

Polly's Pondering

Peter said, "Even if I must die alongside you, I won't deny you." All the disciples said the same thing. Matthew 26:35

Author Gene Edwards talks about a student attending a Baptist seminary in Zurich, Switzerland shortly after World War II, who underwent a tragic turn of events that changed his life. As a result, he was constantly worried about what others might think about him, especially in regard to his future possibilities as a missionary.

Right about now you are wondering what he could have done that would have left him with this fear? How deep was the shame? How paralyzing was the worry "that if they only knew"? I have purposely left that information out, because truthfully, it doesn't matter. Though it could serve to make some of us feel better with an "At least my story is not that bad" kind of attitude. But then, that the point isn't it. No matter what other might think, shame is really about what we think, what we worry about, what we won't forgive.

"I don't know what you are talking about'...'I don't know the man'...Then he cursed and swore, 'I don't know the man!'...Peter remembered Jesus' words, 'Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.'" Matthew 26:70-75

Hans, that is the name of the seminary student, was one of the finest young men in the seminary, he was a strong Christian and well known among the other students. And then the event happened. It was years later that he had the opportunity to present himself before an independent mission board in the United States. Again, even after the years had passed, the sense of shame lingered. So, he wrote a letter to the board members sharing his story, the good, the bad, the unfortunate, and even the event which served as a hinge upon which his future now swung. He posted the letter and waited. Anxiously, eagerly, awaiting their response.

When the letter came, reluctant to see the words which would shape his future, he handed the letter off. There on the paper were two words and two words only. "Remember Peter!" These were grace filled words that revealed a greater truth. The things of our past, do serve to shape us, but they do not define the extent that God can and will use us through his grace filled redeeming power.

"This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead..."Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"..."Yes, Lord, you know I love you."..."Feed my lambs." "Simon son of John, do you love me?"..."Yes, Lord, you know I love you!"..."Take care of my sheep"..."Simon son of John, do you love me?"... Peter was sad..."Lord, you know everything; you know I love you."..."Feed my sheep"..."After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me." John 21:14-19

This is what the Season of Lent is all about. Take a hard look at ourselves. Acknowledge where we have provided opportunity for the enemy to speak fear and shame into our lives, repent and believe the Gospel. The Good News that "God so loved the World that He sent His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish but have everlasting life. For Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world that through him the world might be saved." John 3:16

So I leave you with two words to carry with you on our journey toward the cross and resurrection

"Remember Peter!"

Okay maybe just two more:

"Amazing Grace!"