

# Life of Peter

by J.B. Nicholson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and faith in the face of adversity, using the example of Peter's life to illustrate God's sovereignty and restoration.*

**Duration:** 45:36

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 3:34, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 4:16, James 4:6, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Gods Grace", "Humility"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and how God can use our failures for His glory. It highlights the transformation of Peter, a flawed disciple, into a powerful instrument for God's work, showcasing how God's grace can turn weaknesses into strengths. The message encourages believers to rely on God's grace, trust in His faithfulness, and be willing to humble themselves to strengthen others in their faith journey.

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## Transcript

Officer getting down and shining the shoes of the custodian. That's exactly what our Lord Jesus did. He got down the Supreme ruler of the universe and washed his disciples feet.

And he tells us here that the way up is down and that the greatest are those who have humbled themselves the most. It's a great principle in the word of God that is diametrically opposed to the world in which we live. Now they're fussing about this thing, jostling, jockeying for position.

And we all find it on our own hearts to do that, don't we? We find it easy to think, well, that wasn't a very nice way to treat me. I don't know who I am. One time, years ago, I was introduced at a conference.

The other speaker happened to be a professor of something or other at some university and they went on and on at some divinity school. And, and then they said, brother, JB Nicholson, the other speaker, we all know his father and immediately my heart said, Hey, wait a minute, I'm somebody. It's, it's not hard for it to come to the surface, is it? And so we may find this a very shocking thing, but in the presence of the Lord Jesus himself, the disciples would be jockeying for position and yet the scripture says only by pride comes contention, any contention in our local churches, in our hands, in our families.

I think so only by pride. It's, it's eye trouble, isn't it? And it may be someone says something nasty about us and we, our attitude is, I can hardly believe they'd say such a thing about me. Well, they could have

said a lot worse and been true about it.

The fact is that sometimes we take ourselves a little too seriously, don't we? And we think, well, we deserve better than that. The truth of the matter is that we deserve hell, don't we? That's what we deserve. We deserve to be banished from the presence of God forever.

And so to get these highfalutin thoughts of ourselves, we were as brands plucked from the burning and such we were. Ephesians chapter two describes us in graphic detail and it leaves us absolutely nothing to be proud of. So this idea that somehow we deserve a little better position than somebody else, it comes to us naturally.

We, we have it in the blood like original sin. So when the Lord Jesus turns to Simon Peter and he says, Peter, Simon, Satan is out to ruin you. He wants to make you a chaff Christian.

But I pray for thee, but thy faith fail not. And when thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren. The word desired in verse 31 is the word asked.

Satan asked to get at Peter. Remember he asked to get at Joel. He has to ask.

And it's a tremendous comfort to my heart to know that my life is edited and nothing gets to me, but first it has to go through the heart of God. Remember the Lord revealed himself to Abraham after the battle of the Kings. And this is what he said, I am by shield and by exceeding great reward.

In other words, that's a shield, a shield means that before anybody could get to Abraham had to go through God first. He was the shield. You don't carry a shield behind you.

The shield goes before you. And the Lord is our shield, our buckler. So the Lord obviously allowed Satan to sift Peter.

But what the Lord did was overrule the end result. It's like allowing Balaam to take the money for hire, though he had been forbidden to do so, and to go, God reluctantly allowed Balaam to do it. And Balaam stands up there on the heights of Moab, looks down on the plain below, opens his mouth and lets out a curse on the people of God.

And God programs it between his brain and his tongue. And a blessing comes out instead. It's always the way it is.

You know, nothing falls to the crown. When we get to heaven, we will discover that absolutely everything that came into our lives, whether as a result of our failure or someone else's failure, whether a result, this is Peter's failure, you know, there are things that come to us and we're carrying on bravely and we feel we're doing fairly well for the Lord and something blindsides us and we can't really put our finger on it and say, well, I had that coming, but well, Peter had this coming, didn't he? The Lord warned him. He ran all the red lights.

He was following the far off. He was where he shouldn't have been. I mean, Peter couldn't go back on this circumstance and say to himself, well, you know, there was there was just no way I could avoid it.

Obviously, the Lord wanted that in my life. No, this was something in Peter's life that that he walked into with his eyes wide open. And yet the Lord tells him that even that even those circumstances are ultimately brought around to be good for the people of God.

It's all grace, you know, start to finish. It's all grace. And so in this circumstance, Peter had all the warning. The Lord told him not once or twice, but at least three times we have record of. And he kept on going, ran the red lights, got himself into trouble. And yet we read here, first of all, the absolute assurance that though Peter obviously wasn't praying for himself, somebody was praying for him.

He was on the Lord Jesus prayer list and the Lord prayed him right through that circumstance. Isn't that a good thing? But you're loved above he ever lives to make intercession for us. And even in the worst of situations, even in the circumstances of life, I've got it coming.

If ever there was a day when I deserve to get whacked, that was it. And the Lord takes it and the scripture says he turns a curse into a blessing. And you have hundreds of examples of it in scripture.

Look at David's sin with Bathsheba. God never condones such a thing. He condemns it in the most absolute and certain terms.

And he tells David, well out of David's own mouth, that what he deserved. And yet out of that relationship, God brings Solomon. A child is born and let's remember it's the Lord who opens and closes the womb and he gives them a child.

And they call him Shlomo, which means well-being, everything you need to be happy. The Lord sends Nathan the prophet, the very same one that brought the judgment of God to David. And Nathan comes again to the palace and says in effect, well, listen, David, you can call the little fellow Shlomo if you want.

But says, God, I'm going to call him Jedidiah, beloved. Of the Lord. Can you imagine what a comfort and encouragement that would have been to David? My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought.

My sin, not in part, but the whole has been nailed to his cross and I bear it no more. Is that just the sins of the past? The sins before you were saved? No. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, he included in the cross the cost of your retraining.

He knew every failure and every sin and every flaw and every mistake and every stupid thing I'd ever do. And he loved me anyway. Does he condone it? Of course not.

Cost him everything to pay for it. He doesn't think lightly of sin. But when he said to that woman, neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.

It cost him. He had to go and pay for that in order to set her free from it, in order not to condemn her. He had to be condemned when he said to, to the crowd, when the man was brought by the first gospel quartet, you remember, and let down through the roof.

And the Lord Jesus said to the man, thy sins be forgiven me. And they said, who can forgive sins but God? Jesus said, well, what's easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee or rise, take up thy bed and walk. What's easier for you to say? Easier for me to say, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Because I mean, you know, men grant absolution all the time, but there's no evidence of it. There's no evidence one way or another that it works, right? But if I said, rise, take up your bed and walk, you'd know I'm a phony in a hurry, wouldn't you? Because the man couldn't rise, take up his bed and walk. But it was a lot tougher for the Lord Jesus to say, thy sins be forgiven.

Cost him nothing to raise the man up to hell. It cost him everything to say, thy sins be forgiven me. So we're not saying that, um, that the Lord Jesus for a moment, uh, looked lightly on sin, but oh, what compassion for the sinner while we were yet sinners.

This is Paul's argument in Romans five, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us much more than if he loved you at your worst, if he loved you, when you were stinking, rotting, corrupting and sick, dead in sins, if he loved you, when you were a rebel with your little jaw juttied out of your fist in his face, if he loved you then, he won't give up on you now. Now that your blood bought, heaven bound, spirit indwelled, he won't give up on you folks. He, he's, he's in us.

He's in it for the long haul. He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless, whether we fall or not, before his presence with exceeding joy. I have prayed for thee, but then notice secondly, he says, I have prayed for thee that by faith fail not.

What failed that day? His courage failed him. I, I, I can connect here. I know what it's like to have my courage fail me.

When I know I ought to witness for the Lord, when I know I need to go and confront a brother and tell him, I'm sorry, but where my courage just runs out my toes. What happens? We are so weak, weak as water sometimes, very courageous when we ought not to be. Like Peter.

I mean, he was real courageous in the garden with the sword. What a stupid thing to do. Take on the 10th Roman legion with an old rusty sword.

You know, it's a good thing the Lord puts ears back on. I've done it a few times. I'll tell you, taking people's ears off, trying to show how clever I was.

We're not trying to win arguments. You know, we want to win souls and I'd take somebody's ear off and the Lord would put their ear back on and they'd listen again. Thank God for that.

We're some pretty, pretty inaccurate swordsmen sometimes, aren't we? But, but he says, I have prayed for thee, not that your courage won't fail. You know, some people say, well, of course this was before Peter had the Holy Spirit and once he got the Holy Spirit, well then the problem was fixed, wasn't it? I wish I could say so. But you know, there was a day when Peter was fellowshiping with some Gentile believers and then he heard tell that some Jews were coming up from Jerusalem on the gray line tour and boy, he skedaddled out of that house of the Gentiles in a hurry, didn't he? Tried to get himself kosher before the Jews rolled into town and Paul had to withstand him to the face because courage failed him.

Uh, thank God for the ministry of the indwelling spirit of God. But the fact is that in spite of the ministry of the spirit of God, there are times when our courage fails. His testimony failed.

Oh, what a sad testimony. What a place to do it. I mean, some of us make our mistakes in the back room and some of us do it right in front of the crowd, you know, and here's Peter of all places to do it.

I mean, to say to John, I'm scared. I'm terrified. I don't know if this thing's going to work out or not.

That was one thing, but to deny him with oaths and curses in the courtroom, in the antechamber of the courtroom in front of his foes, you know, after he was restored, if it had been me, I think I would have said, listen, Peter, you're restored. Okay, brother. That's great.

Put her there. We're glad to have you back. But you think maybe like at Pentecost, maybe just behind that palm tree, that would be a good spot for you, brother.

Just kind of lay low for a while, you know, and we'll use somebody else this weekend and maybe, you know, down the road a bit. It is important to notice how Peter was restored. Peter did not simply come back to the brethren and walk in and say, listen, fellas, the Lord's forgiven me.

You need to forgive me too. Let's get on with it. He didn't do that.

Here's what happened. There were three meetings, weren't there, between the Lord and Peter. There was, first of all, the meeting of their eyes.

The Lord looked on Peter. Oh, what a meeting that was. And when the Lord looked on Peter, he saw right through to Peter's heart.

Peter knew it. Peter learned that lesson way back at the beginning, didn't he? When Peter was mending his nets, cleaning them after fishing all night, and the Lord needed his wee boat as a pulpit to preach to the crowd because they were coming right down to the shoreline. And so he launched out a bit from the shore and he preached to the people.

And then Peter was sitting there listening, working on his nets. And the Lord said, now, Peter, I'd like to pay you for the use of the ship here. And the Lord is no man's debtor, you know, and he'll always more than recompense you.

I'd like to give you some fish for your, for your allowing me to use the little boat here. Launch out into the deep. This is no time for fishing.

By, you know, the Sea of Galilee is already 750 feet below sea level and it gets very hot there. It's subtropical. It's like down in Florida, Southern Florida.

And so the fish all go to the bottom of the sea during the daytime and they come up to feed at night. That's why they fish at night. No time to fish in the middle of the day.

But anyway, they go out and the Lord says, cast out the nets and Peter cast out one net. Nevertheless, at thy word, he said, partial obedience, because after all, no use getting all the nets messed up, you know, and the net broke. And Peter fell down, got as close to the Lord Jesus as he dared, got right down at his feet and then said something that seemed completely contradictory to what he was doing.

He got as close as he could. And then he said, depart from me. I'm a sinful man.

In other words, the Lord Jesus, in his sinless holiness, did not frighten sinners away. You know, some of us, we get so sanctimonious, we can actually scare sinners away from us, can't we? They call it holier than thou. The Lord Jesus wasn't like that.

He was sinless, spotless. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. But you know who was attracted to him? It was the sinful people, the people who knew they were sinners, who knew that he was the answer to their need.

So here's Peter. He wants to get as near as he dare. He tells the Lord Jesus what he deserves.

You know, he deserves, and we all deserve that. We deserve to be banished from him. We who are far from God, we deserve that.

But we're invited to draw near. And Peter realized that day that if the Lord Jesus could see the fish in the bottom of the sea, he didn't need any special sonar to find them. And he certainly could see the sin in the bottom of Peter's heart, couldn't he? And that's why Peter said, well, I might as well come clean with him.

He already knows it. Why don't I come clean with him? Good question to ask, isn't it? Like I come into his presence whistling, like everything's okay. I try to put up a brave front.

Why don't I just come clean with him? He already knows about it. He knows my sin. And if I just be honest with him, I mean, is it possible there's somebody sitting here tonight and it's been a long time since you had a garbage collection.

Long time since you just said, Lord, I'm going to spend some time with you. I don't have a very good memory about these things, but you have a flawless memory. So you bring them up one at a time and I'll confess them one at a time until, until I'm clean before you.

We all know that's where the power goes, isn't it? You get a little dirt in there in the connection and you're finished. You've had it. There's no power.

There's no joy. And when we look into our lives, look back, maybe you haven't lived very long, but if you've been a Christian, even for a short time, you look back in your life, you will realize that the happiest days, the days of power, the days of joy, the days when you, you like to get up in the morning and face the day and wondered what good thing was God going to do with you that day? Those were the days when you were clean before God. There is no luxury like it is there to be clean before the Lord.

Oh, listen, the Lord knows it all. He looks at us. I don't think that was anger, was it? It was a look of compassion that melted Peter and he went out and wept bitterly.

If that was the end of the story, well, that's as far as Judas went, wasn't it? It's not just remorse. There needs to be repentance, a change of direction. And so we, we read about a second meeting between the Lord and Peter and the spirit of God has pulled the blind, pulled the drapes over it.

It was a private meeting and, and we have no idea what went on there. You know, that's a good little illustration to us, isn't it? If somebody comes to me with a personal problem, a personal problem, I need to keep confidentiality. There is absolutely no indication.

All we read. The only reason we even know they met was when Paul is arguing, evidence for the resurrection in first Corinthians 15. He says he was seen first of Cephas.

In other words, the Lord had a private meeting with Peter before he made himself known to any of the other disciples. He was seen first of Peter and he and Peter had a little time together to set the thing right. But there was meeting number three and this is very important.

As I say, it's not enough for a brother to say, well look, the Lord's forgiven me. So you want to forgive me and let's just forget the whole thing and get on with it. You can't demand respect.

You can't expect people to respect you. If you broken confidence, if you failed them, disappointed them, let's not forget that every Christian in a local assembly is a member of the body. And when you do

something that hurts the body or hurts other Christians in the body, you're responsible for that.

And when we receive someone into our local fellowship, that's a very intimate thing. You know, uh, they can wound us. They can, they can betray us.

They can hurt us. And we become vulnerable to them. We, we open ourselves to them.

We're honest with them. They know about us and they can hurt us. And when we do hurt one another, we can't just walk in and say, well, look, let's buy, let bygones be bygones.

What did the Lord do? Well, he had a third meeting. He orchestrated the thing. it was obviously something he had planned.

He had a little breakfast ready and it's always nice to have, you know, food. I don't know why that is, but very often the Lord would sometimes bring up some of the most difficult things while they're reading. And maybe it's so that you can, you know, take a sip of your tea or, or take another bite or something while you're thinking about it.

Or I'm not sure. Maybe you can just look at your plate and you don't have to be direct. I'm not sure why it is, but anyway, it's, it's kind of a nice thing to have some food there, you know, and that sense of fellowship and sharing together.

And so they're, uh, they're invited in for breakfast and the Lord says something very gracious. He says, bring up the fish, which you have now caught. Isn't that amazing? They caught them.

Oh, they, they fished all night and caught nothing. Then the Lord took 153 great fish, stuck them in the net and said, bring up the fish, which you have now caught. Well, that's always the way it is, isn't it? And people talk about, well, you know, I led him to Christ.

Well, thank the Lord that he used you in the process. But the fact was that the Lord was working in that person's life a long time before you knew it. And when you say you led them to Christ, well, Christ led you to them actually.

And, uh, and, and Christ has been working with them or you wouldn't get anywhere with them. Right. So the Lord gives them the fish and then he says, bring up the fish, which you have now caught.

Let's, let's participate in this thing together. Let's fellowship. And so they sit down for the little meal or there, there they are at the seashore, the first prayer breakfast, I guess.

And, and the Lord says, Simon, um, could I ask you a question? Do you love me more than these? Now it's not a real easy, uh, verse there. As far as, uh, what these refers to these things, these disciples, what is it? I kind of think it was these disciples because you see, that was Peter's boast, wasn't it? Though all these forsake thee, I will never forsake thee. And so the Lord said, well, now Peter, what would you like while we eat some fish here? Would you like to eat a little humble pie too? It's a golden opportunity, isn't it? Right in front of the other disciples to get down off his high horse.

Very difficult thing to do graciously, but the Lord gives them opportunity one, two and three, the same way as he warned him three times. Now he gives them three opportunities to back off. And Peter does back off.

And Peter has to confess that he, he can't come up to the standard. He can't meet the standard. And what is that? That wonderful provision that God has made.

God's standard is perfection. He never changes in that. He never lowers his standards.

He never puts us on the bell curve. You know, God's standard is perfection. But grace is that wonderful commodity that makes up the difference between human failure and God's perfection.

And the Lord Jesus, along with the fish, and the humble pie administers grace to Peter. We need grace to humble ourselves, don't we? We need grace to get down and say, I'm sorry, brother, I was wrong. And so the Lord there restores him the fellowship with his brethren.

They're all privy to it. They see it. And it's Peter who tells us that love covers a multitude of sin.

In other words, these brethren who knew Peter's story knew what had happened. None of them ever referred to it. Peter's the only one who really refers to it.

And I hope we'll see that a little later in the weekend. But you know, if there's a man that I could look up to in the New Testament, a man who made his share of mistakes, but a man who learned his lessons and who was willing to humble himself and sit down as an older man and write in his epistles to the saints, the lessons he learned and how he learned them. And when you read his epistles, you can't help but see the stories in Peter's life, the occasions when he had to be rebuked by the Lord.

Painted right into the portrait. They're woven right into the tapestry of his epistles, aren't they? And Peter learns his lessons. You'll notice that what the Lord tells him here is so encouraging that though his faith would not fail, his courage would fail.

His testimony would fail. His faith would not fail. How do we know his faith didn't fail? Well, you see, Peter had been the one who blurted out one day when the Lord Jesus, well, he was getting quite a crowd and it was looking like, Hey, their team looked pretty good.

Had they been, they'd been despised and they'd been the crude fishermen, you know, the Galileans, nobody wanted them around and their Jesus wasn't respected very much. But as time went on, he started to get quite a following. So it's pretty good fellas.

Looks successful, doesn't it? Hey, this is, this is working out. And then the Lord Jesus said something that would make a PR man cringe. He turned and said, listen, folks, if you're not real serious, if you're not ready to take up your cross and follow me, why don't you just go home? And they did.

And they did, except a handful. And the Lord turned to that little handful and said, will you also go away? And you have to, you have to love Peter for this. He says to the Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life.

And we believe and are sure that thoughts, the words of eternal life and the Lord had to rebuke him and say, excuse me, Peter, have not I chosen you? Twelve and one of you is a devil. In other words, don't be too quick to say we Peter, you may speak for yourself, but please don't speak for Judas. We believe in our shore that nonetheless, we, we recognize from that statement that Peter was absolutely sure that the Lord had it straight, right? He was sure that the Lord had it straight.

The Lord told the truth every, well, almost every time there was one time in the Lord didn't tell the truth. And the Lord said that, that he would betray him. Oh no, no, no, that's not going to happen.

You don't have it right there. You're right. Everything else, but not right about that.

Surely not right there. Now, what happened when Peter betrayed the Lord? But one of the things that happened was he found out that the Lord was right about a hundred percent of the time, wasn't he? And his faith was actually strengthened. He actually had more confidence telling the Lord unswerving confidence that absolutely everything the Lord said was right.

And the Lord Jesus made a promise to keep every promise. When he said heaven and earth may pass away, but my words will not pass away. Not one job, not one tittle will pass until every word of it is fulfilled.

I prayed for the, that by faith fail not. And when, Oh, what a blessed, when, not if, but when, when thou passest through the waters, not into, but through when thou passes through the waters, I will be with me. There are certain very important words like that, that we sometimes overlook at times.

If we sin, when you pray, sin is presumed to be abnormal. And the life of the believer is never taken to be acceptable or the norm. But when you pray prayer is taken to be the common course in the believer's life.

When thou art converted, it's the Lord who takes on the responsibility of restoring his people. It was not the sheep that dialed nine one one when he got lost. It was the shepherd who left the 99 and went out into the hillside to find the one sheep and bring it home.

Why Peter would take this up with me when he would say, as, as he portrays that scene, when you were a sheep going astray, but I've returned to the shepherd and Bishop of your souls. In other words, the one who shepherds your souls, who, who oversees them, who is the elder, the Supreme shepherd who cares for you when thou are converted. And then this last little phrase, strengthen thy brethren.

It is a marvel of divine grace that the Lord should take a failure and turn it into a ministry. Very often I think we look at our little lives and we say, well now these are liabilities and these are assets. I wouldn't think of giving the liabilities to the Lord.

I mean that's like taking your garbage out and giving it to your guests, but you don't do that. You take the best out. You go to the freezer and get out those nice big steaks you've been saving for the special occasion.

So you don't take the scraps, the leftovers and give them to the Lord. Surely the Lord says, well, no, it's not that I want the leftovers and scraps. I want everything.

You see the Lord takes broken hearts, but he has to have all the pieces. And if we will bring everything to him, to our utter amazement, we'll watch as he sorts through our lives that many of the things we thought were our assets. He brushes aside and says, well, I don't think I can do anything with that.

On the other hand, the things that we thought were our liabilities were the very things that he picks up and uses for his glory. Saul of Tarsus was an expert in the Hebrew. He knew the law inside out.

He knew all the big boys in Jerusalem, the back room boys, you know, knew them by their first names. And when he got saved, I would have had him on the first bus to Jerusalem, got him to stand out there and give his testimony on the temple steps at rush hour. That's what I would have done.

But the Lord didn't do that. The Lord took him off into Arabia for three years. And when he finally did make it to Jerusalem, they didn't even know who he was.

Who is this fellow? Some idiot that took a bunch of people out into the desert to die. He said, no, that's not me. They didn't even know him.

Peter, on the other hand, he's got a Galilean accent, a hillbilly accent. You know, they pick him out in Jerusalem. As soon as he opened his mouth, they did that day when he was standing by the fire, your speech betrays you.

And Peter, imagine taking Peter and sending him into the hotbed of Judaism and taking Paul and shipping him off to the Gentiles. Whoever would do such a thing except God. You see, that's the beauty of it, isn't it? That's the wonder of it.

That when God wants to do a work, oh, he can do it anywhere. In the last upload magazine, we had the story of the Wilhelmsons, Bob, Wilhelmson is originally from a Hayward assembly in California. And he and his wife, maybe you read the article.

uh, they were working among a primitive tribe, a tribal group in the hills and the mountains of Bolivia, the jungles. and she took deathly sick and had, they had to leave and move out to the city for medical attention. And so they moved to Cochabamba and they, they're older and they felt, well, maybe their ministry was over.

One day there was a knock at the door for Israelis. They said, we're anthropologists. And we heard that you did work with sort of tribal group, but we'd like to ask you some questions.

Of course, you can imagine what their questions were. Uh, Margaret Mead, anthropology 101, you know, um, do you, do you feel you damaged their culture? And they said, well, yes, we did. Um, they used to eat each other, you know, and we thought that was something that ought to be damaged.

We spent four years without ever saying a word of censure or correction, four years learning their culture. And they showed them the work that they had done, every, every symbol and the way they cook their food and the way they hunted and the way they dressed and all of their, all of their taboos. And, and they learned their languages and their language.

And, and they said, we tried to do as much as possible to preserve what was good in their culture. But the fact is that our message is a radical message. It's radical to every culture, including the Israeli culture, the American culture.

And there are some things that in every culture that need to be damaged their sin. See, but anyway, they stuck around and Mrs. Wilson served them dinner and they stuck around. And finally he edged in, he really wasn't used to dealing with Jews at all, but he kind of put his toe in the water and said, uh, have you ever heard why we think Jesus is your Messiah? No.

Would you be interested? Sure. Okay. And so for about two hours, he went through the scriptures, fumbling through the Hebrew scriptures.

He didn't know Hebrew and they were saying, well, wait a minute, that Hebrew word is this. And you know, he stumbled along and did the best he could. But that was, I think in 89 or 90.

Uh, they just passed the 8,000 Israeli through their home. Now this is not Tel Aviv. This is Cochabamba.

They have a map showing all the places in Israel from which these people come. If you move to Israel, you could never meet all those people. That's as I'll tell you what, if you're willing, if you like a ministry, don't worry about the fact that you're in Cochabamba.

I mean, I'll bring people who are searching into your kitchen. They have a room, an Israeli room with flags and maps and paraphernalia that these Israelis have given them. They're in these little books.

When you, you know, you buy these books on what to do when you go to South America, they're listed in there. Go see these missionaries. And these people show up expecting, you know, they take them 16 at a time.

Now that's all they can fit in. And she's learned to cook Israeli food. She serves them an Israeli dinner and they spend a little time.

Uh, they take a photo of them. They've got all these photo albums of all these Israelis that have been to their home. I tell you that story simply to remind you that God is God and he can take a crude fisherman whose curses came quickly to his lips and put him in the heart of Jerusalem and use him to unlock the key.

Get this now, a hillbilly with a Galilean twang standing up at Pentecost recently known to have denied the Lord with those and curses standing up at Pentecost and leading Jews to Christ from all over the empire. And one day 3000 saved. He's God and, and the wonder of it is that he used a poor failing servant of his recently failing.

You know, the devil's lie is you've had it buddy. You're on your face. Just lie there and cry.

There's no use you getting up. God can never use you again. Here's a man who denied the Lord with oaths and cursing right in front of this worst enemies.

And the Lord used him within a very short period of time to lead 3000 people to Christ. Oh, thank God for his restoring ministry. And you see what he did.

He used Peter's weakness to remind him of the necessity of strengthening his brethren. He knew how much he needed to be strengthened and his own weakness and failure reminded him of the needs of all of God's people because after all, we're all just little sheep, weak and helpless. And when we turned to Peter's epistles, we discovered that every illustration he used was an illustration of somebody who didn't deserve to be used as a good example.

He uses a lot as a good example. Now that really takes a stretch, doesn't it? What could you find good to say about law? But Peter did. He knew Sarah as a good example.

You sisters do well. You know, when you follow the example of Sarah, she called Abraham Lord. Well, you go back and read the story.

It's the only word that salvage out of the whole story. How's this going to happen? My Lord being old also. And Peter, by the spirit of God says, I think we can use that one.

Isn't that what the Lord does in our lives? But it's all grace brothers, sisters. It's all grace. And if even in our failure, we say, Lord, I don't know what you can do with this.

I'm going to cast it on you. The Lord takes it up. How many a man who is, who's known the wrong side of a bar, a man who is, who's been a drunkard has been used to stand up and proclaim the liberating power of the gospel.

I can't say that, but he can. And the Lord actually uses our failures. If we'll lay them on the altar, he'll take them up and he'll use them.

He'll turn them into a ministry. Oh, what a God we have. I trust.

As we look at some, some lessons from the life of Peter, from his epistles. And maybe if you get a few minutes, you can, you can take a peek at some of them. We'll be spending most of our time in the second epistle.

Uh, but, uh, but we're going to be looking at a few illustrations there. I hope they'll be encouraging to us and remind us again that, um, in many ways we're like Peter, but sometimes we're not like Peter and the way he learned his lessons. And I hope that over this weekend, we'll discover how Peter strengthens brethren and therefore how we can be strengthened.

But also as our brother, introduce the conference, how we can go home and be used in the same ministry. There are a lot of weak saints, struggling saints, and we could be used to strengthen them, strengthen their hand in the work and encourage them to. Shall we pray? Our father.

Now, as we have opened by word this evening, we have been reminded how good is the God we adore our faithful, but we are faithless. He abides faithful, our faithful, unchangeable friend whose love is as great as his power and knows neither measure nor end. Oh father, we look up into my face and we say this evening, we're just a bunch of nobodies, but nobodies who have been saved by the matchless work of Christ.

Redeemed with the precious blood made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ lifted out of the dunghill and set among princes. Oh God, that we, that we would stand before thee this evening and declare with John of old behold, what manner of love the father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God, the born ones of God. We delight in this relationship we have with thee.

We thank thee for the unsearchable riches of thy grace. They never come to an end. They never come up short.

We thank thee that by grace is sufficient for even a bunch of poor sinners like those gathered here this weekend. May we delight in my grace and learn from it and be strengthened in the inner man through it and become the instrument of thy strengthening in the lives of God's people. Remembering that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

We ask it in the savior's precious name.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jb-nicholson/life-of-peter/>

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