



Exploring Easter – Peter’s Story

The Garden of Gethsemane – Mark 14:32-48

Peter rubbed his eyes as he opened them, trying to work out where he was. He saw trees, and heard the rustling of dried leaves as someone approached. Jesus! Jesus had asked him to stay awake, and he had fallen asleep again! He looked up and tried to pretend that he had been awake, but he could see from the way Jesus was walking that he knew that once again they had let him down.

Peter didn’t know what to say so he looked at the ground. Jesus sounded broken as if he had been crying ‘Peter, are you asleep again? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.’ Peter thought back to their conversation as they walked up to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus had said that he too would abandon him. ‘Never’ whispered Peter as he watched Jesus walk to a large rock and kneel beside it leaning on his elbow to pray. He tried to work out what Jesus was saying to God, but couldn’t see well enough in the dusk – whatever it was didn’t look peaceful though. ‘I’m watching Jesus’ Peter said under his breath as a huge yawn overwhelmed him.

This time, it wasn’t leaves that woke Peter up, it was the jangling of metal. Jesus was shaking his shoulder. ‘quick! Get up! Here comes my betrayer!’ Peter jumped to his feet and stared into the darkness – sure enough there were people armed with swords coming towards them. Peter stood in front of Jesus as if to defend him, but then realised that at the front of group was Judas, his fellow disciple. ‘Phew!’ thought Peter as Judas walked up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheek in greeting. Instantly though the men behind him grabbed Jesus and someone told him they were arresting him. Peter tried to pull the men off Jesus realising that he had been betrayed but the crowd was too strong for him. Someone even pulled out a sword to defend Jesus but then Peter caught a look from Jesus that stopped him in his tracks. Jesus was not fighting, Jesus was not running away. Instead he was holding his hands out so they could bind him saying ‘why have you come out with clubs and

swords to arrest me? Have I not been teaching in the temple everyday? You could have arrested me there.' Some of the servants of the high priest hung their heads in shame knowing that he spoke the truth – that their actions showed cowardice, a fear that the ordinary people who listened to Jesus and thought he was amazing would rebel if they arrested him in public.

Peter saw Jesus take a deep breath, and it was as if the pain and disappointment of the last few hours of prayer fell from him as he looked at the people gathered to arrest him 'Still, the Scriptures must be fulfilled' he said and started to walk down the hill with them.

Peter shuddered, unsure what to do next. He turned to talk to the other disciples but there was no one there. They had all run away. He was alone. Quietly, and keeping to the shadows, he started to follow the crowd hustling Jesus down the hill, until they got to the courtyard of the high priest.