

A Portrait of Peter

by Victor Maxwell

Peter's life is a testament to God's power to change and use us for His purposes, even in our failures.

Scripture: Mark 1:16, Mark 14:32, Luke 5:10, John 1:40, John 21:18, Acts 1:15, Acts 2:14, 1 Peter 1:12

Topics: "Discipleship", "Faithfulness"

Description

Victor Maxwell delves into the life of Peter, highlighting his journey from a rugged, strong-willed fisherman to a loyal yet sometimes overconfident disciple of Jesus. Peter's character is portrayed as a mix of boldness, loyalty, and human flaws, making him relatable to many. Despite his failures, Peter's story emphasizes God's faithfulness and the transformation that can occur when one surrenders to Him. From being a follower of Jesus to playing a prominent role in the early church, Peter's life exemplifies the journey of faith, growth, and unwavering commitment to God.

Transcript

Men the Master Made Study #2 - A Portrait of Peter "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. (John 1:40-42) Some might maintain that it would be difficult to find a sermon on every one of the disciples of our Lord.

However, when we come to Peter there are many sermons we could preach on this man's life. While it is true that there were great social, emotional and geographic variances among the twelve apostles, none of them was more human than this man Peter. He was rugged, strong-willed, passionate, and expressive. He did nothing halfheartedly. When it came to fishing, he was determined, stubborn and sometimes even obnoxious. But he was also loyal to the core, blindly courageous, and at times overconfident, which occasionally got him into trouble.

Peter was not only the most prominent but also the most popular of the chosen Twelve. Of all the disciples none stands as much to the front and in the centre as Peter. Whether he's sloshing around in a sinking ship boat or recklessly wielding a sword in the dim light of Gethsemane, Peter dominates every scene in the life of our Lord with His followers. After the name of our Jesus Christ Himself no name is mentioned so much as Peter's. In the Gospel records no other disciple speaks so much or so often as Peter.

No disciple was ever so pointedly rebuked by our Lord as Peter and yet no disciple ever publicly reproved the Lord like Peter. He was to the fore in his bold confession of our Lord and publicly acknowledged and encouraged the Saviour. Yet the same Peter repeatedly intruded, obstructed and tempted the Lord. Jesus.. Our Lord praised Peter and spoke words of approval and blessing to him like to no other disciple and yet almost with the same breath Jesus said harder things to Peter than to any disciple other than Judas Iscariot.

There is no doubt Peter was a most remarkable man. Our study is little more than a thumb-nail sketch of his life. 1. Peter was a Fisherman from Galilee Luke 5:10; Peter was always a very practical man and a lot of this is seen in his background. Being a family man and a fisherman by profession his life consisted of very tangible and practical things; boats, nets, fish, competition, hard work and on of all supporting a family. He was neither scholarly nor sophisticated yet he and his brother Andrew ran a family business in Galilee.

William Carey was a cobbler but he also master six languages. Hudson Taylor was considered an invalid but he also became a chemist. 2. Peter was a Follower of Jesus Christ Mark 1 :16-18; (a) Peter believed in Jesus Christ. (John 1:41, 42) Matthew 16:16) Peter's faith in Christ was instant and radical. He answered Christ's call and immediately followed Him. Peter's natural name Simon means instability or vacillation. The Saviour knew Peter would fail in the crucial hours ahead.

However, the Saviour made a prophetic statement and promised to change his life from instability to strength. Salvation is instantaneous but conversion of character takes longer. (b) Peter belonged to Jesus Christ. Peter with others had forsaken all to follow Him. You have probably noticed in reading through the New Testament that sometimes the twelve were called disciples and sometimes they were called apostles. A disciple is a learner who seeks to imitate his teacher; in other words, a pupil, a student.

In the Gospels the twelve were usually called disciples because as long as Jesus was with them they were still learners.. Jesus was the Master and they were the students. An apostle was one who was sent forth; one who was chosen and sent with a special commission as the fully authorized representative of the sender. All the apostles were disciples but not all disciples were apostles. (c) Peter was beside Jesus Christ. (Luke 5:1-10; Matthew 17:1-8; For three years Peter was constantly with our Lord.

On the sea Peter saw the mastery of the Lord Jesus. (Mark 4:37-41) On Mount Hermon Peter saw the Majesty of the Lord Jesus (2 Pet.1:16-18) In Synagogue Peter saw His ministry to the multitudes. (Luke 4:16-22) Among the sick Peter saw Jesus mercy. (Mark 2:30-34) In the Garden Peter saw agony of the Lord Jesus. (Mark 14:32-42) (d) Peter was blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:16) The development of Peter's character shows that he became less and less Simon the reed and more and more Peter the rock.

It was a matter of Peterizing Simon rather than Simonizing Peter. Upon his confession of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour blessed him and committed to him the keys of the kingdom by which he would open the gospel doors to the Jews¹ the Samaritans and the Gentiles. 3. Peter was Failure at a Crucial Hour (Mark 14:32-72) Peter was undoubtedly strong and rugged in physique but weak and fickle in character. If we were to gauge Peter's life as on the F.T. Index his graph 'would show great highs and lows.

If with the Lord on the mountain was his Highest hour then his denial of the Lord was like Black Friday of the Market crash. Peter was so human. Failure is not popular but the Bible is not silent to tell us the worst about the best of men. Peter was a man who often spoke too soon, listened too seldom and acted too

hastily. However, failure in the past does not nullify God's purpose for the future. A broken heart is fertile soil for putting together a shattered life. Even in the midst of His failure the Saviour assured Peter of His effectual and prevailing prayers.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren". (Luke 22:31,32) 4. Peter was Featured in the Resurrection (Mark.16:7) Failure in the past does not cancel God's purpose for us in the future. "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you". (Mark 16:7) The words "tell his disciples and Peter" remind us that the Lord still had a place for Peter in spite of his denial of the Saviour.

See Peter searching for the Saviour at the empty Tomb. John 20:1 See Peter meet with the risen Saviour in the Upper room. (John 20:19 Lu.24:34 ICor.15:5) See Peter meeting the Son in the forenoon at Galilee. John 21:1-25; 5. Peter was Foremost in the Early Church (Acts.1:15) For three years he had been a learner with our Lord. Now that Jesus was taken up to heaven Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, became a leader. Peter took the lead in choosing a replacement for Judas. Peter was the spokesman for the Church at Pentecost.

Peter with John healed the paralytic on their way to the Temple (Acts 3) Peter and John defied the Sanhedrin in refusing to be silent about the Lord. Peter had to preside over the sad episode with Ananias and his wife. (Acts 5) Peter dealt decisively with a situation in Samaria (Acts.8) Peter was used of God to open the door to the Gentiles (Acts.10) Peter was the man God used to pen two letters of the New Testament. Some one has said, "Revival will come not when our churches are filled with Christians but when Christians are full of God." 6.

Peter was Forthright in the Gospel (Acts. 2:14; 4:8) Every preacher remembers his first sermon and sometimes with a lot of embarrassment. Peter was a great preacher of the Gospel and on his first sermon three thousand trusted the Lord. 7. Peter was Faithful unto Death (John 21:18,19) Often you will see a portrait of Peter in a stained glass window. His life was transparent and we were able to look at all his failings. Peter was a man who could identify with failure, understand pain and was well acquainted with suffering. (I Peter:1, 12-19) Peter's life revealed that not only is God is always faithful to His own but that Peter was faithful to God until he gained the martyr's crown.

Like we said, Peter is such a transparent person. It is easy to look at his mistakes with hindsight and pass judgement on a better way to do things. I came across the prayer which sums how we should feel about this great man. Thank you Lord for Peter. He was a great man. He loved you so much. He left everything to follow you. In your name he healed the sick, cast out demons, and preached the kingdom. For three and a half faithful years he stood beside you. And when the soldiers came to take you away, he stood up for you.

When the others deserted you, he followed all the way to the temple courtyard. I confess I would have never made it that far. Help me not to pass judgment on him, Lord. Rather, may his great and fervent love for you pass judgment on me. Help me to see that I deny you in so many areas of my life, in so many ways and at so many different times. When I am too busy to pray, I deny that you are the centre of my life, When I neglect your Word, I deny that you are competent to guide me.

When I worry, I deny that you are Lord of my circumstances. When I turn my head from the hungry and the homeless, I deny that you are a God of mercy who has put me here to be your hands and your feet. When I steal something from another person to enrich or enhance my life-whether that be something material or

some credit that is rightly due another, which I have claimed for myself-I deny you are the source of all blessings. Forgive me, Jesus, for all those quiet ways, known only to you, in which I have denied you.

Thank you for all the times you have prayed for me that my faith might not fail. There is no telling how many times I have been rescued from Satan's hand because you stood beside me. And thank you, most faithful of friends, that no matter how terribly I have failed you, I can always look into your eyes, and there find forgiveness. . Today God is not in to changing names as he changed Simon to Peter, but He still is changing the lives of those who surrender to Him.

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