



A MAN CALLED PETER

Introduction

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brothers Ryan Sharp and Jeff Johnson at Impact Church.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

It has been my experience that whatever book you're preparing to teach from, the Lord will take you through something that plays into the lessons taught in that book. 1 Peter for

instance, deals a lot with suffering and trials. I need to think through my preaching calendar better. The last few months have been a trial regarding personal health issues in our family.

Our next series will cover all the celebrations Jesus attended. It'll be called Happy Times. Applications will include things like what wine to bring to a wedding and how guests should be seated at a banquet. Stuff like that instead of the trials and suffering and persecution we find in 1 Peter.

Before we actually launch into the text of 1 Peter, I thought we should consider the Apostle himself, because understanding Peter himself will help us understand his letter to the dispersed church.

And dispersed means just that. It was written to groups of Christians who had to flee their homes and lands because of Roman persecution. These groups included a diverse cross section with different ethnicities, customs, prior religions, languages and political histories, but mostly all were from

areas of Asia Minor. And most likely, they were Gentile Christians. But before we look at who it was written to or even why it was written we're going to look at the one who wrote it.

We're going to start with a man called Peter.

Now we don't have time to cover the entirety of Peter's biography, so we're going to look at three points of Peter's lifeline and see how those three points relate to us because of something Peter wrote in the first chapter of

his letter. So, we're building toward one verse in 1 Peter this morning.

Lifeline No. 1

Before Peter is called by Jesus, he meets Jesus. In much the same way, before you are called by Jesus, before you become a follower of Jesus, you meet Jesus. In other words, you are taught about Jesus, who He is, what He did, how He did it, why He did it. You meet Him, you learn about Him and then He calls you. That is the pattern that we learn from Peter's life.

John 1:35-42

(833)

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹ He said to

them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

They spent the day with Jesus, getting to know Him, learning about Him, hearing what He had to say. Remember that Jesus said to them later, “You did not choose me, but I chose you.”

So, they’re learning about Jesus, but they had not yet been called by Jesus. It happens that

way with us as well. We meet Jesus and learn about Him before He calls us to become His followers.

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Which means rock. So, Peter is one of the most significant Apostles, to say the least. But he is not chief of all the Apostles. The Bible never declares him so and neither does he.

At this time, Peter was earning his living as a fisherman. The accounts of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew are nearly identical. Jesus is walking by the Sea of Galilee when He sees Simon and Andrew, the brothers, casting a net into the sea. And he says to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” This

happened after they had already met Him and spent time learning about Him.

When Peter is called by Jesus, he is blessed to see and hear Jesus physically. But you were also called by Jesus. Though, you can't explain it, you know that Jesus called you, you know He saved you. The point being this:

The work of Jesus in your life is no less significant than it was in His work in Peter's life.

Now, His plan for your life is different than it was for Peter's life, but His work is no less significant. Peter was saved the same way you are saved. Paul was saved the same way you are saved. John was saved the same way you are saved. Now, God had different plans for each of those Apostles, but all of them were saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone the same way you are. And you'll see why that is so significant because of something Peter writes in this letter. And that's what we're building toward — this single verse in 1 Peter.

Luke gives a more detailed account of this lifeline of Peter's calling.

Luke 5:1-11

(808)

5 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of

the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, **“Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”** ⁵ And Simon answered, **“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”** ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the

boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, **“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,

Now, here is Peter astonished at this superabundant catch of fish, so why did it make him feel sinful? Because it revealed how little he truly trusted, believed Jesus.

But you too have experienced a sense of your own sinfulness in much the same way. Jesus tells us something wonderful, a promise of abundant life or He does something wonderful, saves us from financial ruin, something. And we're astonished when He actually comes through for us.

We have much the same attitude of Peter before the nets are let down. We've already been working hard at this and nothing seems to be happening. "Lord, what difference is this going to make? But, okay, I'll try one more

time.” And after Jesus comes through for us we are convicted by our own propensity to doubt the promises of Christ, the faithfulness of God. We believe, but we don’t believe. We trust Him, but not really. That’s exactly what Peter was like.

¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Even after Peter's insulting doubt, Jesus gave him assurance, saying, "Do not be afraid."

Now, what do you think He says to you? What are you afraid of? Don't you think Jesus is saying the same thing to you? "Do not be afraid." Because He is.

Peter was a man of up and down faith. He was a man of "this is the best idea ever" to "this is the worst idea ever" when talking about the same idea.

Lifeline No. 2

When Peter saw Jesus walking on the water, he asked Jesus to command him to come to him on the water. He walked on the water to Jesus until he decided “this is the worst idea ever.”

Matthew 14:28-33

(770)

²⁸ And Peter answered him, “**Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.**”

“This is the best idea ever!”

29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”

“This is worst idea ever!”

31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him,

So, that's comforting. There is no delay when you call out to Jesus.

saying to him, **“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”** ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, **“Truly you are the Son of God.”**

That's why Peter writes with this understanding that **his relationship with Christ**

is no different than your relationship with Christ, even today.

Here's the line we've been building up to:

1 Peter 1:8

(953)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

You haven't seen Jesus, but you love Him as much as Peter does. This is so important to see. And I use the verb see purposely, because we see Jesus now right here in His Word. And it's just as powerful as when Peter saw Jesus physically in person and heard Jesus with His own ears, because we just heard Jesus with our own ears even though we do not see Him. And we heard Him say, **“Come.”** And we heard Him say, **“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”** And we heard Him say, **“Do not be afraid.”**

Visibility has nothing to do with proximity. If you could become invisible in the way of the H.G. Wells dime store novel and Hollywood horror movies, you would still be right here. You would still be right next to the person you're next to now. Visibility has nothing to do with proximity. Because the people next to you right now do not understand and know you the way Christ knows you, who now lives inside you. Visibility has nothing to do with proximity. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him.

If you think seeing Jesus physically would change what kind of Christian you are, let's remember a few things about Peter who was as close to Jesus as anyone on the face of the earth.

Peter was the first to recognize Jesus as the Christ, but was then rebuked immediately because he only had in mind the things of man.

Lifeline No. 3

Matthew 16:13-17; 21-23

(771)

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon

Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Jesus said, “No one comes to Me unless the Father draws them.” Interestingly enough, Jesus also said that no one knows the Father but only “those to whom the son chooses to reveal him.” So we see here the Trinitarian nature of our salvation. But the point is, all of us who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God are blessed because we

did not believe this on our own. It was revealed to us by the Father Himself.

Skipping down to verse 21:

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to

Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Peter could not fathom that Jesus was meant to die on the cross. In the same way, many of us still have a hard time getting our minds around the freedom of grace.

“There’s no hope for any of us when we deny the cross. When I mute my heart to the insult of grace, I deny your cross. When I think, even

for one moment, that my obedience merits anything, I deny your cross. When I put others under the microscope and measure of performance-based living, I deny your cross. When I wallow in self-contempt and shame, I deny your cross. When I'd rather do penance than repentant faith, I deny your cross. When I believe the condemning lies of Satan, I deny your cross. When I think of me more highly than others, I deny your cross." (Scotty Smith)

That's why Jesus told Peter he was being a hindrance. But don't we hinder the cross ourselves in all the attitudes I just read?

Peter witnessed the transfiguration of Christ, but then later denied that he even knew Jesus, not just once, but three times (Matt 26:69-75).

Okay, maybe we'll give him a pass because his understanding of the gospel wasn't as full as it would be once Jesus rose from the dead.

So, let's skip ahead in Peter's life to after the resurrection.

Peter preached the first sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2), received a vision from the Lord that led to the gospel being preached to the Gentiles (Acts 10), he proclaimed the gospel even when arrested for it and placed in prison, but still compromised the gospel because he feared the Judaizers (Gal 2), that group of Jewish believers who said Gentiles had to both believe in Jesus and be circumcised in order to be saved. Peter who

already knew that Gentiles were saved the same way he was saved. But because of fear of man, he compromised the gospel and was rebuked by the Apostle Paul to his face.

- Southwestern Seminary & Bobby Lopez

You're probably more like Peter than you think and God made him one of the greatest heroes of the early church. There's hope for you to stand without compromise. You can learn how to live now.