

**"Everyone"** April 1, 2018, Easter Lection  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Acts 10:34-43

The Lesson Text: Peter's denial of Christ (Luke 22:31-32, NIV) "31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Every journey we undertake is a spiritual one. A spiritual journey is not a smooth easy journey, but it is a journey where spiritual maturity takes place. A spiritual journey is one of falling down and getting up again, because it always takes us to what is not easy, unfamiliar-what is different and challenging. In the process, we experience the resurrection again and again. Stumbling-we're enabled to get up again. As God's people justified through in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, we continually encounter Christ in the life-giving power that is now ours through Christ's resurrection. The bread is his wholeness substituted in the place of our brokenness. The wine

is his life substituted for what was weakness, fear and lifelessness in us. In the resurrection, we unite with our true selves, and each other in Christ.

The story of our own journey rises as the story of Christ, who is alive and goes before us. Paul writes to us and proclaims, “Whatever I am now, it is because God has poured His special favor on me, and not without results.”

Because of Christ’s resurrection life in us, God’s favor lavished on us in Christ, getting up again is what we do. Getting up again is always our conviction, our position, our final status, and God be praised, getting up again is for everyone.

Jesus’ words to Peter were clear. “Simon, (hard-rock-headed stubborn Simon, I have pleaded in prayer for you Simon, and your faith will not fail, even though you will. When you have sorrowed,

and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers because they, too abandoned me.”

Saul was strong. Saul had authority. Saul had the Jewish leaders support. He was on his merry way, like an ICE agent, going to round up Christians and imprison them. Suddenly a light blinded him and he fell to the ground. Christ spoke:

*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do (Acts 9:5-6)*

We can say with Paul, “Last and least of all, as one born in the wrong time, Christ died for our sins too, just as the Scriptures say.” And now I am what I am because of God’s favor.

Likewise, in Acts 10:11-15, Peter was still saying NO to Christ-no to new visions, no to new revelations:

He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

So, Peter's had to get up again. When you get up again in Christ's resurrection power, you, like Peter strengthen others-you have something new to give. So never say, I am down, I am out, I am defeated, I give up. When life and its challenges seem to overwhelm us, turn to God who always raises us up, prays for us and gives us a new perspective. God can use our crises to bring us to a new place, where there's less falling and more moving ahead in faith. This is ours, only as we turn to him in faith. Glory Hallelujah. Amen.