

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Vision 2:28 - Week of November 23

Introduction

Are there days you feel like stepping into the shadows? You are not alone. Life can be discouraging. Often the disappointments range from saying or doing something stupid, letting someone down, being let down by someone you *thought* had your back, unwittingly forgetting a special appointment, or allowing feelings of failure to send us into a downward spiral. We can hear negative voices in our head and bench ourselves, step into shadow land and hide. The reality is, today is the day to move out of 'shadow living' and trust Jesus – who is strong, knows our weakness and will not give up on us – to help us with the move.

Background

We think of Simon Peter, the disciple who first confessed Jesus as "... Messiah, the Son of the living God" and how in response to his confession, Jesus gives Simon son of John a new name: 'Rock' *Petrus* (Matthew 16:15-18). However, after Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane, the disciples are fearful, and in the courtyard of Caiaphas, Peter is being asked if he knows Jesus. How does he respond to their accusations? What happens? How could Peter have spiraled down to shadow-dweller? Of all the disciples, no one would have ever thought Peter would *three times* deny his Rabbi, the Lord Jesus. Gethsemane reveals Peter's grief and bewilderment—**Read Luke 22:39-53**, and accusations in Caiaphas' courtyard reveal Peter's weakness—**Read Luke 22:54-62**.

Discussion:

- Have you ever denied your Lord and Savior through your words or actions? When have you become discouraged to the point of hiding out in shame and fear?
- Although Jesus repeatedly warned his disciples about his Kingdom *not* being of this world, the twelve could not grasp Salvation's bigger picture. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus said to Pontius Pilate: "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). What keeps us from seeing Salvation's bigger picture and Christ's eternal heavenly Kingdom?
- In what ways can even the Resurrection of Jesus be head knowledge instead of heart knowledge?

Other Thoughts

Though Peter sees the empty tomb, hears the message of Mary of Magdala: "I have seen the risen Lord!" (John 20:1-10, 18) ... even sees the resurrected Lord (John 20:19-23), Peter is still discouraged. Scripture says that Simon Peter went back to fishing (John 21:3). In fact, several of the disciples go fishing. What else are they to do; this is what they had known prior to Jesus. They fish all night but catch nothing. Discouragement compounds. However, at dawn, someone calls to them from shore: "Fellows, have you caught any fish?"

Read John 21:6-17

Of course, the disciples had not caught any fish. Three years prior, they had been called to be *fishers of men*, not fish (Luke 5:10-11). Yet, the Lord's call is not revoked. Friend, Christ may be fine-tuning the call over your life, even preparing to give you *new* marching orders. But he has not forgotten his initial invitation to which you once responded in obedience! How do you get out of the shadows? Avail yourself to the Lord all over again, even if it means jumping into chilly waters and swimming to where the risen Jesus is standing... actually, cooking breakfast for you.

Here is Jesus with breakfast waiting for the disciples on the shore "... fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread" (John 21:9). The Lord asks Peter to bring some of the miracle catch. How precious is that! Perhaps the charcoal fire reminds Peter of the night in Caiaphas' courtyard when accusers pressed him by another charcoal fire (John 18:15-18, 25-27). But this a new day on the shores of Galilee and Jesus is here. Jesus knows Peter is in the shadows, so the Lord goes to where Peter is in his spirit, calls him *Simon son of John* and asks ... "Do you love me?" ... for Jesus has special work for Peter in the days ahead.

Read Acts 2:14-21, 38-41

In Closing—

Simon son of John becomes *Petrus* the Rock on the day of Pentecost. The Lord Jesus pours out His Holy Spirit upon Simon Peter and Peter's preaching brings in a catch of 3,000+ souls for the Kingdom of Christ. How do we get out of the shadows? Perhaps much like Peter, you feel like you have hurt the Lord by your actions or words. But the Lord still loves you. Spend some time with him *alone* on the shores of Galilee. Allow him to take you back to where he first called you by your new name. Express your heart to the Lord. Tell him you don't want to be a shadow-dweller any longer. Hear Peter's words as an older, seasoned disciple (apostle!) of our Lord—

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay... So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy" (1 Peter 1:3-4, 14-15).

Read together the Plain Truth and close in a time of prayer and thanksgiving.

Plain Truth:

Vision 2:28 calls us out of the shadows into the light of sacrificial living for Christ.



**Text: Matthew 16:16-18, Luke 22:55-62, John 21:12-17,
Acts 2:14-21, 38-41, I Peter 1:3, 14-25**

Plain Truth

Vision 2:28 calls us out of the _____
into the light of _____ living
for _____.

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

- November 23: Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 28:11
- November 24: Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 28:12-13
- November 25: Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14
- November 26: Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 28:15-16
- November 27: Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18
- November 28: Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 28:19-20
- November 29: Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 28:21-22

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