

THE PERSON OF PETER

SABBATH APRIL 1, 2017

AIM: To show the transformation of Peter's life.

KNOW: That failures and triumphs are part and parcel of the Christian journey.

FEEL: The need to be constantly grateful for God's call upon our lives despite who we are.

DO: Respond to the call of Jesus to be fishers of people for His Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

Peter is the author of the two books (1 and 2 Peter) that bear his name. He was one of the early followers of Jesus; he remained with Jesus during the Lord's ministry here; and he was one of the first disciples to see the empty tomb. So Peter had a wealth of experiences from which, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he could draw in order to write these powerful letters. "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (*2 Pet. 1:16, NASB*). Peter appears often in the Gospels, revealing both his triumphs and failures. Most important, Peter knew what it was to make mistakes, to be forgiven, and to move forward in faith and humility. Having experienced for himself the grace of God, he remains a powerful voice for all of us who need to experience that same grace, as well. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*).

MEMORY TEXT: "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (*Matthew 14:30, 31, NKJV*).

READ: Luke 5:1 - 11.

MEDITATE: Vertical relationship.

QUESTION: What does this text tell us about Peter's spiritual condition?

SHARE IN TWOS: Horizontal relationship.

APPLICATION: Name two ways you can express gratitude for the call to be a coworker with Christ?

* After the miracle, Peter sensed something more in Jesus, something holy in contrast to his own sinfulness. Peter's realization of his sinfulness, and his willingness to admit it publicly, shows just how open he was to the Lord. No wonder He had been called! Whatever his faults, and they were many, Peter was a spiritual man who was ready to follow the Lord, regardless of the cost. *

TAKE AWAY: CONTACT WITH JESUS = TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE.

READ: Matthew 16:13-17, 23.

MEDITATE: Vertical relationship.

QUESTION: How significant was Peter's confession of Christ? What were the implications?

SHARE IN FOURS: Horizontal relationship.

APPLICATION: What do you have in common with Peter?

* Peter here spoke boldly of his faith in Jesus. This was to be a turning point in the ministry of Jesus, even though the disciples, including Peter, had much more to learn. As soon as the disciples recognize Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus begins teaching that He must suffer and die (see [Matt. 16:21-23](#)), a concept that Peter could not accept. Peter goes as far as to "rebuke" Jesus. Jesus then turns to Peter and says, "Get behind Me, Satan" ([Matt. 16:23, NKJV](#)). This is one of the harshest things that He said to anybody during His ministry; yet, He did it for Peter's own good. Peter's words reflected his own desires, his own selfish attitude about what he wanted. Jesus had to stop him in his tracks, right then and there (and though Jesus was really speaking to Satan, Peter got the message). Peter needed to learn that serving the Lord would involve suffering. That he learned this lesson is clear in his later writings (see [1 Pet. 4:12](#)). *

TAKE AWAY: SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES SUFFERING.

READ: Matthew 14: 22-33.

MEDITATE: Vertical relationship.

QUESTION: What are the most crucial messages you can take from this story?

SHARE IN GROUPS OF THREES': Horizontal relationship.

APPLICATION: What doubts and fears do you have?

* Why? Could not Jesus have kept Peter afloat regardless of Peter's fear? Jesus, however, allowed Peter to reach the point where he could do nothing but cry out in his helplessness, "Lord, save me!" ([Matt. 14:30, NKJV](#)). Jesus then stretched out His hand and did just what Peter had asked. The fact that "Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him," ([Matt. 14:31, NKJV](#)), when Jesus could simply have kept him afloat without the physical contact, surely helped Peter realize just how much he had to learn to depend upon Jesus. *

TAKE AWAY: DEPENDING UPON JESUS IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR FEAR & DOUBT.

READ: Luke 22: 31-34, 54 - 62.

MEDIATE: Vertical relationship.

QUESTION: What can we learn from the failures of Peter?

SHARE OPENLY: Horizontal relationship.

APPLICATION: How willing must we be to restore others when they have hurt or disappointed us?

* Peter's intentions were good. And, in fact, he showed more courage than did the other disciples. He actually followed Jesus in order to discover what would happen to Him. But in doing so, he decided to hide his true identity. This compromise, this deviation from the path of what is good and right, led him to deny his Lord *three times*, exactly as Jesus had warned him. It was Jesus' forgiveness that made Peter one of the prime leaders of the early Christian church. Yes, Peter knew what it meant to be forgiven. He knew first hand just what the gospel was all about because he had experienced, not just the reality of his human sinfulness but the greatness and depth of God's love and grace toward sinners. *

TAKE AWAY: GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER THAN OUR FAILURES.

READ: Galatians 2: 9-14

MEDITATE: Vertical Relationship

QUESTION: What do the text tell you about Peter the Church leader?

SHARE: In groups of six.

APPLICATION: In your groups sing a song that reflects your learning from this week's lesson.

* Even as a church leader, even as someone clearly called of the Lord (Jesus told Peter, "Feed my sheep" [John 21:17](#)), even as the one who received the vision about not calling "any man common or unclean" ([Acts 10:28](#)), Peter still had some important growing to do. Paul saw Peter's actions as frank hypocrisy and he wasn't afraid to challenge him on it. In fact, Paul used the opportunity to express the key teaching of the Christian faith: justification by faith alone (see [Gal. 2:14-16](#)). *

TAKE AWAY: JESUS MAY USE SOMEONE TO POINT OUT OUR BLIND SPOTS SO WE CAN GROW.

SUMMARY

- 1. CONTACT WITH JESUS = TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE.**
- 2. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES SUFFERING.**
- 3. DEPENDING UPON JESUS IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR FEAR & DOUBT.**
- 4. GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER THAN OUR FAILURES.**
- 5. JESUS MAY USE SOMEONE TO POINT OUT OUR BLIND SPOTS SO WE CAN GROW.**