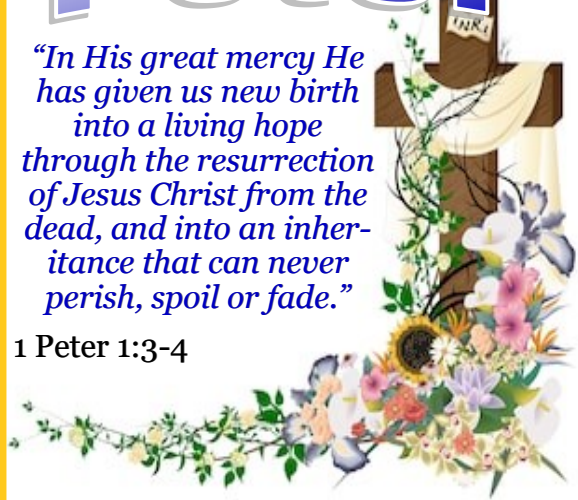


Peter

"In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."

1 Peter 1:3-4



"After The Resurrection"

"I was just a simple fisherman until Jesus called me to be a 'Fisher of Men.' I didn't even fully understand what a 'fisher of men' was until after Jesus had died on the cross and arose from the dead. Sure, I wanted to serve Him, but I kept making foolish mistakes. I was confused as to how a man born on this earth could be a Heavenly King and not a king of the people.

"I had been to the mountain top. I knew Jesus as a personal friend and Lord. I was sure that he was the Messiah. I had everything going for me, but I still had that human weakness. Maybe I was really afraid for my life, deep down. I felt sure the authorities were going to kill Jesus. I didn't know why exactly. I knew that many people were following his teaching. I may have been so stupid in my humanness to think that if I pretended I didn't know him, I wouldn't be killed with him.

"When we were in the garden with Christ and the authorities came to get him, I was the foolish enough and confused enough to draw my sword and attack the servant of the high priest and Christ commanded me to put the sword away.

"On the third day after they had buried Christ, we were all still in shock as to what happened. We believed Jesus was someone special. We had seen him perform miracles and when we recalled what He had told us, we began to think that truly He was the long awaited Messiah. We saw Him bring other people back from the dead including Lazarus, just a few days before. Why couldn't he have prevented all of this? Then we saw the women who had gone to the grave running towards us. Mary Magdalene was the spokeswoman and she told us that an angel had spoken to them at the grave and told *them* 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.'

"We immediately started running. John and I got there first and I went right into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the cloth they had wrapped around his head. John went in also. What were we supposed to think? The angel had said Jesus was going to Galilee and we would see him there. Even though he was not there, we questioned ourselves. Had his body been stolen and the

"The greatest waste, which cannot be recycled or reclaimed is our waste of time that God has given us each day." - Billy Graham



authorities wanted us to gather in Galilee so they could kill us also? Had he really risen from the dead as he had told us? We didn't understand anything. Many times I had told Jesus that I believed, and there were certainly many times during the last few days that I had denied knowing him at all. I said I had never seen him.

"We went to Galilee and gathered with the other disciples and some other loyal followers in a room that we secured because we were afraid of those who had killed him. We feared the Jewish leaders. Then Jesus appeared through the wall and stood before us. He showed us the wounds in his hands from the nails and he showed us his pierced side. We believed but still didn't know what to do.

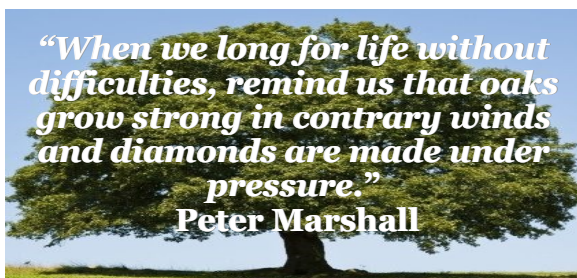
"One day after we had met with Christ and still didn't know where He was, I said to the other disciples 'I'm going fishing.' Some of the other disciples went with me. The fish weren't biting and then a figure appeared on the shore and asked 'Fellows, have you caught any fish?' We replied we had not. He told us to throw out our nets

on the right-hand side of the boat. There were so many fish we couldn't haul in the net! John told me it was Jesus on the shore. I jumped into the water and swam to shore. The others brought in the boat; Jesus already had a fire going. He told me to get some fish from the net and we had breakfast. We knew it was Jesus but we were afraid to tell each other. We were still so confused as to exactly what had happened when we knew that He had been dead and was then alive. He seemed to speak to us in riddles when we did see him.

"Jesus spoke to me as we were on the shore. He asked '*Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?*' '*Yes, Lord,*' I replied, '*you know I love you.*' John 21:15-17 Three times he asked me. He kept telling me to take care and feed his sheep. I wondered why He kept asking me the same question.

"Jesus challenged us to go into the whole world and witness to others what we had heard and seen. I came to know that we were all followers of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles.

"On the day of Pentecost, I was privileged to speak to the people who had gathered. We were called Apostles because we were "sent forth." I was also the first one who was privileged to tell a Gentile, Cornelius about God's grace.

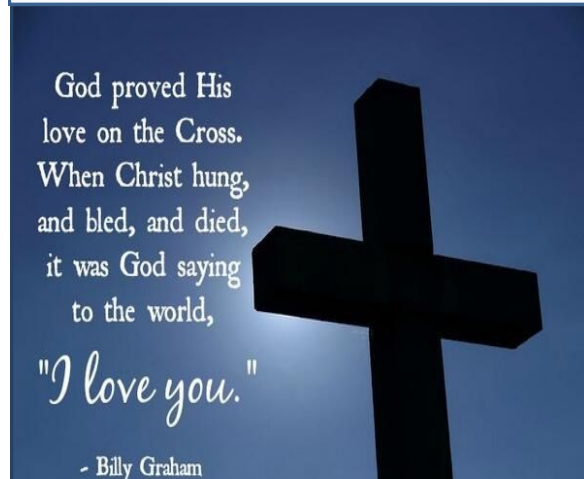


"I was privileged to do this and continued to proclaim the gospel to many people, Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.

"I had done so much wrong and I had denied Christ before His crucifixion. I was afraid for my own life. Now I knew that the only way I could have live everlasting was to love him and obey Him as my personal Savior."



Jesus asked Peter:
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"



Prayer: God, we know that You know our weaknesses, and we know that You know our strengths. Help us to lead our lives in daily communication with You. Amen.

1. Faith is believing what we cannot see or explain. Was that easy for Peter? Is it easy for you? For me?
2. Have you been questioned about your faith by someone and could you defend it?
3. Why did Christ keep questioning Peter about his love for Him?
4. Have you ever been challenged to do something as a Christian you did not want to do? Have you considered the risk to your life style before answering?
5. What is the meaning of "blind faith?"

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What matters is not your outward appearance...but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle gracious kind that God delights in.

Saint Peter, AZ Quotes