

## From Simon To Peter #2

**Introduction.** Jesus did not save us to leave us where we are. He wants to change us from what we once were to what He wants us to be (Galatians 2:20). You may have spent many frustrating days wanting to change, but victory never seems to arrive. You feel defeated and are ready to throw in the towel. We are born into God's family as spiritual babies, and we must develop and grow to become victorious Christians. Peter's life will encourage us to that end.

### I. ***Being Sifted As Wheat***

#### A. Refusal to take up the cross.

1. Up to this point, Peter had not yet encountered the obstacles that would test his faith and obedience. When he did meet up with them, he failed so dramatically that one wonders if he was really ever a disciple in the first place (Matthew 16:21-27).
2. Peter had the audacity to turn around and dictate to the Lord. Peter, expressing great ignorance and arrogance, dared to contradict his Lord's teaching. Peter was not the first, nor will he be the last to tell Christ what is good and what is not good.
3. Christ used this occasion to show that the gospel is diametrically opposed to the unredeemed mind (Romans 8:6-8).
4. Although Peter was only demonstrating his love and protection of His Lord, Jesus chastised him for thinking only as a human being, and letting Satan influence him. Opposing Christ and His redemptive work is Satan's sworn duty. Bearing the cross means that every time God's will clashes with my will, I choose His. Taking up the cross is the hardest lesson for a Christian to learn.

#### B. Uncontrolled, impulsive tongue.

1. In Matthew 17:1-8, Jesus was transfigured and His countenance was altered, His face shone as the sun, and His clothing became as white as light. Peter made a rash statement and was corrected by the heavenly voice.
2. In our arrogance and self-confidence, we take so little time to listen to God. It was Peter who said that we must speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11; cf. Colossians 3:16-17). Peter preached the need of listening to Jesus in Acts 3:22-23.

#### C. Unrecognized defilement.

1. Jesus uses the episode in John 13:4-11 to teach him, and us, the danger of unrecognized defilement. Jesus was providing an example of humility and a symbol of the purification which He accomplished for us by His humiliation.

2. We encounter a tremendous obstacle to maturity when we think we are okay -- that we do not need to be cleansed by the word of God and by the blood of Christ (John 15:3; 1 John 1:7). Thousands of Christians believe that they are in great shape -- they have everything under control. They think temptations will trouble only those people who are weak or immature, but they overlook the fact that every Christian needs to have their feet washed all the time (Galatians 2:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).
  3. A contaminated vessel cannot hold or dispense blessing (2 Timothy 2:19-21). In spite of his rebellion, he had a sincere heart. Peter had no intention of breaking away from the Lord, and even the possibility distressed him.
- D. Not heeding the warnings of scripture.
1. Scripture repeatedly warns Christians about obstacles and problems, and gives us guidelines on how to handle ourselves. In Luke 22:31-34, Jesus warned Peter of what Satan would try to do.
  2. But Peter would not take the warning seriously. He still did not know himself. He sincerely believed he was ready to go to prison and to death for Christ. He insisted that even if all the other disciples denied Christ, he would remain faithful. Peter did not realize that the threat from Satan was real.
  3. We live dangerously close to disaster when we do not take seriously the scripture's warnings about the power of Satan (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Ephesians 6:10-20 tells us to prepare ahead so we will be able to stand against the devil in the evil day.
  4. We need to forget about carnal weapons (Luke 22:35-38; John 18:10-11). Until now, all the crises between Peter and Jesus had been of Peter's own making. When Jesus said buy a sword, Peter, in zealous obedience, happily got a sword. Perhaps he thought that now he could show everyone, including Christ, how faithful he was and how much he loved Jesus. However, in spiritual warfare, only spiritual weapons will work (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

## II. ***Exit Simon, Enter Peter***

- A. After Christ rebuked Peter for drawing his sword, the Bible says that Christ was led away and Peter followed. Peter had not yet experienced the lowest point of his life, the final blow (Luke 22:54-62). Peter found it so important to remove himself from all associations with Jesus that he denied knowing Him with oaths and curses to a lowly maid whose opinions posed no real danger.
- B. When the rooster crowed, Jesus looked at Peter. It must have been quite a look because then Peter went out and wept bitterly. What

months of teaching had failed to do, a quiet look accomplished in a moment. It overwhelmed him with the enormity of His sin.

- C. What does God want from us? What is His goal as He tests our faith, permits great obstacles to hinder our growth, and allows defeat and pain to overwhelm us? God wants to change us from relying on ourselves to relying on Him.
- D. In John 21:1-19, after Peter had went back to fishing, the two of them had one of their final encounters. The Lord asked Peter if he loved Him with the same perfect love he had vowed when making a commitment to go to prison or die for Christ. Peter could only admit to a great affection for Christ. He had found a new honesty. He no longer pretended to give what he had not found the strength to give. Pretense was gone; arrogance was gone. No longer did he believe that he knew more than the Lord. He was maturing and finding the strength to become a steadfast and firm rock.

**Conclusion.** We will still make mistakes. God does not take away the temptations or exempt us from failures. He assures us that He has given us the power for future victories when we give Him control of our lives (John 16:33). The same Christ who made Peter a great apostle is the same Christ who lives in you and me (Ephesians 3:17). Have you returned to fishing while the Lord calls you from the shore? If so, dive into the water, swim to Him, and listen to His call.