

From Simon to Peter: The Process of Grace

November 2, 2025

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Text: John 1:33-42 (NLT)

Introduction: Peter's story didn't happen overnight. His journey from fisherman to follower, from failure to faith, was a process, a long, messy, grace-filled process.

He had moments of incredible boldness and moments of deep regret. Times when heaven revealed truth to him and times when his own pride got in the way. Yet through it all, God's grace never stopped working.

Grace shaped him. Grace restored him. Grace prepared him for everything God had called him to do.

Think about it: this ordinary fisherman became a pillar of the early church. He went from casting nets on the sea to caring for souls in God's kingdom. From hiding in fear after Jesus' death... to standing strong after the resurrection, willing to give his very life for Christ.

Simon's story reminds us that spiritual growth isn't instant; it's a process of grace. And the same God who worked in Simon is still working in us.

There will be moments when we fail, when life doesn't go the way we hoped, when we lose someone that we love, when the doors we counted on close, when the doctor's report breaks our heart. But even then, even when we can't see it, God's grace is still working.

He's shaping us. He's strengthening us. And He's not done yet.

The same grace that saved us is the grace that sustains us. It's what keeps us standing, what keeps us growing, what keeps us becoming more like Jesus, step by step, season by season, through every joy and every trial.

So today, let's look at Simon's story and see how grace works in the process.

The invitation

Unlike Nicodemus, whose curiosity led him to seek out Jesus on his own, Peter's story began differently. He didn't go looking for Jesus, he was invited to come and meet Him.

From the text, we can see that Andrew, Simon's brother and a follower of John the Baptist, was a true seeker. His heart was already stirred with expectation, and when he found the Messiah, his excitement couldn't be contained. He immediately ran to tell Simon, eager to share the good news: *"We have found Him!"*

From John's account, it seems Simon wasn't quite ready to make a full commitment yet but the God-ordained process had already begun. When Jesus looked at Simon and spoke those words over him, it wasn't just a name change, it was the beginning of a transformation.

His given name, *Simon*, means "he has heard." And that's exactly where his journey started, by hearing the good news from his brother Andrew: *"We've found the Messiah, come and see!"*

But when Jesus saw him, He called him *Peter*, *Petros*, meaning "rock." From that moment, Jesus spoke not just to who Simon was, but to who he would become. What began with hearing would one day lead to becoming a man who would stand as a rock, a foundational leader in the early church.

And just like Simon, our transformation begins when we first hear and respond to Jesus' call. But it doesn't end there. The same grace that called Simon began shaping him, step by step, through failures and victories, until the man who once wavered became Peter, the one who stood firm as a foundational leader of the church. This didn't happen overnight, it would take a step by step process.

The Encounter and Call

Luke 5:1-3 (NLT) One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. ²He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.³Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

We don't have a lot of detail about the first time Peter met Jesus, but it seems clear he wasn't yet fully convinced, at least not like his brother Andrew was. Peter was curious, but cautious. Still, God had already begun working in him, the process was underway.

What's fascinating is *where* Jesus meets Peter. Not in the synagogue. Not at the market. But at his workplace, right at the end of a long, disappointing night. Peter and his partners had been fishing for hours and caught absolutely nothing. They were cleaning their nets, ready to call it quits. Tired, frustrated, and probably feeling defeated.

The same Jesus who had called him *Petrus* "rock." The carpenter from Nazareth with no fishing experience suddenly asks to borrow Peter's boat so He can teach the crowd gathered on the shore.

I can imagine Peter thinking, "Sure, why not? It's not like I've got anything better to do. Might as well let the preacher use my boat because right now, I've got no fish, no profit, and a wife waiting at home to hear that the bills aren't getting paid this week."

So, Peter sits there, tired and empty-handed, listening as Jesus begins to teach. We're not told what Jesus said that day, but we *are* told what happened next.

Luke 5:4 (NLT) When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

Simon didn't expect that his life was going to change that day, but God did. After reluctantly casting his net into the water, against all fishing protocols, he and his partners catch a miraculous number of fish.

Simon was blown away and would go from a curious and cautious listening to a repentant sinner.

Luke 5:8 (NLT) When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me, I'm such a sinful man."

Simon was used to catching fish for a living, but on this day, he was caught in the net of the greatest Fisher of souls.

Most of us might think that this encounter was the ultimate goal, to bring Peter to repentance. Yet, it was another step in the transforming process that would move Simon from simply being one who hears to becoming *Peter (Petrus)* a foundational leader of the Church.

Jesus not only gave him a new name but also revealed a new mission, calling him to move from catching fish to catching people for the Kingdom.

Luke 5:10-11 (NLT) His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" ¹¹ And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Notice that although God was working Peter had to respond and not only was this leading him to become a new man who would become a foundational leader, it would also impact his business partners all who would become part of the team of apostles and church builders.

Always remember that while God is working on us, He is also working on those around us. You may not see it in the moment, but He's weaving a larger story that connects your life with others. Our personal encounter with Jesus may be part of God's process in shaping the lives of those around us.

The walk and witness

From that moment on, Simon began to follow Jesus. He not only heard His powerful sermons, but he also witnessed amazing miracles, beginning with the healing of his own mother-in-law. (Matthew 8:14-15)

Simon saw Jesus cast out demons, heal the paralytic, open blind eyes, and even raise the dead. All of this was part of a divine process, steps in the journey of growing Simon's faith and deepening his understanding that Jesus truly was the Messiah. (Matthew 8:16)

But Simon's experience didn't stop at observation.

Jesus empowered him and the other disciples to do the same works, to heal the sick, cast out devils, and proclaim the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 10:1)

Peaks and Valley's

The process for Simon was filled with peaks and valleys. But in every moment God was still working in him.

- **A peak:** Walking on the water with Jesus (Matthew 14:22-33)
- **A Valley:** Being corrected for taking his eyes off Jesus
- **A Peak:** Confessed and commended for confessing's Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16)
- **A Valley:** Rebuked and told, get behind me Satan. (Matthew 16:22-23)

Simon still had much to learn. But that's the beauty of grace, it doesn't give up when we stumble.

His lowest moment came when he denied Jesus three times. Yet even then, grace was working behind the scenes. (Matthew 26:69-75)

Transformation is a lifelong process, the Spirit's ongoing work of shaping us from who we are into the likeness of Christ, one step, one decision, one day at a time.

Restoration by Grace

After the resurrection, Jesus met Peter again by the Sea of Galilee, the very place their journey began. Once more, Peter had fished all night and caught nothing. And once more, Jesus filled his nets. Grace was reminding him, "I'm not done with you."

By a charcoal fire, Jesus gently asked, "Simon, do you love Me?" Three times He asked, and three times Peter answered. With each question, grace rewrote Peter's failure and restored his calling: "Then feed My sheep." (John 21:3-19)

The same grace that called Simon, shaped Peter, and sustained him through every failure now restores him to his purpose. Grace doesn't just forgive our past, it reclaims our future.

Conclusion: Grace Still Works

From a fisherman to a shepherd of God's flock. From a fiery, self-seeking personality to a humble servant in God's house. From hiding in fear after Jesus' death to standing boldly, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaiming Christ to the world. Simon "the hearer" became Peter "the rock", a foundational leader of the church and, ultimately, a martyr for the cause of Christ (Acts 2:14).

Peter's story reminds us that spiritual growth is a journey of grace. God meets us where we are, lifts us when we fall, and keeps shaping us into who He designed us to be. Even when we

stumble, His work in us doesn't stop. All He asks is that we stay in the process, keep trusting, keep following, and let His grace continue to transform us.

The same God who called Peter is still calling you. He's not finished yet. So stay in the game. Keep walking with Jesus. Keep praying, keep reading the Word, and stay connected with others who share your faith. Grace still works.