

Dear Lord,

It's me, Pete, and I am filled with so many different emotions right now I don't know what to think. My daughter Annie was just in a horrific car accident and she is, right now, on a table being attended to by doctors. The car is totaled. And I have no idea where this is going – the extent of the damage, her injuries, the dangers. I just know that they told me to wait here, and soon I would know more. But what I saw when she came in did not look good.

Part of me feels strong and confident. You have been faithful to me throughout my life. When I was in my own car accident you pulled me through all the pain and all the doctors and all the rehab. It wasn't easy, but I saw you work miracles in my muscles and bones enabling me to do things I thought I might never be able to do again. And so many other times you have been with me too, Lord. When Annie was born she was two months premature and we wondered if she'd even see this day. But there you were. And when Barb had her knee problems, you drew us together as a family and led us through it.

Yes, part of me feels strong and confident.

Part of me, though, is angry. I wonder, how could you let this happen? This is a girl who has so much going for her. Straight A

student, great test scores, hard working – she's got all her priorities right. Next year she would go to college and probably be a real light for you there. She's already talked about getting involved in the campus ministry. Why would you allow a beautiful girl like this be involved in this kind of tragedy? It doesn't make sense. Couldn't you pick some hoodlum or mean-spirited child instead?

Part of me feels strong. Part of me feels angry.

Quite frankly, part of me is also full of doubts. For my entire life I have put my faith in you, even as some friends and relatives told me that religion was just a crutch for weak people – a fantasy, an illusion. “God helps them who help themselves,” is their favorite quote. But I always said, “Oh no. Jesus is alive! He's my Savior.” But inside, I have always had some lingering questions – things I don't understand or can't explain. Bad things happening to good people is one of them.

Part of me is confident, part of me feels angry, part of me is doubting.

You know what else, Lord, part of me is afraid? I've never been one who likes uncertainty. I prefer all my ducks in a row with little left to chance. And now, I don't know what I might be

facing. Could Annie end up in a persistent vegetative state? Will she need round the clock care? Can I afford the medical bills -- will she have her mind? I'm scared. Really scared Lord.

Scared, doubting, angry confident. But that's not all.

Part of me feels guilty. After all, she is my daughter and I could have had more restrictions on her driving. She's only 17. She doesn't have much experience behind the wheel. She probably shouldn't have been out there so late at night. I could have picked her up. But I've gotten used to her making her own way back and forth -- and she liked the independence. But perhaps I should have done more.

O Lord, what a jumbled mess I am. Where can I turn to find some answers?

Dear Pete,

There is another Peter who knows your conflict, your pain, your struggles. He is my disciple, and 2000 years ago, on the night I was betrayed, he was a *jumble* of mixed emotions too.

He thought he was brick wall -- a tower of strength -- a leader among his peers. He thought nothing could sway him from his firm devotion to me and my message. But as the night progressed, he became more and more confused.

It began as I tried to show my disciples what kind of Messiah I had come to be. I took a basin and did that which was the job of a slave -- to wash feet. I washed my disciples feet! And I did it because I wanted them to know that my mission was not to be glorified and honored on earth. My mission was to be a servant -- to be despised, rejected, and to bear the sins of all.

Peter was, at first, indignant at the thought of my washing his feet. He had envisioned me as a great king on a white throne ruling Jerusalem. I shouldn't be doing such menial tasks on behalf of others, he thought. But after a word from me, Peter jumped on the bandwagon and allowed me to be his servant. He didn't really understand -- but he certainly wanted to do what would please me.

My servant message continued as I broke bread with my disciples and shared with them the most precious gifts of my body and blood which would be given and shed for them.

Again, Peter and his comrades didn't fully understand what I was doing and were horrified that I might possibly believe they would fall away from me. Peter, in fact, declared: "Even if all fall away, I never will."

You know the rest of the story. It wasn't long after that that Peter was sleeping while I was praying -- that he was lifting swords when I was taking up my cross -- that he was denying me while I was saving him -- he was out weeping when I was on the cross dying.

You see, he was full of all the same feelings as you. Faith, fear, doubts, anger, guilt. When he found himself weeping bitterly on that night, after he had denied me three times, he was a jumbled mess of confusion and emotion. He didn't know where to turn or what to do. Was I really the Messiah or was I just a man? Was he in danger too, since he was one of my followers? And now the One He followed was pierced, beaten, mocked and scorned. The One he loved seemed powerless, weak, and broken. He denied, and then he felt awful about denying.

But here's what Peter learned that night -- and here's what I want you to learn too. The God of the Universe never sits idle while His people are in need. My Father saw the need of His people for rescue -- and so He sent me. And I became a Servant.

And what does a servant do? He makes it his TOP priority for the one he serves to be taken care of. For me it meant washing feet, breaking bread, going to trial, crucifixion and death. That's how my people would be saved from sin, and I loved them enough to do it.

And I loved Peter enough to take his jumbled emotions from that night, and to bring order and sense to it all. In my time. His denial was forgiven, his fears were quieted, his doubts were dispelled, his anger silenced, and his faith strengthened. Soon afterward I said to him, "Feed my sheep. Go and make disciples of all nations." And He became a mighty force in the growth of the early church.

I will be there for you too, Pete, you can count on it. For I am your Servant Savior, and I love you more than you will ever know.

So let me wash you, let me cleanse you, let me nourish you, guide you, strengthen and sustain you. Trust me. I will not leave you alone through this ordeal. Trust me, and I will surround you with my arms of help. Trust me, and you will never be alone.

I have a plan for you in the middle of it all -- and for your daughter too. Just you wait and see. Be patient, hold on, and I will be as faithful to you in your struggle as I was to my Father in my mission.