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There is a saying that goes, "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." Of course this means *don't criticize others for doing the same things you yourself do*.

Peter stands in front of the disciples and says, "You'd better tell God you're sorry for killing his son."

Well, we could say to Peter....

"Peter, you are living in a glass house, so don't throw stones."

We could also say, "Peter, don't blame the other disciples for doing something that you did, too."

Or, we could simply say, "Peter, you're a hypocrite."

Because that's what he is.

Peter actually has the audacity to stand in front of the disciples and tell them to repent of the roles that each of them played in the crucifixion and death of Jesus. *Peter says this. Peter!*

The very same Peter who denied even knowing Jesus not once not twice but three times right at that hour when Jesus needed him most! Yes, this is the Peter who turns tail and runs away just at that very moment when he most needs to show Jesus his loyalty, his support, his friendship. But Peter does none of these things...he is a deserter. He is a coward.

And then he has the guts to stand up and tell the other disciples to say they're sorry!

Now he is worse than simply being a coward, now he is a *hypocritical coward*.

Poor Peter.

This whole scene of the blame game reminds us a bit of the tragic lunacy in the garden...in that ridiculous exchange between Adam, Eve, God and Satan...where God says don't eat this and Eve eats it and she makes Adam eat it and they get in trouble and so Adam blames Eve and Eve blames Satan. That's of course the original blame game, that happened so long ago.

But wait,

That all happened *before* Easter.

But now we are post-Easter. Jesus has been raised from the dead! Hell has been crushed! Satan has lost the war! Eden was *then*; Easter is *now*.

So if we are living in these post-resurrection days, why are there still things like blame hanging around? Isn't Easter supposed to erase all that bad stuff?

Well, it certainly seems as though Easter hasn't erased anything for Peter, the hypocritical coward blaming the other disciples for the crucifixion of the very same Jesus he denied even knowing. Easter doesn't seem to have erased Peter's bad stuff.

Nor does it seem to have erased the sad stuff for the two who are walking away from Jerusalem the very same day that Jesus is raised from the dead....it is the very first Easter, and we discover two men saying, "To heck with you, Jerusalem...this whole Jesus thing has been a big, fat lie. We're out of here." And they hit the open road and head towards Emmaus. They are let down. They are disappointed. They are sad. For these two, religion is just another disappointment in a long series of other disappointments in life.

But wait a minute! We're living in these post-resurrection days...*why* are sadness and disappointment still hanging around? Isn't Easter supposed to have erased all that sad stuff? It certainly doesn't seem to have erased any sad stuff for those two men on the road to Emmaus.

So if blame and accusation and disappointment and bad things and sad things are still lurking around in our lives, *has Easter changed anything at all??*

I have a wonderful friend and colleague who was battling some significant depression over Easter this year. He sent me a text on Easter Sunday that read, "Jesus may be risen, but I'm still in the ditch."

How many of us feel this way?

Jesus may be risen, but I'm still in the ditch.

How many of us are guilt-ridden, like Peter, over bad things we've done?

How many of us are hypocrites, and accuse our neighbors of the same exact sins that we ourselves commit?

How many of us are let down by religion and the church and want to just walk away?

How many of us are disappointed in God, for not being the kind of God we want him to be?

How many of us are in the ditch, when the rest of the world seems to be celebrating?

Peter describes this existence in the ditch as a time of exile...and he knows what he's talking about...after he denies knowing Jesus, he runs away...he is all alone—spiritually, mentally, physically alone. Friendless. Dead to the world. One living in exile.

So Peter knows that dark place of ditch existence, that place where there seems to be no hope...and he offers us these words, “Live in reverent fear during your time of exile, knowing that you have been born anew. Set your faith and hope in God and in his enduring words of love for you.”

These words are a beacon of light to the one living in the dark ditch.

To be born anew!

To not be driven further into exile after sinning, but instead to be brought closer to God!

To put faith and hope where they belong—in God—not in humanity, which will only disappoint us. We are to love each other, not put our faith in each other...faith belongs only in God.

To be loved by a patient God, even when we drag all of our old bad things and sad things into these sparkling post-resurrection days.

To be forgiven by a Jesus who knows we have sinned and will sin again and we will deny him and walk away from him and give up on him...this is the Jesus who loves you so much he gives his life for you. This is the Jesus who knows you are in the ditch, but who also has a no-man-left-behind and a no-woman-left-behind and a no-child-left-behind policy...not in terms of politics or military or economy, but in terms of salvation...that Jesus will search every dark ditch in this world until he finds every single person who thinks he is too bad or sad for God to love...and it is God's eternal pleasure to prove him wrong by pulling each one of us from the ditch and bathing us in glory and light.

There is no joy or completion in heaven until you are there.