

Oh, to be like Peter

He just couldn't wait to get to Jesus.

THE APOSTLE PETER, BLESS HIS HEART, takes a lot of hard knocks from the body of Christ—usually for good reason: He was impetuous, short-sighted, abrasive, hard-headed and, worst of all, a coward in the face of persecution. To be fair, Peter was at other times strong and dynamic for the Lord—and insightful:

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:15-16

day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve.

1 Corinthians 15:4-5

So for whatever reason the disciples decide to get in a little fishing. It must have felt good to Peter and James and John to be back on the water with their nets. But the fish weren't cooperating and their nets remained empty. Then a man appears on shore and inquires about their catch.

Shortly after Christ's resurrection we find seven of the disciples at the Sea of Galilee. They had decided to do a little fishing. I have always imagined this moment representing the disciples' struggle to regain some sense of normalcy after the traumatic events of the previous days: the arrest in Gethsemane; the trial (and, for Peter, his humiliating denial of Jesus), crucifixion and burial; then the resurrection and Jesus appearing before them by walking right into a shuttered room. I think after all of that we too might say, as Peter does, "Aw—I'm going fishing."

Put yourself in Peter's shoes. When he denied Jesus at Caiaphas' palace, he knew his Lord was aware of his cowardice—and he also knew that His prophecy regarding the moment had just come true.

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:60-62

How terrible Peter must have felt after that. But then, after His resurrection, Jesus went out of His way to encourage Peter. Even the angel at the tomb singled him out—as if there were a heavenly dictate from the throne: *Heal Peter*. The angel said to the women,

"But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

Mark 16:7

And the apostle Paul, in First Corinthians, writes,

"Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find *a catch*." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

John 21:5-6

This was enough evidence for John. He turned to Peter and said, "*It is the Lord.*"

Did I say Peter was impetuous? At this realization, he threw back on his outer cloak and dove into the water, swimming, I imagine as fast and hard as he could, toward shore. Truth is, the boat wasn't that far from shore. John and the rest of the cooler heads opted to row into shore with their overwhelming haul of fish.

But when it came to his Lord, Peter wasn't moved by cool logic, but by his heart. He couldn't *wait* to get to Jesus!

Oh, to be more like Peter. How sophisticated we are, how erudite. Appearances matter, don't you see, and we dare not appear foolish to others. But Peter shows us another way to live.

Just picture it... The disciples have made it to shore. They are standing around Jesus, who is squatted before the charcoal fire grilling fish and toast. Everyone is high and dry, warming themselves around the small fire in the chill morning air—except, that is, for Peter, who stands there, drenched to the bone, shivering and grinning stupidly.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

He doesn't care that everyone else is dry and comfortable and he is soaked through. *It is the Lord!*

And to him nothing else matters.

