

Jesus Grows Simon Peter

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In our previous studies where we've looked at Jesus' character when He interacted with individuals we've watched how He **evangelized**. This morning we are going to look at how He works with someone after salvation. We are going to look at the **perfecting** part that He does.

We will do this by studying the apostle Peter. Peter was a guy who **thought he had this perfecting part** figured out. Peter's **motto** probably would have been "God helps those who help themselves." While this might sound and look good for some of us Jesus wasn't impressed and He was going to spend time teaching Peter how this perfecting or sanctification part of the journey actually works.

Let's take a look at Peter and gain a little more clarity into his personality:

Matthew 16:21-23 (NASB) 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 be raised up on the third day. 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

- In Peter's mind Jesus was here to be the long awaited Messiah that was going to be rule and be king over Israel. Jesus' comments didn't fit into what Peter felt made sense nor fit into how Peter saw the plan working out. So he physically takes Jesus aside and calls on the name of Jesus' Father to forbid this from happening. Pretty bold!
- Jesus tells Peter he's a stumbling block for Him as well as refers to him as Satan, why? Because Peter was rebuking or correcting Him based on a worldly, temporal perspective.
- This helps to set the tone for us as we study Jesus' sanctification of Peter. A guy whose heart was passionate and actions were quick but he did most of those things from the **wrong place**...his own strength. He walked by sight not faith.

John 13:5-10 (NASB) 5 Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 So He *came to Simon Peter. He *said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, **but you will understand hereafter.**" 8 Peter *said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." 10 Jesus *said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

- Many have used this passage to point to Jesus humility in washing His Apostles feet. While this act certainly carried humility with it, it wasn't Jesus' primary purpose for doing it. If it was simply an act of humility Jesus' comments **John 13:7 (NASB)** "**What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.**" Don't make much sense.
- It's Peter who helps us see this message by informing Jesus that he would never let Jesus clean his feet. **What Jesus wants this group to come to an understanding of is that even though you are saved (John 13:10 (NASB)) "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean...**) you will get dirty walking in this world and your feet will need cleaned (repentance)
- That cleaning only comes from Him, we can't do enough to repent, we make the choice to

repent but it's Jesus that cleans our feet (just like it's Jesus that cleaned our souls).

- By Peter telling Jesus: **John 13:8 (NASB) ...Never shall You wash my feet...** We see Peter's mindset here, he's telling Jesus, this is beneath you your not going to wash my feet that's my responsibility not yours. **Jesus' response to Peter: You can't clean yourself (sanctify) yourself, that's my job and if you feel you can than you have not part with me.**

Matthew 17:1-5 (NASB) 1 Six days later Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and *led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

- Talk about a mountain top experience. This is literally a mountain top experience.
- Jesus is transfigured. Moses and Elijah are present and Peter is pumped.
- **Matthew 17:4 (NASB) Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."** In other words I can't think of anything better to do than for you to let me build something for You to show You of how much I appreciate being here. Peter needs to put his hands on something and build.
- Verse 5 is great: **Matthew 17:5 (NASB) While he was still speaking** (in other words God cut him off from saying anymore). God tells Peter "**This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!**" This isn't time for you to talk Peter, this is time for you to listen and simply take this experience I've allowed you to be a part of in.
- Listen to Him! You can't listen when your talking.

So we have a pretty good flavor of Peter. A guy that's passionate, would probably leave a Promise Keepers rally, a retreat or a wonderful church service and begin planning all the things he is going to start. A small group, a prayer group, a bible study at work or school.

None of the things Peter did would necessarily appear bad externally and yet in one set of verses we Jesus calling him Satan, in another we have God interrupting his speaking.

Why? Because in Peter's mind, if it's a good thing one ought to do it. God gave him a mind, he could see it would be good so of course he ought to do it. The problem was that there's no submission with this way of thinking it's still Peter (man) leading. In other words there's *no heart change*, just works and that is religion.

HEART CHANGE MILESTONES

Luke 22:31-34 (NASB) 31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" 34 And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

Sift - siniazō (sē-nē-ä'-zō)

1. to sift, shake in a sieve
2. fig. by inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow

Not sure how you feel when you read these verses but I know that it causes my blood to run a little cold.

If you're Peter right here what's running through your head right now? There might be several different things swimming around but I can tell you where my mind would start to settle would be "Ok Lord...and what did you tell him?" Christ's response:

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; - So in other words Christ granted Satan permission. Again, if your blood isn't running cold at this point you probably haven't quite grasped what has just been allowed to happen to you.

Notice Peter's response:

33 But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!"

Peter responds like Peter always does. He responds by letting Jesus know that Jesus can count on him. Peter responds, I believe, with the way he thinks Jesus would want him to...with confidence...**with what many today might say is faith? I would agree that it is faith but there is a problem with this type of faith:**

Mark 14:29-31 (ESV) 29 Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." 30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." 31 But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.

I will not - whose Peter's faith in? It's in himself.

Peter is an incredible example in scripture of the person who has a tremendous amount of passion and desire to follow Christ but has not learned the most important principle that anyone of us needs to learn in order grow at all with Christ. John the Baptist said it best:

John 3:30 (NASB) 30 "He must increase, but I must decrease.

What Jesus knew about Peter's heart was that Peter relied entirely too much on his own strength in order survive the ordeals and trials that this world throws at a believer. The only way Peter would grow any deeper with Christ was going to involve Peter getting sifted, becoming undone and then put back together.

GETTING SIFTED

Luke 22:54-62 (NASB) 54 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. 55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. 56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times. The word Christ used to tell Peter that he

would deny Him is:

Deny & Denied - aparneomai (ä-pär-ne'-o-mī)

1. to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone.
2. to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests

Notice Peter's words in our verses... "Woman, **I do not know Him**, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "**Man, I am not!**", "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." But Peter said, "**Man, I do not know what you are talking about.**"

If this is not what losing your faith looks like then I'm not sure what losing your faith looks like. Peter does not associate himself with Christ anymore. He doesn't want to be recognized as one of His followers and on top of that says "**I do not know Him**".

Luckily for Peter and for you and I, Christ's blood is bigger than our unbelief:

2 Timothy 2:13 (NASB) 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. - How did Christ look at Peter? Disappointed? A stern look that said "I told you would do this Peter", Shaking His head at Peter?

Think about it for a few seconds and now capture what you think. How you view Christ's face and looking at Peter is probably an accurate reflection on how you see Jesus looking at you when you fail.

I encourage to pray and ask Him to answer this question for you.

And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Wept - klaiō (klī'-ō) - weeping as the sign of pain and grief...

Bitterly - pikrōs (pē-krō's) - bitterlymetaph. with poignant grief

I think at this point, Peter is in a very dark place. Peter is devastated. Only a few hours before he had been talking a big game with Christ. He was stronger than "any of these". But when confronted by a servant girl he had immediately denied ever knowing Him.

Peter is being sifted.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS WAS SATAN TELLING PETER IN HIS HEAD RIGHT NOW?

You are worthless, You've lost everything, you're worse than Judas, You think Christ would ever take you back?

But we know that Christ is always concerned for us and our faith. It is very important to Him.

Notice what is said when Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother, came to the tomb on that Sunday morning:

Mark 16:1-7 (NASB) 1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, they *came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 Looking up, they *saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. 5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. 6 And he *said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. 7 "But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

Be sure to let Peter know. I love that....don't you?

I wonder if this angel was given instructions to be sure that he mentioned Peter by name when he spoke to the women. Almost as if there is an implied "You see I know that Peter is **struggling and hurting right now**, I want Peter to know that **I've indeed beaten death as I said I would**. I want Peter to know that just like the other disciples **I want Peter there. I desire for Peter to share in what is going to be a sweet reunion.**"

John 21:15-19 (NASB) 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16 He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17 He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep. 18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!"

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs."

Love - agapaō (ä-gä-pä'-ō) - to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

More than these - This is probably a reminder to Peter of his rather brash earlier statement:

Peter's response is worth noting...he says: **"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."**

Love - phileō (fē-le'-ō) - to approve of, treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend

So Peter was replying to Jesus' question of whether or not he loved Him, Peter was essentially saying Yes, you know I'm your friend.

We see a man who is stinging from his previous failure with Christ and unwilling to make statements that he now feels are hollow to Him.

16 He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

Jesus - agape

Peter - phileō

Again Peter is only able to tell Jesus that he is His friend.

17 He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep.

Jesus - phileō - Interesting that this time Jesus asks Peter about the same kind of love that Peter has been saying that he has for Christ.

But now Christ is asking him if he even has that kind of love for Him.

Which is why we see: **Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"** Peter is sad because Christ has questioned even his friendship level love.

This can be a difficult thing to wrap ones mind around. What has exactly happened here?

Jesus used this time of Peter's raw honesty to teach him something.

Peter was unwilling to go back to the big brash proclamations of his great love and devotion for Christ.

"Peter that love that you keep trying to conjure up on your own on inside, you can't do it. Not only can you not conjure up enough agape love on your own, you can't conjure up phileō love."

There is no part of us trying to do it ourselves that can love Him.

Remember what we discussed about Peter at the beginning of this lesson, he is a guy who wants to rely on showing Jesus how much he (Peter) loves Him.

He must do it for us, Christ wants us to focus on Him and He will grow us. He was telling Peter, you just look at me. Follow me and I'll change you from the inside out.

He also let Peter know that Peter was going to show his love for Christ by serving and loving His church. Peter was going to have to get beyond his self-centeredness and begin focusing on using his gifts for something besides trying to prove to Jesus how great he was or prove to Jesus his value to him.

Christ was telling Peter, Peter you are never going to get this until you understand this ***"it's not about how much you can show me that you love me, it's about you understanding how much I love you then you will be able to love...."***

1 John 4:19 (NASB) 19 We love, because He first loved us.

Christ loved Peter enough to meet him where he was at so that He could do the work that Peter needed in order to move forward in his walk with Him.

18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!"

Did Peter ever understand what this kind of love looks like?

Acts 4:17-19 (NASB) 17 "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." 18 And when they had summoned them, they

commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Cannot - dynamai (dü'-nä-mī) - quite literally they were saying we don't have the power to stop. We can't stop.

2 Peter 3:18 (NASB) 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

