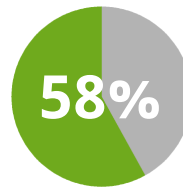


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"...and Peter!"



STAN SLADE



SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL

When the decisive moment came, they failed. They **all** failed.

One sold out to those who wanted to kill Jesus. One swore he knew nothing about Jesus. Ten took off for the hills.

Oh-for-twelve.

From late Friday afternoon through Saturday night, it looked like the Jesus movement was finished. Another victory for treachery over truth, for might over right.

But, thank God, that was not the end of the story. Not for God. Not for Jesus. Not even for his failed followers—though they didn't know it yet.

At the crack of dawn on that first Easter morning, some courageous women went to tie up loose ends and make sure the burial of their beloved Master was "done right." On Friday, the power people had done their best to cover him in shame. The women couldn't let that stand. They were going to do something, at least, to treat him with the honor and respect he was due. So they took their burial spices and went to the tomb, just as soon as they could.

But they were too late. Thank God, they were too late! They could not give Jesus a better death, because he was already **done** with death! Amazing news! Impossible news!

The courageous women were shocked by what they didn't find... and awe-struck by what they did find. A divine messenger spoke to them. He made them the first heralds of the amazing, reality-changing news: "He has been raised! He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him again, just as he told you" (Mark 16:6-7). They had news to share!

They had news, not just for the courageous, but for the cowardly. "Go, tell his disciples." The failed ones.

"...and Peter" (Mark 16:7). Peter, the most spectacular failure of them all: "Even though all the others desert you, I will not." That's what he had said on Thursday night. But desert he did, just like the others.

The earliest testimony about Mark's Gospel says that his primary source was none other than Peter himself. Peter must have found it nearly impossible even to look at the women on Easter when they got back from their early-morning errand. He was still wondering how he would pick up the pieces of his shattered life.

"You found what? And he mentioned... **me??**"

Yes. There was news—great news!—for Peter. There is news—great news!—for me and for you.

The call to be part of Jesus' mission in the world is a call both to receive and to become a channel of God's redeeming love. The call does not depend on any courage of ours. It does not depend on our faithfulness to our promises. It depends on the faithfulness of God in Christ. Peter wanted us to "get" that, when we heard his story. So he told it to Mark warts—and wonder!—and all.

So, on this first day after Easter, thankful for Peter's honesty and humility, thankful for the courageous women and their message, I focus not on my failures, but on the faithfulness of

God. May you, too, know the joy and power of God's faithfulness in your own life and service, today and every day.

In Christ,

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