

The Second Conversion Of Peter

Introduction. Peter's life is so interesting because he is like so many of us. He was certainly a man who was hasty in speech and hasty in actions. The incident of his denial of the Lord, his most infamous and one which all four gospels record (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27), needs to be studied because it contains some valuable lessons about coming back to God.

In a moment of passion, excitement, and anger, Peter committed a deed he could have regretted for a lifetime. You may be just like Peter today. There may be some sin of which you are guilty and are in need of repentance and forgiveness. If you are in that situation, you need to listen carefully and act when the lesson is over.

I. Peter's Beginning

- A. Peter was called to be a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 4:18-20) and was then named in Matthew 10:2 as one of the Lord's apostles. In fact, he was listed first in all the lists of the apostles (Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13), which was an indication of his importance.
- B. Although it was Peter who confessed Christ and was given the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19), he held no official preeminence. The Catholic Church reveres Peter as the first Pope, but this position is completely foreign to the New Testament.
- C. Peter was special to the Lord:
 - 1. He was taken along with James and John to the mount of Transfiguration where Jesus' authority was established (Luke 9:28-36).
 - 2. He was taken along with James and John to the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus said His famous prayer (Matthew 26:36-46).
- D. Peter obviously had faith because Jesus prayed for his faith (Luke 22:32). No one can doubt Peter was a converted person.

II. Peter's Fall

- A. Jesus warned that Satan desired to sift Peter like wheat (Luke 22:31-34).
- B. Factors that led to Peter's fall:
 - 1. He was too self-confident (Luke 22:33; Mark 14:27-31).
 - a) Paul warns of too much self-confidence in 1 Corinthians 10:12. You may feel firm and strong in your obedience to the Lord, but this is not evidence that you are safe.
 - b) All Christians should be admonished. All are in danger of falling into sin and of dishonoring the name of Christ. When we cease to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41), we can be snared by Satan (1 Peter 5:8).
 - 2. He followed Jesus from a distance (Matthew 27:58).
 - a) Peter wanted to be near the Savior, but his fear kept him from standing up for his Master.
 - b) So many Christians want to follow Jesus, but they do it only from a distance. They refuse to relinquish their sins while singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus!" (James 4:7-8).

- C. Peter denied Christ three times:
 1. He denied Jesus to the door girl at Caiaphas' palace (Matthew 26:69-70).
 2. He denied Jesus to a man on the porch (Matthew 26:70-72).
 3. He denied Jesus with cursing and swearing (Matthew 27:73-74).
- D. Peter had followed the course of least resistance, much like Demas (2 Timothy 4:10). Had Peter died, he would have been lost (2 Timothy 2:12).

III. Peter's Restoration

- A. His restoration was brought about by a means no less remarkable than the circumstances that led to his fall.
 1. Luke 22:60-61 tells us that the cock crowed (Mark 14:72 tells us that it was the second time the cock crowed) and the Lord looked at Peter.
 - a) There was no angry word, no harsh reproof, or humiliating rebuke — just a convicting look.
 - b) We have to reprove, rebuke, and exhort against all unrighteousness and wickedness (2 Timothy 4:1-4), which would include:
 - (1) Sins of division — envy, strife, malice, reviling, anger, disputes, dissensions, and factions.
 - (2) Sins of impurity — fornication, idolatry, adultery, sorcery, homosexuality, and lasciviousness.
 - (3) Sins of excess — greed, covetousness, lust, gluttony, drunkenness, and addictive behaviors.
 - c) Matthew and Luke both record that Peter wept bitterly (Matthew 27:75; Luke 22:62). All of the Lord's disciples would have been sad during that three-day period, but Peter would have been profoundly sadder. Peter was sorrowful to the point of repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).
 2. Christ arose and told Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome in the early morning of the first day of the week to go and tell the disciples and Peter (Mark 16:7).
 3. Peter's sincerity was tested at the Sea of Tiberius (John 21:1-25).
 - a) When Peter realized that it was the Lord, he jumped out of his fishing boat and swam for shore (John 21:7).
 - b) When they all had finished breakfast, the Lord gave Peter the opportunity to confess Him three times, perhaps cancelling, at least in his mind, his three denials (John 21:15-17).
- B. Peter came out of this experience a more humble individual (cp. 1 Corinthians 9:27). Years later, he would sternly denounce those false teachers who would deny the Lord (2 Peter 2:1).

IV. Peter's Subsequent Life

- A. Peter preached the first gospel sermon in which 3,000 were converted on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36). He used the keys to the kingdom promised to him in Matthew 16:19 to open the doors for the Jews.
- B. Peter had great success in Lydda (Acts 9:32-35) and Joppa (Acts 9:36-42).
- C. Peter preached to the Gentiles in Acts 10:34-43. This opened the doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles.

- D. Peter was thrown in jail by Herod Agrippa I and an angel of the Lord secured his release (Acts 12:3-11).
- E. Peter was convicted of hypocrisy by Paul (Galatians 2:11-14), showing that he was not a perfect man but demonstrating he could still be corrected.
- F. He was an elder in the Lord's church (1 Peter 5:1).
- G. He wrote wonderful letters of encouragement (1 Peter 1:6-9) and remembrance (2 Peter 1:12, 15; 3:1).
- H. Jesus prophesied that Peter would die a violent death but that his death would glorify God (John 21:18-19). Tradition says that Peter was crucified in Rome during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68).

Conclusion. The account of Peter's second conversion is one of an erring child who had to return to God (Acts 8:22-24). Peter's subsequent life and letters are a testimony to the fact that he did indeed return to the Lord and lived righteously after committing such a terrible deed.

Has the rooster crowed in your life? There may be someone here now who needs to return to the Lord. You have not stayed away from sin as you should have. Your armor has not stood firm against the assaults of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17). Esau sought repentance with many tears, but he could not change his situation (Hebrews 12:15-17). If you are in sin, do not wait until your heart is hardened and never respond to Christ (cp. James 5:16).