

Peter, A Transformation In Progress

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1. GOD CAN USE ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO OBEY HIM.

2. There is a question often debated: “Are leaders born or are they made?”

- a. In Peter’s case
 - i. we can see that the answer is “yes”.
- b. Peter had a lot going for him
 - i. that made him a leader,
 - ii. but there was a lot of work that had to be done on him
 - iii. by Jesus
 - iv. **to make him what he became.**

A Sculptor and Marble

A tourist once asked a sculptor how he created such a beautiful horse from a block of marble.

- a. The sculptor replied, "I simply removed everything that wasn't the horse." Jesus when meeting Simon bar Jonah
 - v. Jesus renamed him from Simon to Peter
 - 1. (when translated: Rock)
 - vi. Jesus looked at Simon the fisherman
 - 1. and saw Peter the apostle.
- ### 3. As we will see in the life of Peter
- a. God can take very flawed people
 - b. And transform them into pillars of strength
 - c. God often sees in us what we cannot yet see ourselves.
- ### 4. **First** let’s look at the things that were in the raw materials of Peter
- a. that gave Jesus so much to work with
 - b. as he transformed Peter
 - c. **from** an impulsive fisherman
 - d. **into** the rock of the church.

5. FAITH MUST STAY FOCUSED ON CHRIST

Matthew 14:22–33

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out

in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

- a. Peter was the only disciple willing to step out of the boat.
 - i. As long as he looked at Jesus, he walked on the water.
 - ii. When he focused on the wind and waves, he began to sink.
 - 1) He cried,
 - 2) "Lord, save me!"
 - 3) Jesus immediately reached out and caught him.
- ii. Peter took the initiative
 - 1) That the other disciples didn't do
 - 2) He actually walked on water

ILLUSTRATION

- a. Think of a baby learning to walk
- b. When that baby starts taking those very first steps
- c. What is the parents' response?
 - i. Excited
 - ii. Encouraged the baby with positive reinforcement

6. WHAT WAS JESUS' RESPONSE?

"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

- a. Not what you would expect!
- b. It was a subtle rebuke
- c. Jesus expected him to go the distance
- d. There is a lesson in this for us
 - i. God will push you beyond what you think you can handle
 - ii. He's not going to pat you on the back if you fail
 - iii. His expectations for you go beyond what you think you can do
 - iv. He is chipping away from you the pieces that don't look like a disciple
 - v. Like the sculpturer with the horse
- e. Another Lesson in this is:
 - i. Faith is not the absence of storms.

- ii. Faith is keeping our eyes on Christ during the storm.
 - 1) Many Christians begin well
 - 2) but become distracted by
 - i. persecution
 - ii. fear,
 - iii. finances,
 - iv. health,
 - v. or uncertainty.
- iii. Jesus remains the answer.

f. Peter Learns to Trust Jesus

7. FAITH IS BUILT THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Luke 8

- a. Peter witnessed miracle after miracle.
 - A storm calmed.
 - Demons cast out of Legion living in the tombs.
 - A woman 12-year bleeding problem healed.
 - Jairus' (synagogue leader) daughter raised from the dead.
- b. Every miracle strengthened Peter's understanding
 - i. of who Jesus really was.

Matthew 17:1–8

“After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.”

- i. If Peter had any doubts, this would certainly wipe them out
- ii. To see Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus
- iii. To hear the voice from the cloud, “This is my Son”
- iv. Not a lot of doubt left after this experience

APPLICATION

- a. Our faith isn't built merely by reading about God.
 - i. It grows by walking with Him.

- ii. Our Faith grows
 - a. as we experience
 - b. God's faithfulness.
 - c. As we see God working
 - d. And revealing Himself as we walk with Him
- iii. My faith today
 - a. Is much stronger than it was 20 years ago
 - b. I've seen (in my own life) God perform
 - i. Incredible miracles
 - ii. Answered prayers
 - iii. Wisdom in decisions that I can't explain

8. A RIGHT CONFESSION IS ESSENTIAL

Matthew 16:13–20

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.”

- a. This is the turning point in Peter's life.
- b. Jesus explained that this truth
 - i. had been revealed by the Father.
- c. Christianity is built upon the truth
 - i. that Jesus is God's Son
 - ii. and the promised Savior.

Lesson

- a. Everything begins with correctly **answering one question:**
 - i. **Who is Jesus?**
 - ii. **To you?**
 - iii. Are those just words
 - 1) Or do you **truly believe them**
 - 2) It proven by how you live your life
 - 3) *“Proof is in the Pudding”*

4) **Words are meaningless** without action

James 2:14–19

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

- b. When our confidence in who Jesus truly is
 - a. Is tested and proved authentic
- c. God will grow our responsibilities
 - a. As **we grow** in our faith
 - b. Peter was given an incredible trust
 - i. Keys to open the Kingdom of God
 - c. Peter may have failed many of the tests
 - i. But he never gave up
 - ii. He never quit
 - iii. He kept trying
- d. When others quit
 - i. He hung in there

John 6:60–69

“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.” From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

9. EVEN STRONG BELIEVERS CAN BE WRONG

Matthew 16:21–23

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke

him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter; "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

- a. **Immediately** after Peter's great confession,
 - i. Jesus predicted His death.
 - ii. Peter objected.
 - 1) **That's not what he expected**
 - iii. Jesus responded, "Get behind me, Satan!"
- b. Peter loved Jesus
 - i. He was committed to Jesus' cause
 - ii. **but did not yet understand God's plan.**

Lesson

- **It is possible** to sincerely love Jesus
 - **while** resisting His will.
- As in Jesus' case
 - God's plans often involve sacrifice
 - before glory.
- How do **you respond** when God says, "NO"
 - Your prayers are not answered
 - Do you want to pack up your toys and go home?
 - Or do you patiently wait for God
 - To light up the path He wants you to take
 - Which may take years
 - Took Moses 40 years
 - David was on the run from King Saul 7-10 years
 - ✓ Before becoming King

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

10. GOOD INTENTIONS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH

Matthew 26:31–35

“Then Jesus told them, ‘This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.’ Peter replied, ‘Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.’ ‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.’ But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.’ And all the other disciples said the same.”

- a. Peter boldly declared, *"Even if all fall away... I never will."*
- b. Jesus predicted Peter's denial.
- c. Peter insisted, *"Even if I have to die with you."*

Lesson

Jeremiah 9:23–24

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the LORD.”

- a. **Self-confidence is dangerous** in itself
 - i. But boasting our self-confidence is **both** dangerous and folly
 - ii. Spiritual victory depends upon
 - 1) God's strength, not our own.
- b. **Within hours** he denied knowing Jesus three times.
 - i. Peter not only had to eat his words
 - ii. But his folly became public for all to see (then and 2000 years later)
- b. Peter's sinful nature was rash, brash and soon to be smashed

11. FAILURE IS NOT THE END

Luke 22:54–62

“Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, ‘This man was with him.’ But he denied it. ‘Woman, I don't know him,’ he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, ‘You also are one of them.’ ‘Man, I am not!’ Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, ‘Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.’ Peter replied, ‘Man, I don't know what you're talking about!’ Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.”

- a. Peter denied Jesus three times.
- b. Then the rooster crowed.

- c. **Luke records a powerful moment:**
- d. *"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter."*
 - i. Imagine what Peter was feeling
 - ii. Having just said boastfully, He would never turn on Jesus
- e. **Peter went outside and wept bitterly.**
 - iii. He had once again failed Jesus
 - iv. Those tears were tears of
 - i. Regret
 - ii. Remorse
 - iii. Hopelessness

Lesson

- Peter's failure did not surprise Jesus.
- Jesus had already prayed for him.
- Failure is never God's final word

12. JESUS RESTORES BROKEN PEOPLE

John 21:15–19

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' 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.' The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'"

- a. **After the resurrection,**
 - i. Jesus met Peter beside the Sea of Galilee.
- b. Three times Jesus asked,
 - i. *"Do you love me?"*
- c. Three times Peter answered,
 - i. *"Yes, Lord."*
- d. Three denials were met with
 - i. three opportunities for restoration.

Jesus commissioned Peter:

- Feed my lambs.

- Take care of my sheep.
- Feed my sheep.
- a. Jesus did not simply forgive Peter.
- b. He restored him to service.

Lesson

- God forgives completely.
- He also restores purpose.
- Past failures do not have to define future usefulness.

13. PETER'S LIFE SHOWS THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Character Traits of Peter

His Strengths

- Courageous
- Passionate
- Honest
- Natural leader
- Quick to act
- Deep love for Jesus
- Humble after failure
- Spiritually teachable

His Weaknesses

- Impulsive
- Speaks before thinking
- Overconfident
- Fearful under pressure
- Sometimes misunderstood Jesus' mission
- Struggled with consistent faith

- ✓ This is often God's pattern with believers today.
- ✓ He patiently shapes us into the people He wants us to become.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. Jesus Calls Ordinary People

- a. **No**
 - i. background,
 - ii. Education,

iii. or past failures

b. Disqualifies someone from following Christ.

2. Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

a. Storms reveal **if** we truly have faith.

3. Know Who Jesus Is

a. Everything in the Christian life **begins** with

i. believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

4. Do Not Trust Your Own Strength

a. Humility protects us from spiritual failure.

5. Repent Quickly

a. Peter's tears led to restoration

b. because they reflected genuine desire to change.

6. Accept Christ's Restoration

a. God delights in using people

i. whose lives have been transformed by His grace.

7. Peter is a great example of how Jesus sees us

a. Not what we are

b. But what we can become