

Word notes Sunday 19/7/09 – Ruth Brown
Overcoming Weakness & Failure – Lessons from the life of Peter the Apostle

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Texts: Matthew 26:31-35 & 26:69-75. John 21:1-19

Simon Peter had many high and low points in his life during the time he spent with Jesus. A quick brainstorm of the congregation yielded many aspects of Peter's life demonstrating highs and lows. The lowest of these must have been the time when he denied Jesus three times as the Lord had said he would. We can summarise Peter's actions:

- 1, Peter starts out being overconfident – wants to be better than the rest (v33). Jesus knows the real Peter, **the Peter he will become** and has prayed for him to be kept secure (Luke 22:31-34).
- 2, Recognition of failure comes and he is brought low, realises he's not as great as he thought (v75).
- 3, Chooses to carry on – even before he has seen for himself he is together with John and indeed is one who dared believe (See John 19:2, Luke 23:11,12) unlike Judas for whom betrayal of Jesus was too heavy a weight to bear and commits suicide (Matt 27:3-5).

Failure is not falling down but refusing to get up (Chinese proverb)

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts (Winston Churchill)

We should ask ourselves if we are really willing to do whatever it is that God asks (even if we think we are experts (John 21:6, if there is something Peter did know it was fishing!))

We should mature and develop as follows:

Know our acceptance by God – His unconditional Love.

Learn to depend on God.

Find our identity in Christ - because of what God has done for us, nothing we can do.

Achieve – do stuff for God based on our identity in Him

Too often we do this back-to-front: Start with doing things (I have to/am called to do 'xx' for God), find our identity in what we do rather than who we are, instead of leading to reliance on God this leads to drivenness and ultimately we seek acceptance from God based on our identity and achievements.

What reactions can we have to failures/weaknesses? We might:

- A. Not recognise it
 - B. Blame someone else
 - C. Be overcome by it
- OR
- D. Can learn and grow through it.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Reflect, discuss and pray:

- What do you recognise as your successes and failures?
- Remember to rejoice in the good!
- Repent of failures or of not going forward after a fall.
- Recommit to follow God's way and rely on Him.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Set a goal to perform one random act of kindness, helping someone/doing something that will benefit others. Report back next week.