



# HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

Volume 20 No. 4

Modeling the Truth of God's Word

April 2021

## VICTORY OVER SIN

### From the Pastor's Desk

**John 18:15-18; 25-27**

This year Resurrection Sunday comes in early April. It is amazing how fast time seems to fly by – before you know it we will be celebrating Christmas again. Okay maybe that was a heart attack that did not need to be administered, but you get my point.

On this day in which we celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and death, we take time to worship Him with family and friends. It is a time in which many people will make the effort to come to church service. You know those two most famous Sundays of the year, right? It's Easter Sunday and the Sunday before Christmas. It is amazing how we can draw in bigger crowds on those two days. Normally throughout the year most people are a little more conservative about bringing people with them. They tend to accept the fact that on those special holidays, the family or friends will make a concession for your faith and friendship, so they'll go if they're invited.

It reminds me of a passage I came across in my daily Bible reading. I was reading John 18:15-27 in which John and Peter together followed Jesus after Jesus had been arrested. The passage tells us that John was known by the former high priest Annas and had access to the early questioning of Jesus before he was sent to Caiaphas who was the current high priest. John went into the inner chamber and, after getting permission to enter, he sent a servant girl out to get Peter. This process to John and the servant girl was as ordinary as eating cereal for breakfast. She was only doing her job and she quickly went out to escort Peter into the inner chamber to be with John.

While John was setting up the arrangements inside, Peter was left outside in the cold. He was left at the door and probably still dazed and confused by the events that just transpired back in the garden. He was left to think about the betrayal of Judas and he had time to think about how the other nine disciples had fled for their lives leaving Jesus to be handed over to the temple guards.

While Peter had time alone with his thoughts he remained outside the high priest's home, this solitude only signified the loneliness that he felt inside his heart. He wasn't ready to hear the voice of the servant girl when she appeared. His

### Upcoming Events and Meetings

**April 4 – Resurrection Sunday**

**April 4, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper**

#### Weekly:

**Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion**

**Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service**

**Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study**

Continuing the examination of verse 3:16 as it appears in each Bible Book.

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mind was not prepared to hear the question that was going to be asked of him. He was feeling too guilty already for letting his master down.

In a feeble attempt to save Jesus, he needlessly cut off the ear of one of the servants. The reason why it was feeble was that, after he did that, Jesus chastised him for living by the sword and then undid the damage by healing the servant. He probably couldn't believe that Jesus would willingly go with the mob, but everything that happened earlier indicated that is what he actually did.

With Peter all disorientated, the servant girl comes to him and asks, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" The question was probably one in which she was verifying that she had the right person to escort into the inner chambers of the home. It probably wasn't one of accusation or of speculative inquiry, but instead she was probably just trying to complete the task demanded of her or that of any servant who would have been asked to let someone in.

But that was not the way Peter interpreted her question. His mind had enough time alone in the dark and cold to conjure up fears that at the moment were unnecessary and uncalled for. Yet to begin the prophetic utterance of Christ concerning this follower, he in turn answered in fear, "I am not."

*See Pastor's Desk on p. 2*

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

## Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

I wonder what must have been going through his mind at this point. He hadn't yet fully grasped the ramifications of his denial of being a follower of Jesus, but he was definitely on the path of failure and sinfulness. Even with this denial she had escorted him in and he entered the door and came into the front chambers of the house and that probably spiritually represented his entering into the three denials of Jesus. In regards to his fall he just came into the building and had not yet committed himself to the inner chambers of sin and denial. So he excused himself from the presence of the servant girl and went to warm himself by the fire that had been built by others. He didn't know it, but his sifting by Satan had begun.

The story breaks for a moment and focuses on Jesus being questioned and confronted by the former high priest. After a brief interlude the narrator gets back to Peter by the fire. One of the other companions at the fire glanced over at him and asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" This question was probably less accusatory as it might seem. At a quick glance it might seem to be confrontational, but it was probably a question that was based on the practical. The man saw someone he did not notice, a man who wasn't part of any known group in the inner chambers, so the inquisitor was probably deducing that Peter was with Jesus. After all who else could he have been with?

Peter was probably still reeling over the fact that he was asked once. He was still off balance from the earlier question and now, after being asked a second time, Peter responded, "I am not." The response seems simple enough, but it was packed with more than what the three words indicated. It was step two out of three to complete the fall. He was two-thirds of the way to knowing the full ramifications of his actions. He was probably shaking his head; shouldn't this person have heard the earlier question from the girl? Surely he must have heard the answer that was already given to the question repeated. Regardless, Peter denied Jesus once again.

Within moments of being asked a second time, he was asked a third time. This time the questioner was someone who was related to the man whose ear was cut off by Peter earlier in the evening. This man chimed in and said to Peter, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?"

Not only was this man questioning his affiliation with Jesus, but he was witness to Peter being in another place at the same time with Christ. Now Peter was in a real jam. Not only had he already lied twice, but now he is confronted by someone who really did recognize him. What to do now? Should he have given in? Should he have admitted it and then accepted the same fate that his Lord and Master were to receive? After all he was the one who boldly proclaimed that if all the other disciples were to fall away that he would not. He claimed he was willing to follow Jesus all the way to his death, but there were so many people present.

There was a great amount of opposition to Jesus and He doesn't seem to care that He was going to his death. The

*See Pastor's Desk on p. 3*

## Property and Space Patrol

No snow was a blessing back in March. With the temps getting into the 60s, the grass will soon be waking up and needing a haircut. If you can offer some help with ongoing lawn maintenance, please let me know.

Also, there are many limbs and branches that have fallen over the winter from the maple trees along the main road.

If you have a pickup truck, please consider stopping by and taking a load to your local landfill. That will improve the appearance of our front lawn and eliminate extra maneuvering with the lawn tractor.

✠ Pastor Al

## Explain That "God Stuff"

The following story comes from the *Our Daily Bread* Devotional for June 10, 2020 and was written by Tim Gustafson.

First read 1 Peter 3:13-18 and then read the story.

Most of Mike's co-workers knew little about Christianity, nor did they seem to care. But they knew he cared. One day near the Easter season, someone casually mentioned that they'd heard Easter had something to do with Passover and wondered what the connection was. "Hey, Mike!" he said. "You know about this God stuff. What's Passover?"

So Mike explained how God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. He told them about the ten plagues, including the death of the firstborn in every household. He explained how the death angel "passed over" the houses whose doorframes were covered by the blood of a sacrificed lamb. Then he shared how Jesus was later crucified at the Passover season as the once-and-for-all sacrificial Lamb. Suddenly Mike realized, Hey, I'm witnessing!

Peter the disciple gave advice to a church in a culture that didn't know about God. He said, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

Because Mike had been open about his faith, he got the chance to share that faith naturally, and he could do so with "gentleness and respect" (v. 15).

We can too. With the help of God's Holy Spirit, we can explain in simple terms what matters most in life—that "stuff" about God.

## Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music.

During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

## Pastor's Desk, from p. 2

miracle worker who had the power to feed thousands and the power to stop the waves and wind wasn't going to lift a finger. This wasn't what Peter thought was going to happen. Surely the Messiah was greater than this. Peter was faced with a difficult decision and the passage makes it look like it was something that Peter just conceded to. The passage reads, "Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow."

Peter's denial was complete. No lightning came down and struck him dead. No one hauled him off to be whipped and flogged. No one cared that he denied Jesus. After all no one wanted him anyway, they wanted the one who claimed to be God. They wanted the trouble-maker Jesus who had crowds following him. The Pharisees wanted the one who was stealing their thunder and authority. No, no one cared that Peter denied Jesus, no one except Jesus, that is.

Peter realized that he had let his Savior down. He was at the end of a fulfilled prophecy. He was alone and he ran off and wept bitterly as the other Gospels tell it. Can you imagine the devastation, the despair, the totality of what he did? He denied knowing the One who was about to die for everyone's sins. He denied the one who loved him more than he loved himself. He denied knowing the God of all creation. What a feeling that must have been. Talk about being outside looking in.

We must not be too hard on him though. Many today have and still do deny knowing Jesus. That is one of the reasons for why our churches are so empty each and every Sunday morning.

We interpret simple questions by friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family as being part of an inquisition, when all the while they probably just want to try and figure out what you see in this Jesus you have mentioned in the past. We get defensive and state to those around us that our faith is personal and it is no one else's business. Often when asked, we would just as soon strike up a different topic than to talk about church or our faith.

No, Peter is not alone in denying the experiential knowledge of Jesus, but instead of remaining down in the dumps about his failure, Peter was restored to prominence and then turned around and was never again ashamed to admit knowing Jesus or to be associated with Him.

Have you reached that point in your faith? I hope and pray so. With this upcoming Easter season upon us, let me encourage you to be bold in your faith. Tell others about Jesus, don't get defensive about your faith, but be willing to be questioned. You just might find that someone wants to see your faith in action, not in failure.

Lift your head up and boldly profess your association with your Savior, for He associates Himself with you. After all when it comes to your salvation, don't deny it, you know Jesus!

✠ Pastor Jim

## Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to anyone who is celebrating another orbit around the Sun.

If your birthday is this month, let the Editor know about it so we can celebrate it too.



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on the following people who celebrate a wedding anniversary this month. How did they plan to get married on the same day?

4/28 Al & Rachel Page

4/28 Peter & Julie Jenkins

## Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

## Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is April 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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*Modeling the truth of God's Word*



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