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RESURRECTION DAY

Spring is a time of renewal, a time for light to bring us out of the darkness of winter. There is no better example of this than Easter. There are many aspects of Easter that we can focus on. This year I would like to focus on the purpose behind the ultimate Sacrifice made by our Savior Jesus Christ and the following resurrection and promise of our own heavenly resurrection. It is about having a second chance, which each of us desperately need. Romans 3:23 says "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." A perfect Easter example of this is the Story of Peter and his denial of Christ. In some ways we are all Peter – and God knew that each of us would need a second chance, a clean slate, a fresh start. Do you need a fresh start? Do you need a second chance today? On the first Easter morning, Peter needed one. There in the Upper Room during the Last Supper, he had insisted that he would never deny Christ. But just as Jesus had predicted, Peter not only denied the

Lord, but he denied Him three times. The last glimpse Peter had of Jesus before His crucifixion was in the glow of the fire in the high priest's courtyard, where he actually made eye contact with Jesus. And then he went out and wept bitterly. What kind of look do you think Jesus gave Peter when their eyes met? Do you think it was one of those I-told-you-so looks? Do you think it was one of scorn, as if to say, "How could you betray Me?" I don't think it was either one. I think it was a look of love, a look of compassion that said, "I still love you, Peter." And I believe that is why Peter went out and wept bitterly. He had failed the Lord so miserably. He probably thought there was no hope for him. In Mark 16:6-7 it says: "and he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who has been crucified. He has risen! He is not here. Behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told

you." That Easter morning a message went out from the empty tomb that Jesus had risen, followed by these instructions, "Go, tell His disciples—and Peter. . . ." It was not, "Go tell the disciples, including Peter, James, and John. . . ." It was just Peter, because Peter needed a special word of encouragement, he needed a second chance. Do you need encouragement today? Have you felt that there is no hope? Maybe you have fallen short. Maybe you didn't even plan on it, but it happened. Have Hope! God gave Peter a second chance, and He will give you one, too—because Easter is for all of us, Easter is for those who need a second chance. Rejoice - the tomb is empty, He has risen! He has risen indeed!

Happy Resurrection Day!

Chaplain Mark Smith