



Jesus Talks to Peter

John 21:15-17

Gus marched to one corner of the stone wall surrounding the Kingdom and squinted into the distance for any sign of trouble. Not seeing anything out of place, he marched back to the Kingdom gate and leaned against the post. A smile spread across his face. Gus loved guarding the gate. The job made him feel very important. His thoughts were interrupted by a barking sound. The young knight-in-training jumped to attention. "Halt! Who goes there?" He yelled in his most commanding voice. Rufus, the Dragon appeared and barked again. "Ah, it's you Rufus and you're barking again, good! What is your message?" Gus asked as he relaxed his hand from the handle of his sword.

"Watch out for robbers," Rufus barked.

"Thank you, Rufus! I will not let any thieves pass this gate on my watch," Gus declared gallantly as he raised his sword and promptly dropped it. "I will not let any robbers pass by me," he declared out loud.

"Then may I suggest you look out for ones that sneak up behind you," said a voice from over his left shoulder.

Gus turned and saw a man in a velvet robe. "Oh thank you, Robespierre," Gus said and then went back to scanning the road for robbers. After a moment, he turned again and yelled. "Ack! You're Robespierre! Halt!" Gus grabbed the robed man and wrestled him to the ground. "Aha! Got you! You're under arrest!"

"Wait! Let me explain!" Robespierre begged as he struggled to free himself.

"I'll wait for nothing!" Gus proclaimed.

Robespierre tried to sit up but Gus was holding him down with all his strength. "Please, Mr. Knight, I'm trying to tell you I have permission to be here."

"By whose authority do you come into this Kingdom?" Gus growled.

"By the authority of Prince Loves-a-lot," Robespierre gasped.

"Ha! Do you expect me to believe that Prince Loves-a-lot would give you a pass to enter this gate?" Gus huffed as he jumped up and stared down at his prisoner.

Robespierre reached into his pocket and handed a folded sheet of green paper to Gus. "Here you are. One pass!"

"Let me see that!" Gus snatched the paper out of Robespierre's hand and read aloud: "Dear Gus, Please welcome my friend, Robespierre into the Kingdom. He wants to hear more about the King. Love, Prince Loves-a-lot." Gus looked up and waved the paper in Robespierre's face. "Did you write this?" he demanded.

Robespierre smiled. "Would I do that?" he asked. "Prince Loves-a-lot told me about Jesus and we prayed so that I could enter the Kingdom."

Gus studied the green paper again. He looked up and stared at Robespierre with narrowed eyes. "I'm not convinced, but because you have this pass I will let you enter. But, I'm keeping an eye on you," he warned.

Robespierre let out a sigh of relief as he stood up and brushed the dirt from his long, dark robe. Gus looked at the little man he had just allowed to enter the Kingdom gate and wondered if he really had changed. Maybe if he told the man a story from the Bible, he could tell if he really wanted to learn about the King. "Are you familiar with God's Word, Robespierre?"

"Which word is that? Hallelujah?" asked Robespierre.

"I thought so, you don't have a clue," Gus said. "I'll get God's Word out, right now!" He took the Bible from its special window and flipped through the pages. With no real plan of doing so, he turned to John 21. "Ah, this is when Jesus appeared to His disciples after He died and rose again. Did you know that after He rose from the dead, Jesus appeared to over 500 of His followers?"

"Sacre Bleu! I did not know that!" Robespierre exclaimed. "This man was amazing!"

"On this day, the disciples were fishing and Jesus was cooking some fish on the shore. He invited Peter and the men to join Him," Gus explained.

"Did they have French Toast?" Robespierre asked.

Gus shook his head. "Good question. Actually, they just had fish. But then Jesus started to talk with Simon Peter. Jesus asked him, 'Do you truly love Me?'"

"What did Simon Peter say?" Robespierre asked.

"He said, 'Yes Lord, You know that I love You,'" Gus said. Then he looked at the Bible and read, "Jesus said, 'Feed My lambs.'"

"Hold on, what does loving Jesus have to do with farm animals?" Robespierre asked.

Gus laughed. "Jesus wasn't talking about animals. He was calling the people who follow Jesus His lambs."

Robespierre felt terribly confused. "Why? Did they have fluffy tails?"

Gus laughed at the idea. "No! But just like young lambs need help to grow, new followers need help to grow in their faith."

Robespierre still did not understand. "So, did Peter give them carrots?"

"No, Jesus actually questioned Peter three times." Gus looked back down and read, "Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' Jesus said, 'Take care of My sheep.'"

"Now Peter has to take care of sheep?" Robespierre asked.

"It's another way Jesus told him to feed and care for His followers," Gus explained.

Robespierre sighed. "They sure are hungry all the time."

Gus nodded. "That's because they're growing. It's not their bodies, but their faith, that is growing. The Bible is like food for their faith." Gus stopped and let out a loud sigh. "Oh, you sure do ask a lot of questions!"

Robespierre shrugged. "Well, that's because I have never heard this before!"

Gus suddenly stood up straight and smiled broadly. "Of course!" he announced. "Now I see why God led me to this story. I'm supposed to feed you!"

Robespierre patted his stomach. "I just ate, thanks. But you go ahead and eat."

"No, I don't want to feed you food. You are now God's lamb and I think He wants me to help feed your faith," Gus explained.

"He does?" Robespierre asked.

"Yes, of course! Jesus wasn't just talking to Peter! He was telling all of us that it's our job to help new believers know God's Word and grow in their faith. And we're to feed the poor, to help the sick, and to be a servant to others! That's how we serve the King. Serving the King is the noblest thing!" Gus exclaimed. "Robespierre, sit down here with me while I watch the gate and let's read another Bible story—I can't wait to feed you!"

Robespierre smiled as he and Gus sat down just inside the Kingdom gate. "Okay, I'm famished!"