

”Lord, I love the house in which you dwell
and the place where your glory abides.” AMEN!

So, Peter wasn't ready after all.

Last week he was praised by Jesus when
he correctly gave him the title of “Messiah.”

Peter the Rock, for on which the future church
would be built... flops.

The account read this morning comes directly
after that praise from Jesus
for Peter's confession.

Yet, it is good for us to know that it probably
wasn't the very next day.

We can know this because the Bible wrote
these words “From that time on...”

You see now perhaps that it wasn't just one time
that Jesus was taught how he must
go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering
at the elder's hands, chief priests,
and scribes and then be killed,
and on the third day be raised.

Or twice, or even three times!

But from that time on Jesus taught the ugly truth...

We can relate to Peter , can't we?

Someone can say something
we disagree with once or twice
we can keep quiet, but when they
say it over and over again we
hit a breaking point and have
to say something, right?

And that's what happened to Peter, bless his heart! :-)

He had had all he could take
with this suffering and dying business.

He couldn't take it anymore!

It's like he was reminding Jesus,
"Remember that day I named you the Messiah,
Jesus? What you're saying isn't what
Messiah's do!"

So, we can conclude that he didn't fully know
what God's Messiah was going to do.

He was crystal clear on what Israel's Messiah

was supposed to do or the Messiah he'd
pictured in his mind was a supposed to do.

You know, be the kind that conquers with
a sword and restores the kingdom of David
and makes Jerusalem, once again,

the city on a hill and light to many nations.

But God was up to something different and
finally Peter couldn't take it anymore and
broke his silence.

And he had to eat his words. (Pause)

So we learn from Peter here, yes?

If Peter was not always going to "get it,"
then chances are, then neither will we
always get what God is up to. (Pause)

There was a study once that asked Christians
asked to describe God.

They found that often there's
an old man on a throne far, far, away and
he's angry all the time.

Why do most Christians believe this?

Well, because it is easier.

We understand angry men because we've
had fathers in our lives that were distant, or
worse abusive, not all of them, of course,
but it's not secret that most children

find it pleasing to gather themselves in
their mother's arms.

But that is not always the case for some people.

Still, God as an angry man is easier to understand,
that's where we get the theology that God
needed to be bought off by Jesus' crucifixion.

There's never any long-lived good news in
this theology.

It's short term good news until we go deeper
in our thought and faith journey and find Jesus
not buying off God's anger and righteousness

but substituting, as God's Self, in order to
turn people back to God.

I don't know why God chose to respond
to humanity this way but I do know

that sometimes we do things that we think
will help people only to have it blow up
in your face. (Pause)

Maybe that was what happened to Peter.

He was just trying to help Jesus,
but it blew up in his face because the thing
God was up to was stranger than
he could have ever thought.

How can God be killed?

Peter knew it didn't make sense.

So, did Jesus overreact?

I mean, he called Peter - Satan.
That's not a good thing! :-)

Was the language too harsh?

Maybe, but it was done in love and
done because humans think too small.

A joyful life is not only about ourselves.

And while we call Jesus a personal Savior and
we seek to have a personal relationship with

the Son of Man, we don't know
everything God is up to.

And then we find that our thinking might is
too small like Peter's thinking was or
we just picture God as an old man on a throne
far away angry all the time.

And it is just too small...

God is neither male nor female.
God is not far away and always angry and
a joyful life is not only about ourselves.

A joyful life is about pointing people to see
God's love for them.

And it's best done by taking up our cross and
following him.

That is, being of service to the other,
the marginalized, to the least in our midst.

This is our response because God came to us...
the marginalized and the least...

And God did something unbelievable.

God loved us into belief.

And then said, "Come, follow me."

AMEN!