



Benefice of Atworth with Shaw and Whitley

The Disciples of Jesus: Peter

26th April 2015

2 Peter 1: 1 – 11 Matthew 16: 13 - 23

In essence:

- Simon Peter was a married man, a fisherman, the brother of Andrew and together with James and John he became part of an inner circle of Jesus' disciples. He is present on the mountain at the Transfiguration and later we see him in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus is sorrowful and troubled. That closeness to Christ was vital for Peter to grow and develop in order to fulfil the role he would later undertake – a role that would lead to martyrdom.
- John 1:42 "And he (Andrew) brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said 'You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which translated is Peter)." Note that Cephas is the Aramaic word meaning rock and Petros is the Greek word for rock.
- Sometimes Jesus continues to call him Simon and at others Peter. Looking closely what we find is often a distinction being made by Jesus of Simon - the raw material, the worldly man with failings - and Peter - the man on a spiritual journey. If he says Simon then it is a sign that it is the old Simon acting in the old ways but if he speaks to Peter then it is an affirmation of his behaviour and actions.
- Peter was inquisitive – always asking questions and wanting to know more. Peter asks more questions in the Gospel accounts than all the other apostles combined. He uses his initiative and makes things happen; sometimes he is bold and decisive even when it is the wrong thing to do but lessons need to be learned even it is the hard way. It is his boldness that enables him to assert that Jesus is Christ, the living son of God. Peter is always involved, always in the middle of the action; he may have denied knowing Jesus but he followed him just the same to see where he went and he was close enough for Jesus to look him in the eyes as the cock crowed.
- Peter has to learn some very hard lessons because the life he is being prepared for is going to be unbelievably tough. He needs the ups and downs of the disciples' journey and to experience the highs and lows to understand that disaster and triumph are never far apart. Peter's loyal declaration to Christ in front of others that he would never deny Jesus resulted in the total humiliation he must have felt as the cock crowed and he recalled his bold words.
- Peter's character qualities were developed as he spent time in the company of Jesus: submission to man for the Lord's sake; grace to the humble; to love one another with compassion and understanding; courage to see things through to the end. Peter does not become perfect but is able to use his life with Christ to become the rock of faith that Jesus said he would be.

For Reflection:

1. Have you ever had a nickname given to you/ given a nickname to another? Was it used in a specific context?
2. Do you like to ask questions? Is it easier to leave questions to others?
3. What bold and decisive actions have you made? Looking back are you glad you did (even if you regretted it at the time)? What did you learn as a result?
4. Do you like to be in the centre of the action or on the edge, looking in?
5. Have you ever felt totally humiliated by something you have said or done as Peter did when he denied knowing Christ?
6. Can you think of one thing that has happened in your life that has shaped the person you are today?