

Part 11: Accepting Ourselves–II

Start with a short prayer and some minutes of silence. How did the week go? Share some of your experiences. (15 minutes)

Much of our meditation over the past weeks may have been uncomfortably introspective. As was mentioned earlier, we need to see ourselves as we really are, as God sees us, in order to pray creatively. It is only by God's grace that we can see ourselves as he sees us.

If we can begin to love ourselves unconditionally, just as we are, especially when we see our own brokenness and poverty of spirit, then we can begin to make the space for ourselves that we need, to grow to wholeness and maturity.

Our Lord invites us to freedom and life, but we can only come to it if we bring the whole of ourselves, the side we like as well as the side we don't like. So we begin to befriend this other side, the dark and uninviting uncomfortable side.

In looking at Peter and his different sides, we may find it a relief that this man, who was so volatile and impetuous, was not rejected or kept at a distance by our Lord, but instead he was dearly loved and accepted.

As we look at Peter's weaknesses, and also his real generosity and love for Jesus, we see a man responding from his heart. At times this response seems rash, but from it he could see where he was, and make amends accordingly. He dared to be himself. When we hold back from being who we are fully to avoid any unpleasantness, we condemn ourselves to the greyness of uncertainty; the 'what ifs' and 'if onlys' that swell our self-doubts.

Exercise

Spend 15 minutes reading and reflecting on John 21:1–19. Imagine yourself in Peter's place.

- Do you see parallels with last week's passage on the miraculous catch and Jesus' call to follow him?
- Peter lived with Jesus for three years. Is there any change in Peter's attitude in these accounts which span the three years?
- Why does Peter say, 'I'm going out to fish'?
- What do you feel as Jesus asks you three times 'Do you love me?'

Journal for 5 minutes and then share your experience in the group.

At home this week

Stay with this passage in John 21 for as long as you can.

- As you relive this experience, can you feel Jesus' love for you?
- Do you feel any doubt about his care and respect for you?
- If you have time, look also at 1 Peter 1:3–9 and then at 2 Peter 1:2–11. Peter wrote these words years after the resurrection.
- How did Jesus' love for him change his experience and the course of his life?
- Could or would he have changed without this love?



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