



Volume 16 Issue 36

September 5, 2021

THE APOSTLE PETER

The apostle Peter was a man not unlike all of us. He had his good and bad characteristics. He was known for his impulsiveness as well as his faithfulness to God. I think most Christians can relate to Peter in many ways, for have we not, for example, all been impulsive? Have we not all spoken when we should have been quiet? At the same time, are not Christians all trying to remain faithful to God and serve Him in this sin-sick world? Let us study about Peter and learn about his wise and foolish decisions. Let us learn to do what is right and avoid what is wrong through this study. **Peter Was Impulsive.** Peter showed his impulsiveness on the Mount of Transfiguration when he suggested three tabernacles be made on the mountain for Moses, Elijah, and Christ (Matt. 17:4). God settled the matter when He said, *"This is my beloved son in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him"* (Matt. 17:5)! His

impulsiveness was seen a few other times when he spoke and should have been quiet. For example, when he argued with Jesus about whether or not He would go to the cross. He was told, *"Get thee behind me, Satan ..."* (Matt. 16:22-23). Peter learned from this error and later would declare, *"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"* (Matt. 26:34). Jesus would then be the One to declare that he would deny Him before the rooster crowed twice (v. 35). No wonder we have warnings from men like James to make sure we are *"quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (Jas. 1:19)! Impulsiveness can get us into trouble just as it did Peter. **Peter Was Tenderhearted.** A good characteristic in Peter was his tenderheartedness. After denying Christ, the apostle left the place and *"wept bitterly"* (Matt. 26:75). Like David and other faith heroes, his

conscience was pricked, and he understood the magnitude of his sin when he remembered the words of Christ and saw Him (Mk. 14:72; Lk. 22:61-62). Let us be thankful that this man did not turn bitter or allow his sin to harden his heart as Pharaoh and others have done. Some people have done this, and they have traded grace and forgiveness for a feeling of rejection, sorrow, and guilt! Don't make the mistake many have made – learn from Peter and soften your heart to the Lord and the truth (Rom. 1:16)! Peter was forgiven for denying the Lord, and you can be forgiven for your sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16)! **Peter Was Cowardly.** In Matthew 26:69-74, Peter's cowardly side shown through. Instead of standing with the Lord, he denied Him! He was afraid of the people around him who asked about his identity and lied to save his own skin! He saw what was done to Jesus, and he wanted no part of it. So, he lied, saying, *"I know not the man!"* His cowardly side was again evident when he was in Antioch years later (Gal. 2:11-14). When the Jewish Christians were around, he would separate himself from the Gentile Christians, fearing what others might say. Thankfully, Paul withstood him and corrected his error. **Peter Was Self-Sacrificing.** Once more, we note a godly characteristic in Peter. The Bible presents Peter to us, not as one-

sided, but as a multi-faceted person who knew how to do the right thing and did it! His godly character is evident when we note his self-sacrificing attitude! This character is seen early in the life of Peter. Peter willingly left when Christ called for him, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. Peter went *"straightway,"* which means he left immediately (Matt. 4:19-20; Mk. 1:18). Peter didn't hesitate to follow because he knew he was following Christ (Jn. 1:40-42). Peter was willing to leave his family, his job, and all to follow the Lord (Matt. 19:27). What have we given up to follow the Lord? Anything? What sacrifices will we make to follow the Lord? These are necessary, you know (Rom. 12:1-2) **Peter Was A Confessor Of Christ.** Another good aspect to his character is seen in his willingness to confess the truth. Peter confessed the Lord on at least two occasions. When we read the New Testament, we hear Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16 (*"Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."*). Later, we read where Peter made a similar confession in John 6:69 after many people left the Lord. Times like this make me appreciate Peter and his bravery. First, he confessed Christ in Caesarea Philippi, a city dedicated to the emperor and emperor worship! Two, this was a place dedicated to false gods in

Old Testament days like BaalGad and Pan! Peter made a confession that not only contradicted the worship of the people of the area, but he also made a confession that could have gotten him kicked out of the synagogue (Jn. 9:22, 34-35, 12:42-43)! Paul made a point of saying that confession takes place not only in our words but in our work as well (Titus 1:16). Let us understand this! Peter stated his faith and lived it, and we need to do the same thing. In days gone by, confession meant something, and confessing Christ to the "wrong" people got you killed (Acts 8:1-4, 22:3-5, 26:10-12)! Yet, this confession is necessary for salvation (Rom. 10:10), and it is essential that all Christians live that confession daily (Heb. 10:22-24). Are you living it? **Conclusion** Peter teaches us much, doesn't he? He was a flawed person, but thanks to Jesus, he was a forgiven person! That is the great thing. In like manner, are you saved? Believe and obey the teaching of Peter today and be saved while you still can (Acts 2:36-38, 3:19; I Pet. 3:20-21)! Then determine to follow in the godly steps of Peter! Do it now; tomorrow may be too late (II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7-8, 15)! – Jarrod Jacobs

Why Teach First Principles? N.B. Hardeman (1874-1965) Why preach again first principles of the gospel of Christ? I look out over the audience and see silver-

haired sires along with other brethren that have been knowing the truth for numbers of years, and I wonder if you do not think: "Is he to preach again on faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins? Why, brother Hardeman, we understand that." Doubtless, a large part of you do; but mark it: There are people attending this meeting now and shall hereafter, who know no more about the gospel today than some of you preachers did twenty-five or thirty years ago. It is just as necessary to show this present generation the distinctive plea of the gospel of Christ as it was for our ears to have been greeted by it in the years gone by. Second, there are people accountable to God today that were not accountable last year, and for that reason, let us tell it over and over again. In the third place, there are people interested now who were not at the last meeting in Nashville. Well, how do I know that? By general observation. I know there are experiences and things that come to pass in our lives that make us feel more keenly that we are rushing on down to an open tomb, that makes us more conscious of the fact that we are beating funeral marches to the confines of the dead. Some spell of sickness, the burial of some loved one, some tragedy has come so close as to make people recognize the danger, thus prompting them to resolve within themselves: "I expect to become obedient unto the gospel of Christ." Therefore, preach the first principles. (Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. 4, p. 14-15.



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Bible Study Challenge

Exodus 12:21-22 *"Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.'"* It is amazing how all throughout the Old Testament, there were constant pictures and themes of Jesus, which He was constantly fulfilling throughout His time on earth. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. Jesus was constantly making references to these prophetic statements about Him to reveal He was the Christ the Old Testament was preparing the world for. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," Jn. 3:14. "I am the bread that came down out of heaven," Jn. 6:41. Take some time this month to go through statements like these that Jesus made and see how many references and pictures from the old testament you can find that show God was revealing Jesus the whole time!

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Ecclesiastes 7:11-22

"Wisdom along with an inheritance is good and an advantage to those who see the sun. For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors. Consider the work of God, for who is able to straighten what He has bent? In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider – God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him. I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness. Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself? Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time? It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them. Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city. Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins. Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you. For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others."