



Peter: It Feels Like We Lost

John 18:1-19:42

Inspiration for You:

I've never liked the sound of velcro.

NOTE: If you are using this as a sermon outline and have personal non-favorite sound take a minute and talk about it.

To me, velcro sounds like skin being ripped off bone. It just gives me the shivers.

In the UK there is a company called Big Finish and they create audio dramas of Doctor Who and Sherlock Holmes and classic TV series. They once filled a rubber glove with custard and squooshed it under a microphone. It's a sound they use for everything from alien monsters to the villain of the Hound of the Baskervilles disappearing in quicksand.

When Orson Welles broadcast the War of the Worlds he had a sound engineer put a mason jar down into a toilet in mens room and slowly unscrew it to create the effect of the alien spacecraft opening.

Let me give you a few more...

(NOTE: If you are using this as a sermon outline you can ask your congregation to raise their hands.)

Screeching tires.
Fingernails on a chalkboard.
A dentist's drill
the Smoke alarm

It's not necessarily the sound that makes us shiver is it? It's the memories that go with it.

If you have ever been in a car accident what happens to your body when hear screeching tires? You clench up, don't you? You react physically.

Peter heard the rooster crow. Any other time it would be the signal to get up and start your day. It was a sound of new beginnings. For Peter the rest of his life would bring back the feeling of that night.

Even after everything turned out okay. Even after he saw Jesus again. Even after he went out on his own as a minister, every morning would be like waking up to the betrayal.

If we were casting a movie, Peter would be the hero's best friend. The one you really like, who is usually the funny one but he never quite gets it totally right.

We know Peter. We know Peter because he stepped out of the boat. We know Peter because he drew his sword and cut off the soldier's ear. Peter has a mother-in-law. Peter is part of one of the coolest coin tricks ever. We know Peter because we all have a friend like him.

We hate Judas. We kind of like John. But, we all know Peter.

When Peter walks on the water we sometimes forget to mention that Peter didn't believe Jesus at first. Jesus is out there on the water showing off doing a moon walk or tap dance. Peter says, "If that's you...it that's REALLY you....stand there while I come out on the water."

Jesus says, "Okay then. Come'on."

And Peter does. He sinks. And then it's Mr-I-Believe. "JESUS SAVE ME!"

Peter sinks because he doubts. He doesn't doubt Jesus. He doubts himself. Any disciple would want to just follow his rabbi, he would want to be like his rabbi. Peter fails.

From the beginning Jesus is trying to create something in Peter. He didn't start with "If you love me, feed my sheep." Jesus was preparing Peter for ministry from the beginning.

Jesus knew.

Jesus knew how it was going to end. He knew Peter would deny him and he let Peter do it because of what it would create in him. It would make him into the kind of minister Jesus needed him to be.

There's a line in this video that goes by quickly but it's so important. "What would you do?"

"Why no officer I had no idea I was going that fast."

(PAUSE)

Yeah, in that situation I'd probably deny him too.

We like Peter because Peter is...well, he's us. He's the most relatable. What would you do?

Peter was originally named Simon. People in the Scriptures seem to get their names changed quite a bit. Jesus changed Simon's name to Petra which means Rock. Thankfully he did this before Peter sank like a stone or I'm not sure it would have had the same effect. Peter, the rock, the stone on which Jesus says he's going to build his church.

If we relate to Peter because we are like him,

if we are sometimes a little slow on the uptake,

if we occasionally act before we think,

If we'd lie to get out of a traffic ticket then we would most certainly lie to keep from being put in jail and put to death...

We relate to Peter because we to, really, really, really want to be like Jesus...

If we relate to Peter because we ARE Peter, what does that say about the church Jesus is building?

Maybe it says we don't need to perfect. Maybe it says we don't need to have it all down. Maybe, just maybe it says we understand that we are loved and can share that love.

The church was never meant to be that place with all the answers. Sometimes the church is like one beggar showing another beggar where the food is.

Information for you:

The text accompanying this video is heavy; it feels and is long when compared to other texts in this series. Over 2000 words must be read if one is to capture the full effect of what the gospel writer, John, was attempting to convey to his audience. Peter felt every ounce of the emotionally draining events articulated in these two chapters and then some. If it feels long to read, just imagine how it felt to live these chapters as Peter did. For one who had walked with Jesus for three years to this point, along with the other disciples, what he experienced on and around Good Friday felt like a total disaster.

It felt like the bottom dropping out of dreams filled with hope.

It felt like chaos overtaking their lives.

It felt like things were out of control.

If words somehow could sum up what the disciples, especially Peter, were experiencing in that moment of the story:

“It feels like we lost.”

Let’s read the two chapters of John 18-19 that lead us to feel some of what Peter must have felt during those unraveling hours in and around Jerusalem. Try to put yourself in Peter’s sandals and determine if you, too, feel like you just lost something that you had been so invested in with Jesus and his followers.

18 “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” ⁵ They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶ When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁸ Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” ⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

¹² So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸ Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

¹⁹ The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²² When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?” ²⁴ Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷ Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” ³⁰ They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.” ³¹ Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone

to death.”³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.”³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”⁴⁰ They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.² And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe.³ They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands.⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.”⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”⁶ When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.”⁷ The Jews^[h] answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.”⁸ When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.⁹ He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.¹⁰ So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”¹¹ Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

¹²From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” ¹³So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” ¹⁵They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” ¹⁶So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, ¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” ²²Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, ²⁴ so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” ²⁹A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.” John 18:1-19:42

Certainly, what Jesus endured and accomplished not only on the cross, but also on his way to the cross in the hours leading up to that horrific endeavor, was more than we could possibly imagine or fully experience. However, sometimes lost in the shuffle of the events that are portrayed in the chapters such as John 18-19 are how such moments might have affected the disciples. After all was said and done the things they encountered began to make sense. But in the moment, the emotional roller coaster that was experienced must have been overwhelming.

Jesus knew the toll these emotional events took on his disciples, especially Peter. One of the reasons Jesus said what he said and did what he did to Peter in John 21 was to reinstate Peter “back in the gospel fight” after feeling like all was lost at the cross. That breakfast that Jesus shared with Peter on the shoreline after a night of fruitless fishing helped Peter realize that all was not lost. In fact, so much had just been won. But before that redemptive breakfast took place, Peter would find himself being swallowed up by his own fears and shaking in a corner as he wept over his own disappointment in betraying Jesus.

We must not read into the text where specifics are not already included. However, there is nothing wrong with remaining curious and wondering what might have been happening on the inside of Peter and the other disciples. How many times did a crowing rooster cause Peter to shiver in his heart throughout the remaining days of his life? Jesus told Peter that denial was coming that night. Peter did not believe Jesus. But it happened again and again. The cock crowed and that piercing sound in that night must have replayed in his mind over and over again throughout his life.

Did Peter ever pick up a sword when he did not think of the swipe that took place and the blood that spilled in the garden that night? How many times did he think about the closeness that his blade came to severing not the ear of Malchus, but the neck instead? Had his sword connect inches to the right or left and it would have resulted in Peter's death on the spot by the other soldiers; unless Jesus would have chosen to restore life to one run through by the sword.

Would there ever again be a time that Peter did not warm himself by a fire that the echoes of his own denial in knowing Jesus would not rattle in his head? The emotional blows that Peter could have endured throughout his life may have been triggered by such simple, yet powerful elements that played such a part in the waning hours of Jesus' life before the cross. Peter was a wreck. And yet all that he experienced ultimately did not keep him being used by God to help move the mission of the gospel forward.

God can and does use moments around the table, choices of betrayal, words of denial, hands being warmed by the fire, echoes of a rooster in the night, and tears we cry from disappointment and shame to lead us from what feels like loss to a new hope of victory.

John's words in 19:36 must not be overlooked. Rather, it is worth pausing and resting in the magnitude of what they mean to this incredible part of the story that took place on and around Good Friday.

“For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled...” John 19:36

All that Jesus experienced were parts that must come together to accomplish in full what the Scriptures had foretold through the prophets of God. Such fulfillment would mean emotional and physical difficulty that felt like losing rather than winning along the way for so many of the characters represented in the account.

Jesus must win the victory in Gethsemane before losing his life on the cross at Calvary. And through the power of prayer in the garden, Jesus trusted his Father to bring forth the victory although it would not be without pain and suffering that filled his cup. He

would soon be the champion and King who defeated death and would rise from the grave.

The words above Jesus' head at Calvary were more appropriate than Pilate may have realized when he had them written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. They pronounced who this one was and what he was known for while losing his life: "The King of the Jews." While they proclaimed a victorious truth in the end, during the moment they seemed to indicate a loss because of what people saw taking place in Jesus' body on the cross. The three languages on the sign said so much in that moment.

The Hebrew religion rejected Jesus. The Greek culture ignored Jesus. The Roman law crucified Jesus. All three languages tried to announce that he and all he had lived for had been lost on this Good Friday. The words not only were able to be read, but the additional words from the crowd who passed by and gathered at the cross sounded out the cruel loss that was taking place. Jesus was being taunted as he was perceived as losing his life in vain. It must have felt like the "winning team" was rubbing it in as defeat with death was being experienced in the moment.

With so much blood, sweat, and tears, surely this scene was one that shouted: "LOSER!" The cross is the place where life and dreams go to die according to most. It was such a painful and disturbing end that felt agonizingly long by those who endured it until the end. One of the most gruesome parts of a crucifixion was the dehydration that came from the loss of body fluids. It must have felt like Jesus was close to defeat when he acknowledged his own thirst upon the cross in John 19:28. Again, to those on the sidelines of the cross, it felt like they were losing in those moments as time elapsed. Finally, time had run out. The battle was over. Jesus declared his life and mission completed in John 19:30 when he announced, "It is finished."

That proclamation that ended the cross episode is one word in the Greek language: "tetelestai." It is the form of the verb "teleo" that means "a state of permanency." This verb means to bring something to its intended end or desired goal once and for all. Literally, "It is finished and stands finished forever." Thus, the crucifixion Jesus endured not only was finished in that moment, but also never again would be required to be replayed. Jesus' redemptive work was accomplished in his death. What felt like a loss in the moment would lead to a victory for eternity.

John lets his readers know that after Jesus gave up his spirit in death, his side was pierced but his bones not broken. Out rushed blood and water. Some medical opinions suggest the mingling of both blood and water rushing forth indicated a ruptured heart.

Thus, while no bones were broken in Jesus' death, he did die of a broken heart for the people he came to save. What truly had been lost, now had been found by having a way back home to salvation through Jesus' sacrifice. Thus, what may have felt like losing in the moment really was the first seconds of victory over sin, death, Satan and hell for all of humanity that would call on the name of Jesus for salvation.

It would take some time for Peter to know that what felt like a loss actually was a win. He would not know it on this night. This was his "dark night of the soul" as St. John of the Cross would later identify such moments in life. Peter was drained emotionally and yet filled with regret at that point in time. It was anything but a Good Friday. It felt like he lost. It felt like we lost.

And yet even though Peter did not know it at the time: Sunday was coming.