

## Peter's Story by Gill Hartley

Peter was one of Jesus' special followers, one of his closest friends. He was one of the first that Jesus had chosen - one day when he was out fishing with his brother, Andrew. Since then Peter had gone everywhere with Jesus. Right from the start, Peter knew that Jesus was no ordinary man and as the weeks and months went by he began to think that perhaps Jesus was the Special One sent by God to help people. In fact, he had even told Jesus so. One day Jesus had asked his special followers who they thought he really was; the others had hesitated, but Peter had come right out with it and said, 'You're the Messiah, the Special One sent by God.' After he'd said it, Jesus had begun to tell them what was going to happen to him - that he was going to die. Peter was shocked. 'What are you talking about?' he demanded. 'You aren't going to be killed! Haven't I just told you that you're God's Special One? No one can kill you!' But Jesus had just told him that he didn't understand - and he was right - Peter didn't understand!

Well, now it seemed that Jesus was right again. Peter stood miserably in the courtyard trying to keep warm by the side of the fire. Jesus had been arrested. He'd been taken to the High Priest's house for questioning. Peter couldn't believe it. How could Jesus have let it happen? Why hadn't God stopped the soldiers? Where were all the others? Why was he the only one of Jesus' special followers there? Mind you, Peter thought, he couldn't really blame the others for running away; it had taken him all his courage just to follow at a distance. He didn't want to get arrested as well - he knew what the palace guards were like and what might happen to him! So he stood there and wondered what to do. He knew that Jesus was being questioned by the High Priest and his council in the big hall upstairs. There was nothing he could do.

Just then one of the servant girls came up to where Peter was standing, to warm herself by the fire. She looked at him and asked, 'Weren't you one of the people with that man from Nazareth?' Peter panicked. He didn't want to be caught, so he blurted out, 'I don't know what you mean! I've got nothing to do with him!' And he walked away from the servant girl, away from the fire and out into the porch. He'd been standing there a little while when she passed by again. He heard her say to the other servants, 'He's one of them!' By now Peter was beginning to get really frightened, and without stopping to think he said it again, only a bit louder this time, 'I don't know what you mean! I've got nothing to do with him!'

After she'd gone Peter stood there, unable to move, thinking hard, trying to make up his mind. What was he going to do? Should he creep quietly away and leave Jesus to his fate? That might be the safest thing to do. But how could he leave Jesus there on his own - he was one of his closest friends! True, he hadn't been much use to him so far. He hadn't done anything to stop him being arrested - in fact he'd been a real coward back there in the Garden of Gethsemane, but even so he couldn't just abandon him now. Could he?

While he was still deep in thought, one of the other people waiting in the courtyard turned to him and said, 'You are one of them, aren't you? You must be, I can tell you come from Galilee by the way you talk.' That was too much for Peter. He began to swear and shouted, 'I've told you all! I don't know the man!' and he rushed out of the courtyard. As he went, he heard a cock crowing and he remembered back to that day when he had said that Jesus was God's Special One, and Jesus had told him that he didn't understand. He remembered, too, the time he'd told Jesus that he'd never leave him, and Jesus had said, 'You will. There will come a day when you will deny that you know me. Before the cock crows on that day you will have denied me three times.' And Peter broke down and cried.