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**Weekly Letter - 3 September 2023**

**Matthew 16.21-28**

**The Gift of knowing yourself**

Peter is well known for being the first disciple to see who Jesus is, for he has just said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” Matt.16.16.

Peter is a spontaneous, impulsive person, and we have a sense that each time he speaks, he means what he says.

As time passed by Peter became increasingly aware that Jesus’ challenges to the religious and political authorities was placing him in grave danger, of being accused of sedition and blasphemy. Peter couldn’t deal with the thought of losing his master and Lord, and so he expresses his anxiety.

One of the fascinating qualities to see in the ‘sketches’ we have of Peter is that each time he ‘puts his foot in it’, he didn’t know he would regret his words until he said them. He really did love Jesus, and he did want Him to succeed. But, and yes it’s a big but! He neither knew Jesus or himself.

Peter has more to learn about who he is when he denies Jesus on three different occasions. Life is full of important lessons/truths!

Part of the privilege of following the Christ is that we are encouraged to pray so that we may ‘get to know our true selves’. If we sailed through life in this modern culture of believing everything is positive, awesome and everything should make us feel good, we would be utterly ignorant of our true nature. So, Peter getting it ‘oh so wrong’ here, and on the night before Christ is crucified clearly helps Peter to see who he had been and who he is.

Once an act of self-acceptance is made, God thus can help to heal us. For we all have to work with the hand dealt to us, and remember there is no rewind button. Doubtless, like you, Peter wished there could have been!

Christ encourages us to know the truths, and as we slowly discover the truth about ourselves he also says, “don’t be a grave digger of the past”, for if we do, it reduces our ability to see the truth, it buries the future and we become imprisoned in the past. Christ came to liberate!

So, today, let us pray for the courage to accept who we are, to offer the truth of who we are to God, and trust that he will treat us, forgive us and open new doors to us.

**Stephen**

**Induction Service in Christ Well on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September at 2 pm will be available on Zoom.**

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well**, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling. We will celebrate Communion.

Bible Readings: Exodus 3.1-15: Matthew 16.21-28

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Tabernacle, Mumbles

Prayers for every household – we will pray for Manor Road no. 37-71

**Tea and Chat in Christ Well** – Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> September – 2-4 pm

### **New School Year**

Best wishes to all our children and young people, whether they are changing schools, going to university, or joining the work force. We hope they will soon settle in their new surroundings. God Bless.

### **Overcoming evil**

Exodus 3.1-15 and Psalm 105.1-6, 23-26, 45b: Jeremiah 15.15-21 and Psalm 26.1-8: Romans 12.9-21: Matthew 16.21-28)

Loving Jesus,

Forgive us for the times we let evil overcome us,  
when we lack the strength to keep holding fast to the good,  
when we are tired of serving,  
when we lose patience with the needs of others.

Lead us away from the temptations to curse those who annoy us,  
or to look for vengeance when we have been wronged.

You know what it is to be human.

You know what a high standard you are setting for us.

You know we will fail, and fail again.

You also know this is the only life worth living.

Give us the grace, not to be perfect, but to keep on trying.

And help us remember that others who are not perfect may be struggling too,  
and in need of compassion.

Sue McCoan (URC Prayer Handbook 2023)

