

Peter's Story

Reading : Mark 14:66-72

Peter's Story – Promises, Promises

"Even if I have to die, I will never leave you!". That's what I, Peter the disciple, had said to Jesus, and I really meant it. "Promises,.... Promises," my Mum used to say to me when I was a boy, because sometimes I would say something first and engage my brain later, and realise I couldn't do what I'd promised.

But that evening, there in that upper room with Jesus, I felt so close to him that I thought it would take more than life itself to break us apart. "I will never desert you", I said and I really, honestly meant it, and so did all the other disciples.

Then we went out to the garden and as we were snoozing, the soldiers came. There was such a noise, such a commotion. I jumped to my feet and, with my heart pounding and my hand shaking, I pulled my sword out and I was ready to fight. But when it came to it, I ran away. I ran away just like all the others. I ran off into the darkness and let the soldiers take Jesus away. "Promises..... Promises" I thought.

Later I made my way to the high priest's house to try to find out what was happening. But people kept looking at me suspiciously. One of the servant girls just kept on and on, telling the others "That man was with Jesus. Listen to the way he speaks – he's from Galilee. He's definitely one of them".

"No", I said, "I don't what you are talking about". "NO!" I said again. **"NO!!!! I NEVER KNEW HIM!!!!"**

And then that cock crowed, just as he said it would. And I knew I'd let him down. "Promises.....promises", I thought. And I went out and wept.

Peter's Story – I wonder what it feels like

I wonder what it feels like to realise you have made a promise you cannot keep.

I wonder what it feels like to know you have let down the most important person in the world.

I wonder what it feels like to see again someone you have let down very badly indeed.

I wonder what it feels like to be given another chance.

Mrs. Pilate's Story

Reading : Matthew 27: 15-23

Mrs. Pilate's Story – In our dreams.....

I tossed and turned and watched the clock, 2am, 2.30am, 3am. Finally, I gave up and went out on to the balcony at the back of our huge house in Jerusalem. There was just a faint glow in the sky to the east. In another hour or so, the dawn would be breaking properly and it would be decision day – not for me, but for the man I loved – PP, Pontius Pilate.

I turned my eyes to the hills to the north, just visible through the darkness. I remembered the day I'd slipped out with two of the servants into those hills and heard that man who now haunted my dreams and gave me sleepless nights. "You must come and listen to him", my maid had said. And she was right. For he spoke like no-one else I'd ever heard; gently but with a wisdom and an authority that touched my heart.

What had he said on that warm summer's afternoon on the mountainside? "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy". Yes, yes I remember that. I'd thought about it so often in this violent, troubled city of Jerusalem. Every few weeks, it seemed, there was a rebellion, or hint of a rebellion and Pontius would find himself sending some of the rebels off to their deaths. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy"

And now, my maid told me that it was the teacher himself who was to stand before Pontius. I turned to the east and saw the sun rising above the horizon. Could I tell him? Could I tell the man I loved, that I'd heard this teacher's words "Blessed are the merciful"? Could I tell him or would I let him wash his hands and let an innocent man die?

Mrs. Pilate's Story – I wonder what it feels like

I wonder what it feels like to be troubled by your dreams.

I wonder what it feels like to be afraid to tell the truth.

I wonder what it is like to feel that that somebody you love is about to make a terrible mistake.

I wonder what it feels like to be afraid to tell someone else what Jesus means to you.

The nail 's Story

Reading : John 19:16-22

The nail's story – For good or bad.....

I don't expect you've ever heard a nail speak before. I don't expect you'd ever thought of a nail having thoughts or ideas. But we spend such a long time waiting around, you see. Often, we wonder what we will be used for. Sometimes we just wonder whether we'll be knocked in straight!

So on that Friday, when they picked me up out of the toolbox, I felt a thrill of excitement. I was finally going to be useful! I'd waited ages for this moment, and I thought back to all the other nails in my family and what they had been used for.

Years ago, my grandfather had been used to help make a manger – a box to hold food for cattle. Someone once told me that a baby had been born in that manger but that seems a silly idea – why would a baby be born in a cattle trough?

Then my father had gone off to Galilee, to a town called Nazareth and he was used in a carpenter's workshop there. Someone told me that the carpenter who used my Dad had gentle hands and worked carefully to make good things for other people.

And finally here I was in Jerusalem, the city of Kings and important people. Perhaps I'd be used to make the door of a palace or even a throne?

The man who pulled me out of the toolbox on that Friday morning had rough, coarse hands. It was noisy. People were shouting all around us, and some seemed to be crying. I couldn't work out what was happening, but it didn't feel right. And then he picked up the hammer to knock me in and I couldn't believe! I was being used to nail a man to a cross!

The Nail's Story – I wonder what it feels like

I wonder what it feels like to be used by someone else.

I wonder what it feels like to be caught up in something you don't like and be unable to stop.

I wonder what it feels like to know that you can do good but find yourself doing something wrong.

I wonder what it feels like to have high hopes for yourself, but to have them broken.

The thief's Story

Reading: Luke 23: 39-42

The thief's story – Even me.....

You may know me as “the good thief”, but I wasn’t really good. I just wasn’t quite as bad as the other one, the one who shouted and yelled at Jesus and tried to taunt him. No, I didn’t do that, but I don’t think I could be called “good”.

I was a thief – I’d taken something that didn’t belong to me, and so I deserved to be punished, just like the other thief. But when it came to that day, I couldn’t believe that the third man there beside us on the cross, was the teacher and healer from Nazareth.

I couldn’t believe it because I’d heard him speak. I’d seen him do wonderful things. He’d even healed a man from my village who was blind! He didn’t deserve to be there. Yes, he’d upset the authorities and I’d even heard him have a few run-ins with the other religious teachers. But he was different to them. He spoke as if he cared for ordinary people like me. I’d done lots of wrong things and I really wanted to change. I wanted to follow him. I wanted to know what it was like to be close to him, because I felt that if I could be near him, it would make a difference to the way I lived my life. I really believed that. But then I was arrested and found myself here on a cross.

And now, amazingly and unbelievably I was near him. Even now, there was a chance to change. Even me. So before I knew what I was doing, I heard myself say: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

And like Peter, and Mrs. Pilate and the nail before me, and all of you today – I think he heard me.

The thief's Story – I wonder what it feels like

I wonder what it feels like to know you’ve done wrong.

I wonder what it feels like to want to change but to find it hard to do so.

I wonder what it feels like to see someone punished when they didn’t deserve it.

I wonder what it feels like to know that someone has heard you and remembered you.