

From Simon to Peter: The Process of Grace Part Two

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Matthew 8:14-16 (NLT) When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. ¹⁵ But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him. ¹⁶ That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick.

Introduction: This morning, as we continue exploring the work of grace in Peter's life, we'll see that his encounter with Jesus was not the end of the journey but the beginning of a transforming process.

Key point: Spiritual growth isn't instant; it's a process of grace.

From hearing the good news through Andrew his brother, to the miraculous catch that brought him to repentance, to receiving a new name and mission, every step was part of God's transforming work.

From the moment Jesus called him to follow, Simon's life began to change. He not only heard His powerful sermons, but he also witnessed amazing miracles, beginning with the healing of his own mother-in-law.

He 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 indeed the Messiah.
(Matthew 8:16)

Simon's experience didn't stop at observation.

Matthew 10:1 (NLT) Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.

We may not witness or operate in the same measure of miracles that Peter and the original twelve experienced, but we serve the very same God. The God who shaped Peter into a Spirit-filled, Christlike follower is still working in us today, forming us into the image of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord, who is the Spirit, makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

Just as it was for Peter, that process isn't always easy. Remember that the goal wasn't for Peter merely to witness and perform amazing things, but for him to be saved and transformed, to become like Jesus in character and heart.

As believer we will walk through seasons that test and teach us, moments of spiritual highs and humbling lows. Peter's journey shows us that grace doesn't only meet us at our best; it holds us steady at our worst.

The same grace that calls us also keeps us, through our successes and our stumbles.

Let's look at some his peaks and valley and observe God's grace in the process in Peter's life.

1. A Peak: Walking on the Water

Matthew 14:25–29 (NLT) About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" ²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"

²⁸ Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." ²⁹ "Yes, come," Jesus said. So, Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

When Jesus called Peter to step out of the boat, it wasn't just about defying gravity, it was about developing faith. Peter was the only disciple who dared to say, 'Lord, if it's really You, tell me to come.'

He did what no one else dared to do he walked on the word of Jesus. The moment Peter fixed his eyes on Jesus; he did the impossible.

Faith grows when we respond to Jesus' call, even when it defies logic. But just as fast as he had believed and walked on water, Peter stepped into a valley of fear.

2. A Valley: Taking His Eyes Off Jesus

Matthew 14:30 (NLT) But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

He began to sink not because the waves got stronger, but because his focus shifted. Fear replaced faith. The same man who was walking in power of grace now felt himself drowning in doubt. Yet even then, grace reached out. Jesus didn't let him fall far.

Matthew 14:31 (NLT) Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

Jesus was the embodiment of grace, God's unmerited favor in human form. He didn't have to save Peter; He could have let him sink as a lesson to the others. But grace doesn't abandon us when we lose focus. Grace reaches for us, lifts us, and rescues us the moment we cry out.

Grace is quicker to reach than we are to fall. But we must respond. Peter could have drowned in the waters of shame and defeat, but instead he reached for the hand of grace extended to him. He couldn't save himself, so he called out to the only One who could.

Someone once defined grace as God's willingness to use His ability on our behalf.

- Grace was present **before the fall** when Jesus called Peter out onto the water, trusting him with an opportunity to grow.
- Grace was present **during the fall** when Peter's fear overtook him, Jesus didn't back away; He stayed close enough to catch him.
- Grace was present **after the fall** when Jesus lifted him up, walked him back to the boat, and continued shaping him into the man he was becoming.

Let's look another moment of grace working in the process of Peter's faith journey.

3. A Peak: Confessing the Christ

Matthew 16:15-16 (NLT) Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

That moment was a spiritual breakthrough; heaven had revealed truth to Peter. Jesus affirmed his confession:

Matthew 16:17-18 (NLT) "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Once again, Jesus highlighted the name change: Simon would be known as Peter (Petros).

Imagine how Peter must have felt hearing this powerful, life-shaping declaration from Jesus. He must have felt like a giant in the faith. Yes, he had sunk in the water, but that was in the past. This moment of grace overshadowed his failure. The Father Himself had chosen Peter as the one to receive and proclaim the revelation of who Jesus truly is.

What a mountaintop experience! It must have seemed like it couldn't get any better. He was making progress, stepping into his purpose, and standing in the favor of God.

But the process wasn't done. Peter still had so much to learn; not only about God, but about himself.

Spiritual formation isn't a straight climb upward; it's a journey of mountains and valleys, breakthroughs and humbling moments.

It not only leads us to know more about God but also reveals how incapable we are without His undeserved grace and sustaining power.

And so, even after this incredible revelation and affirmation from Jesus, Peter soon found himself slipping into another valley experience.

4. A Valley: "Get Behind Me, Satan"

Matthew 16:22–23 (NLT) But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

This was not long after his spiritual high of being commended for knowing that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God.

Peter tried to correct Jesus, telling Him the cross couldn't happen. In his human reasoning, he wanted victory without suffering.

Jesus rebuked him: 'Get behind me, Satan! You are seeing things merely from a human point of view.' The same lips that spoke revelation now spoke resistance. Yet even this rebuke was grace, correction, not rejection.

From walking on water to sinking beneath the waves, from confessing Christ to being corrected by Him, Peter's life reminds us that: God's forming grace is experienced in both the peaks and the valleys.

The enemy wanted to destroy Peter. He tried to expose his weakness and disqualify him from his calling. Just as wheat is separated from the chaff by shaking and striking it, Satan wanted to shake Simon and separate him from his faith.

Luke 22:31-32 (NLT) "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. ³² But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers."

Peter tries to assure Jesus of his loyalty... "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you." (V33)

However, Jesus next words would leave him speechless. "Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me." (V34)

Peter would be shaken, but through the shaking he would learn that grace is greater than the shaking. The shaking would bring pain, testing, and moments of weakness, but grace would prove stronger than every trial.

5. The Greatest Valley: Denial (Matthew 26:69-75)

Peter's darkest moment came when he denied Jesus three times. But grace had already prepared for that fall, Jesus had prayed for him. Grace was already waiting on the other side of his failure.

Grace doesn't define us by our worst moments; it redeems us for our next assignment.

6. Restoration by Grace (John 21:3-19)

After the resurrection, Jesus revisited Peter's calling on the same shore where it began. Three denials were met by three affirmations: 'Do you love Me?' Each answer restored him, rewrote his failure, and renewed his mission. Grace always brings us back, not to shame us, but to send us forward.

Jesus doesn't cancel us when we fall; He commissions us again with purpose.

Conclusion: Peter's life is proof that grace works in the highs and lows of the journey. It's there when we step out in faith and when we start to sink. It's there when we speak truth and when we miss the mark. Through every season, **God in His** grace keeps shaping us into who we were meant to be.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

So, stay in the process. Don't rush what God is shaping. Keep turning to Him, responding to him, walking with Him. Keep praying, keep serving, keep surrendering and trust that grace is still at work in places you can't yet see.

The same God who called Simon 'the one who hears' and patiently formed him into Peter 'the rock,' a pillar in the early church is faithfully working in you as well. He hasn't stopped. And He won't stop now.

He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. (Philippians 1:6)