

THE MAN CALLED SIMON PETER – PART 2

As mentioned last week, we are **about to** embark on a study of the book of II Peter. I say “about to” because we haven’t started quite yet. Why not? Because we are first **getting to know some things** about this man called Simon Peter.

Some of you “It’s a Wonderful Life” fans know that in the opening scene, the angel Clarence is given the assignment of going to earth to help George Bailey. Before heading to earth, however, there is something Clarence must do first. The angel in charge tells Clarence to “Sit down.” “Why?” ask Clarence. “Because if you are going to help a man, you’re going to have to know something about him, aren’t you?”

In the same way, we need to get to know some things **about Peter**. Why? Not to **help him**, of course, **but to help us** see what kind of man God used as **His** servant! If God can **change** and **transform** and **use** Peter, He can do the same **with** and **for** us!

That’s not the only reason to learn about Peter, though. Another reason is because it will help us better understand **what he wrote**—the books of First and Second Peter! The more we know about Peter’s **strengths and weaknesses**—and successes and failures—the more insight we will have into what he says. Besides, both books begin with his name—so God obviously expects us to know some things about him!

Last week we looked at three characteristics of Simon Peter.

1. Peter was the reactive one

He was impulsive. He **often did** what the other disciples were afraid to do—or **said** what the other disciples were afraid to say! Last Sunday we looked at two examples: 1) First, when Peter got out of the boat and walked on water; and 2) Second, when Peter whacked off the ear of Malchus with a sword!

We also noted last time that... **2. Peter was the rebuking one**

Here’s part of the quote I gave you last week from Alexander Whyte: “... no disciple ventures **to reprove his Master** but Peter.” (Bible Characters From the NT; Vol 1; pg 46).

Did Peter **rebuke** Jesus? Yes, he did—on at least two different occasions!

1) First, Peter thought he knew **God’s plan** better than Jesus did! What makes me say that? Because He rebuked Jesus when Jesus said that He would be crucified in Jerusalem!

Mt 16:22 “Then Peter took Him, and began to **rebuke Him**, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

2) Second, Peter thought he **knew himself** better than Jesus did! Jesus, the All-Knowing One told **all the disciples** that they would forsake Him that night. Peter boldly—and proudly—proclaimed in **Mt 26:33** “...Though all men shall be offended because of thee, **yet will I never be offended.**”

Good intentions are **required** for good actions, but good intentions don’t always **lead to** good actions!

And thirdly, we noted last week that... **3. Peter was the repentant one**

Peter understood his sinfulness when Jesus called him to become a “fisher of men”—“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord”—and when he went out and wept bitterly after denying he knew Jesus the night before His crucifixion.

It is no wonder that God had Peter write about the need for humility as recorded in I Peter 5:5b-6 “... and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and **giveth grace to the humble.** ⁶ **Humble yourselves therefore** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:”

This morning, we are going to look at 3 more characteristics of the man called Simon Peter.

I’m beginning with the number 4 because this is part 2—and I just gave you the previous three!

4. Peter was the rebuked one

Peter wasn’t just the one who **rebuked** Jesus—he was also rebuked **by Jesus**! Here’s the first half of the quote from Whyte that I gave you last week: “**No disciple is so pointedly reprov’d by our Lord as Peter...**”

When did Jesus **rebuke** Peter? There are numerous examples, we will look at just two.

A. Jesus calls Peter “Satan!” Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 16 and follow along as I read vss 21-22. This is one we looked at last week and I mentioned it just a moment ago, but I want us to see it again.

Now vs 23. Not very flattering, is it, to have Jesus call you “Satan”?! Jesus had told the religious rulers of the day that “they were of their father, the devil” but **Peter is the only person** that Jesus directly calls “Satan.” Why such seemingly “harsh” words?

--Is Jesus just emphasizing the fact that when you are fighting against **the plan of God**, you are **acting like** the devil—and **working for** the devil! I think it is a little more involved than that.

--Let’s think this through a little bit. What does Peter **not want** Jesus **to do**? “Go unto Jerusalem...and suffer...and be killed!” Peter does not want Jesus **to die**!

On the surface, it is a **good and noble thing** to want to protect the life of Jesus! But...Jesus **came to die**; that was the reason He came to earth in the first place! **Satan** did not want Jesus to die—Satan did not want God to **provide a way** for mankind to be forgiven—so Peter was **speaking for Satan** when he rebuked Jesus’ talk of His upcoming death! Here are a couple of thoughts in way of application.

a) Did it “feel good” to be called “Satan” by Jesus? Obviously not! We need to remember that the Word of God doesn’t always **make us “feel good”**—but God’s words are what will always be best **for us**, and they will always be truth! **Surgery** doesn’t always feel good—but most times it is necessary!

b) Jesus told Peter he was not “savouring” the things that be of God. The word “savour” does not mean what we usually think of when we hear the word. Jesus was not saying that you are not **enjoying and relishing** the things of God. What He is saying, though, is you are not **thinking about**—you are not directing your mind toward—the things of God.

What about us? **Are our minds** directed toward the things of God? Do we **think about God** and His will for our lives and how to please Him—or are we preoccupied with **us and our things**?

Not only does Jesus rebuke Peter by calling him Satan...

B. Jesus tells Peter to “mind your own business!” We see that in John 21; let’s turn there.

We’re going to begin with vs 12 so we have a little of the context. Please follow along as I read vss 12-14.

--In vss 15-17, Jesus reminds Peter that He is **not done with him** and still needs him in His service. Now vs 18. The first part of the verse is fairly easy to understand, but what is Jesus telling Peter when He says “...but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”

--Vs 19 gives us the answer: “This spake He [Jesus], signifying by what death he should glorify God.” Jesus was telling Peter that Peter’s death would involve “stretching forth his hands” ...and being “**gird**”—meaning having his belt tightened—by someone else...and being “**carried**”—instead of him walking himself.

Many commentators suggest that this refers to Peter being put to death the same way Jesus was—**by crucifixion**!

--Let’s not miss the end of vs 19 “...And when He had spoken this”—after telling Peter **how he would die**—“He saith unto him, Follow me.”

--Would it be **hard** to follow Jesus if you knew it would result in your death? **Probably**—even though it shouldn’t! Why shouldn’t it matter? Because we are all going to die, and we don’t know **when**—or **how**. Not only that, we can’t **stop it** from happening! What we can do, though, is decide **who** we are going to live **for**.

--Will **any believer** get to the end of their life and say, “I wish **I hadn’t lived for God**?” No one will say or think that, will they? But...there will be some—and sadly, **I believe many**—that will lament in their old age that they wasted their life trying to **please only themselves**! Don’t be one of them!

Let’s not forget, Jesus says the same thing to us that He said to Peter: “**Follow me**.”

Now vs 20-21. **Who** is Peter referring to? John!

What is Peter asking? In essence, Peter is saying this: ‘You’ve told me how **I’m** going to die, but **what about John**? What is going to happen **to him**?’ What is Jesus’ response to Peter’s question?

Vs 23 “If I will that he tarry til I come”—if I decide that John lives until I return—“what is that to thee?” ‘What difference does it make to you! You worry about you, Peter!’

In other words, ‘Stay in your lane’—and ‘Mind your own business, Peter!’

Is Jesus **being mean or rude**? No! Jesus is simply telling Peter to “Follow Him” regardless of **how he is going to die**—and **how long** John is going to live!

What about us? Can we **get distracted by** what God is doing for this person or that person and forget that **our responsibility** is to faithfully follow God—regardless of if others seem to be getting the “better end of the stick” or not?

But Peter isn’t just the rebuked one... **5. Peter was a revelation-receiver**

What does that mean? It means that Peter supernaturally received spiritual **information—and insight**—from God! Stated another way, there were things that **God revealed to Peter** that He didn’t reveal to the others.

Once again, there are several examples, but we will look at just two. Probably the most familiar one is found in Mt 16 where Peter says... **A. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

Please turn again to Mt 16, beginning with vs 13. Here Jesus asks a simple question “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” Their answer is given in vs 14.

Now vs 15. Jesus directs the question to **them**—the disciples.

In vs 16, we have the response of Peter already referred to: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” What does that mean? Let’s break it down a little bit.

“Thou art the **Christ...**” “Christ” comes from the Greek word “Khris-tos” and occurs 538 times in the Greek NT. It comes from a word that means “anoint with olive oil” and carries the idea of “Anointed One.” Jesus is the “Anointed One,” the promised coming Messiah—and Son of Man—foretold by Daniel and Isaiah.

“Son of the living God” **does not mean** God physically “fathered” Jesus—it means that Jesus was the **representation** of God—of the **same nature as God**...and **one with** God...and **equal to** God.”

The Jews understood that when Jesus claimed to be the **Son** of God, He was claiming **to be** God!

John 5:18 “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that **God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.**”

So **where** did Peter get this information from? How did an **uneducated fisherman**—who humanly-speaking had difficulty understanding that Jesus **came to earth to die**—come to realize that Jesus was the Promised Messiah from God?

--Vs 17. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona [son of Jonas]: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, **but my Father which is in heaven.**” Somehow—in a way not explained to us in this passage—God revealed this truth to Peter. It was not by **audible teaching in the ear**; instead, it was by **an impression of truth upon the heart**.

On the one hand, **we can’t explain it**; but on the other hand, **we can!** Many people **hear**—with their ears—the good news that Jesus left heaven and came to earth to die for their sins. And many people can **intellectually understand—and agree**—with that truth in their minds. **But...** that is not the same as the Spirit of God impressing upon **our heart** and **stirring** our hearts and saying **to us** in a still, small voice: “This is true—and you need this for you!”

Jesus Himself reminds us of the necessity of God “opening our eyes” and “turning on the light bulb.”

John 6:44 “No man can come to me, **except the Father which hath sent me draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day.” My apologies for having to skip vs 18; we will come back to that another time.

Let’s turn now to Acts 10. The revelation Peter received here is quite different than what we just looked at in Mt 16. In Mt 16 we aren’t told exactly **how** Peter received revelation from God, but in Acts 10 we **are told—through a dream!** What was the revelation—the new information—that Peter received from God?

B. Bring the gospel to the Gentiles! Please follow along as I read vs 9-16. You have the picture, right? Peter is hungry...falls asleep and begins to dream. In his dream a sheet comes down containing animals and birds—many of which Peter **could not eat** because they were forbidden by the dietary rules in the law of Moses. He is told to “Rise, Peter; kill, and eat”—but Peter refuses.

This happens three times—and each time Peter is told, “**What God hath cleansed**, that call not thou common.” Now vs 17-20. Here we see that while Peter is thinking on this vision, men sent from Cornelius—a **Gentile**—come to call upon Peter. Peter is told to go with them, “doubting nothing: for I have sent them.”

Peter goes and meets Cornelius and some of his family and friends. Now vs 28. The vision, then, was not just about **dietary rules**—it was now very plainly God’s will to share the gospel with **non-Jewish** people! And thankfully for us, the 12 **Jewish** apostles did that very thing!

Lastly, let’s consider... **6. Peter as the remade one**

What became of Peter after he denied Jesus the night before Jesus’ crucifixion? We know from Luke 24:34 and I Corinthians 15:5 that Jesus **met with Peter** at some point—**alone**—on Resurrection Day. We also know from John 21—a passage we looked at earlier—that Jesus instructed Peter to “Feed His sheep—and lambs” and to “Follow Him!” And we know from the chapter we are in now that Peter was used of God to reinforce the truth that the gospel should be brought to the **Gentiles**—meaning non-Jews—as well as to the Jews.

There are a number of instances in the book of Acts where we see **the transformation** that had taken place in Peter’s life. I’m going to point out just two.

A. Peter’s message to those who had crucified Christ.

We find that in Acts 2; let’s turn there. We obviously can’t read through the whole chapter, but I do want to highlight a few things.

--Vs 14. Peter is the spokesman of the 12. Who is he preaching to? “Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem...”

--Now vs 22. Peter preaches Christ to them and reminds them that God validated the ministry of Jesus by doing “miracles and wonders and signs”—and that they themselves were witnesses of those things.

--Vs 23. “Him”—Jesus—“**ye have taken**, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:” Let that sink in... Here is Peter—**previously fearful** when a servant girl said, “This man was also with Him”—**fearlessly proclaiming** to the ones he had been afraid of—“**You and your wicked hands** have killed the Son of God!”

And if that isn’t enough, Peter tells them **the same thing again**—in the same sermon! Vs 36. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom **ye have crucified**, both Lord and Christ.”

No fear here, is there? And no mincing of words! It seems to me that **Peter didn’t really care** what they did to him! Was he fearless **because he knew he wouldn’t die** until he was old? He knew that—Jesus had told him that—but I don’t believe that is why he was fearless.

He was fearless because He was **following Christ**—the forgiving, living, loving and sovereign Savior! Peter preaches a similar message in Acts 3:12-26.

Lastly, let’s turn to Acts 4. Here we see... B. Peter’s message to those who wanted him to stop preaching.

1) First, the **command** not to speak. Notice Acts 4:16-18. What was Peter and John’s response? Vs 19. ‘You tell us what is more right in God’s sight: to do what **God** says—or to do what **you** say!’

2) In vs 20, we see their “**compulsion to speak**.” They felt compelled; they had an irresistible impulse to speak for God. They couldn’t help themselves! And so—even though they are commanded by “the authorities” **not to preach Christ**, they do anyway!

3) Jump ahead now to Acts 5:27-28. Here we see them being **confronted for speaking**. In vs 29, we see... 4) Their **commitment to obey** God. In vs 30, we again see the fearlessness of Peter: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, **whom ye slew** and hanged on a tree.”

5) And in Acts 5:40, we see the **consequences of their disobedience**: “And him they agreed: and when they had **called the apostles, and beaten them**, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”

Quite a transformation, isn't it? Peter goes from denying that he even **knew** Jesus, to fearlessly telling **the same people** that he had been afraid of that they were guilty of the **blood** of Jesus!

We need that kind of transformation, don't we? Sadly, we have **the fearful part** “down pat.” Although we don't **openly deny** that we know Jesus, we are really good at blending in...and being quiet...and not making waves. We are **undercover Christians**—and conceal our identity quite well!

But...that's not what God wants, is it? He wants us to **be bold—and burdened**—to share Christ with others. And Peter serves as an example to us that God can “remake” us—He can transform us—the same way that He did Peter. But we have to **want Him** to change us—and have to **ask Him** to change us.

Are you doing that? Let's start today!

So what would God have us do in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. Look at your life and be **honest**.

--Do you savour—do you think about—the things of God and how you can please Him?

2. Look at your life and be **humble!** Don't be self-satisfied. We are not as bold as we should be; we need to grow in our burden and boldness.

3. Be **hungry!** Jesus said in **Mt 5:6** “Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst** after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” We will not change and grow if we have no desire to change and grow.

But if we do have that desire—if we do hunger and thirst—God will transform us—just like He did Peter!