Jesus says, "**Are you committed to me (love) more than just friendship?**" and Peter says, "**You know that I am your friend (like)**"
    - c. Jesus says, "**Are you my friend?** (*Willing to give up your life for his friend. John 15:13*) and Peter is grieved at Jesus for third question, "**you know that I am your friend (like)!**"
  2. Do you have a "**like**" relationship with Jesus or are you **in love** with Jesus?
- We can live a life of restoration not penance
  1. **ILL.: RESTORATION**
  2. Not living a life of **transaction** with Jesus; rather living a life **transformed** by Jesus
    - a. Do you serve him out of obligation, afraid of his power, or do we submit ourselves to Him, his Word, and his righteousness, because you respect his authoritative love?
    - b. *"I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me." John 15:15*
  3. Following Jesus' lead by feeding and mentoring others (selfless in service) because you are well fed
    - a. *How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You— to dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. Psalm 65:4*

### **Grace-encouraged Well-lived Life**

In his best-selling book *The Reason for God*, Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in Manhattan, shares the story of a woman in his congregation who was learning how the grace extended to us through Christ's work on the cross can actually be more challenging than religion. He writes:

*Some years ago I met with a woman who began coming to church at Redeemer and had never before heard a distinction drawn between the gospel and religion [i.e. the distinction between grace and what is often a works-based righteousness]. She had always heard that God accepts us only if we are good enough. She said that the new message was scary. I asked why it was scary and she replied: If I was saved by my good works then there would be a limit to what God could ask of me or put me through. I would be like a taxpayer with "rights"—I would have done my duty and now I would deserve a certain quality of life. But if I am a sinner saved by grace—then there's nothing he cannot ask of me." She understood the dynamic of grace and gratitude. If when you have lost all fear of punishment you also lose all incentive to live a good, unselfish life, then the only incentive you ever had to live a decent life was fear. This woman could see immediately that the wonderful-beyond-belief teaching of salvation by sheer grace had an edge to it. She knew that if she was a sinner saved by grace, she was (if anything) more subject to the sovereign Lordship of God. She knew that if Jesus really had done all this for her, she would not be her own. She would joyfully, gratefully belong to Jesus, who provided all this for her at infinite cost to himself. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God* (Riverhead Books, 2008), pp. 189-190*

### **Living in the PAST**

One man said to his friend: "Say, you look depressed.

What are you thinking about?"

"My future," was the quick answer.

"What makes it look so hopeless?"

"My past."

### **Overcoming the PAST**

I wish there were some wonderful place called the Land of Beginning Again, Where all of our past mistakes and heartaches, And all of our poor selfish grief, Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door And never be put on again. **Putting Your Past Behind You, E. Lutzer, Here's Life, 1990, p.13ff**

### **Restoration**

J. Stuart Holden tells of an old Scottish mansion close to where he had his little summer home. The walls of one room were filled with sketches made by distinguished artists. The practice began after a pitcher of soda water was accidentally spilled on a freshly decorated wall and left an unsightly stain. At the time, a noted artist, Lord Landseer, was a guest in the house. One day when the family went out to the moors, he stayed behind. With a few masterful strokes of a piece of charcoal, that ugly spot became the outline of a beautiful waterfall, bordered by trees and wildlife. He turned that disfigured wall into one of his most successful depictions of Highland life. Swindoll, *The Quest For Character*, Multnomah, p. 49ff

### **John 21:15-19**

<sup>15</sup>After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than your relationship with these other disciples?"

Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I like you."

Jesus told him, "Feed my lambs."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus asked him again, a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I like you."

Jesus told him, "Shepherd my sheep."

<sup>17</sup>Jesus asked him a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you like me?"

Peter felt sad because Jesus had asked him a third time, "Do you like me?" So Peter said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I like you."

Jesus told him, "Feed my sheep."

<sup>18</sup>I can guarantee this truth: When you were young, you would get ready to go where you wanted. But when you're old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will get you ready to take you where you don't want to go." <sup>19</sup>Jesus said this to show by what kind of death Peter would bring glory to God. After saying this, Jesus told Peter, "Follow me!" [GW]