

Forgiveness- a gift that everyone needs. March 16, 2015

Jesus gave us a blueprint to follow for forgiving those who have wronged us. When I think of the Scriptures that address this topic, I always think of Jesus as He attempts to prepare his disciples for the night wherein He will be arrested and condemned to die.

In Mark 14:13 the disciples asked Jesus where he wanted them to go and prepare that they might eat the Passover together. Jesus sent two of the men out in the city and told them to follow the man that they saw carrying a pitcher of water. When he entered the house the two men was to say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us. The disciples went out and when they entered the city, they found it just as Jesus said they would and they prepared the Passover.

Shortly after they entered the room, they sat and ate and Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eat with Me will betray Me." As soon as the words were spoken, the disciples began to be sorrowful and one by one asked, "Is it I?" Jesus told them that it was one of the 12 who would dip in the dish with him. Jesus let it be known that the Scriptures concerning his death would be fulfilled, but it would have been better for the person who betrayed him if he had never been born. See verse 21.

After the Passover the group sung a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Judas had slipped out into the night as soon as Jesus told him to go and do what he had planned to do. Jesus again spoke to the disciples and warned them that all of them would stumble because of Him this very night, for it is written, "I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." Verse 28 says "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee" Peter spoke up and said "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not." Jesus told him that that very day, that very night before the rooster crowed twice, Peter would deny him 3 times. But Peter spoke more passionately, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" They all said likewise. See Luke 22:31 "Satan desires to sift you as wheat."

If you read the account, you will notice that they all went to Gethsemane with the exception of Judas, and Jesus asked them to sit there while he prayed. He took Peter, James and John with Him and he became distressed and deeply troubled. He revealed to them that his soul was exceedingly sorrowful even to death. He asked them to stay and watch. He went further and prayed that if there was any other way, to remove this cup from him. Nevertheless, he wasn't looking for his own will, but his Father's will.

He came back and found them sleeping and He asked Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went again and prayed and when he returned, they were once again asleep. He asked again, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough for the hour has come."

Jesus was betrayed by Judas with a kiss and the soldiers led Jesus away to be brought before the high priest and Sanhedrin. Verse 54 says that Peter followed Him at a distance right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself. He could observe the abuse and the questioning of his master and he saw them spit on Jesus and he watched as they condemned him to death. They blindfolded him and beat him and scoffed at him commanding him to prophecy and the officers struck him with the palms of their hands. Peter was able to observe the terrible crimes that were being committed against his master.

One of the servant girls watched Peter as he warmed himself by the fire. She looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter denied it saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying. And he went out on the porch and a rooster crowed. The same servant girl saw him again and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." But he denied it again. A little while later some people who stood by said, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean and your speech shows it." Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak." A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind "Before the rooster crows twice you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

In Luke 22:60 & 61, it says that even as Peter was speaking, the rooster crowed and the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord and how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus was crucified and placed in a rich man's tomb. When the women came to the tomb bringing spices so they could anoint him, they encountered an angel who told them that Jesus had risen for he was not dead. Mark 16:7 tells us that the angel gave instruction for the women to go tell the Lord's disciples and Peter that He was going to go before them into Galilee and there they would see Him just as He had told them. Look at John 21 and read the story of Peter and other disciples. Peter said, "I am going fishing." They answered, "We are going with you." They fished all night and didn't catch one fish. When morning came, Jesus stood on the shore but the disciples didn't know it was Him. Jesus asked "Children, have you any meat?" They answered "No" Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they would find some. They did as they were told and they couldn't haul in the nets for they were so full of fish. The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter put on his outer garment and plunged into the sea. The rest of the disciples came to shore in the boat. They saw some fire of coals there and fish laid on it and bread. There were 153 fish in the net yet it didn't break. Jesus invited them to come and eat breakfast.

After they had eaten, Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" Peter said, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." He said, "Feed my Lambs"

A second time, Jesus asked, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter said, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

The third time, Jesus asked, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because Jesus asked the third time if he loved him. Peter replied, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you". Jesus said to him "Feed my sheep." He then told Peter that there would come a day when he would glorify God by being crucified for the gospel's sake and when He had spoken these words, He said to him, "Follow Me."

Jesus restored Peter by building a fire and allowing Peter the opportunity to speak the words that were in his heart. "Yes, Jesus, I love you!" And Jesus told him that he was being called to take care of the people who would believe on Him through the teachings of the disciples. Thus Peter was forgiven and on the day of Pentecost, he was baptized with the Holy Ghost and with Holy boldness, he stood and declared the truth of God's word and 3000 souls were added to the church that day. See Acts 2:14-41. Jesus Christ is able to forgive, restore, and rebuild lives that have been shattered by sin and shame. He can put families back together and cause the love of Christ to heal and mend so that new memories can replace the ugly scars that have been made from the trials of life. Trust God and believe. He can do more for us than we can ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)