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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - Starting Over

APRIL 09TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer has called failure “the back door to success.” But at first, it often just feels like failure. When we stumble, we may find it difficult to get back up and start again. Even after seeing the risen Christ, Peter seemed to go backward rather than forward. When Peter made the sudden decision to go fishing in John 21:3, he was not merely looking for a way to pass time. Perhaps it was a decision born of necessity. Were the disciples running low on food? Did Peter feel his denial of Christ had disqualified him from serving the Lord, and all that was left was a return to his old vocation?

Whatever motivated Peter, the result was a failure that mirrored his initial call (Luke 5:4–11). When someone on the shore urged them to try again on the other side of the boat, it was John who recognized it was Jesus (v. 7). Jesus’ repeated questions and the command to “feed” His sheep in verses 15–17 could imply Peter’s sudden return to his old vocation sprang from concerns

about the practical needs of the small band of disciples. Yet when they reached the shore with their miraculous catch, Jesus already had “a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread” (v. 9). Jesus’ questions were not intended to shame Peter but to remind him of his true vocation and recommission him. In addition to providing an opportunity to reaffirm his commitment three times (one for each denial), He promised that Peter would one day make good on his boast that he would lay down his life for Jesus (John 13:37).

Jesus’ promise made Peter curious about John’s fate, prompting a quick rebuke. Jesus’ new marching orders for Peter are the same as His original command: “You must follow me” (v. 22).

How do you tend to compare yourself with other believers? What kind of obstacles might this create for you in following Jesus?

Christ, protect us from repeating the apostle Peter’s mistakes. May we never grow so fearful and discouraged that we “go back to fishing”! Give us a steadfast faith to remember Your marching orders to Peter: “You must follow me.”

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