

Peter's Attitude to Money and Correction

by Zac Poonen

Peter's story teaches us the importance of humility and surrender to God's will, even in the face of challenges and tests.

Scripture: Matthew 16:22-23, Luke 5:1-11, Luke 12:21, John 6:68, Acts 3:6

Topics: "Faith and Wealth", "Humility in Correction"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes Peter's journey of faith and his attitude towards money and correction, illustrating how God had a greater calling for Peter that required testing and approval. When Jesus called Peter to leave his fishing business, he chose to follow Christ instead of seeking material wealth, demonstrating a profound understanding of true riches in God's kingdom. Poonen contrasts Peter's response to wealth with the modern Christian mindset that often seeks prosperity and material gain, warning against the deception of earthly-mindedness. He highlights Peter's humility in accepting public rebuke from Jesus, showcasing that true discipleship involves embracing correction as a path to eternal life. Ultimately, Peter's choices reflect a commitment to spiritual wealth over earthly success.

Transcript

God had a great calling for Simon Peter. But it could not be fulfilled until he had been tested and approved. Peter however had no idea about God's wonderful plan, at the time that Jesus called him. God unfolds His plan to us only one step at a time. One day Jesus came into Peter's boat and told him to put out the boat into deep water and to let down his nets for a catch. Peter did so and caught the greatest catch of his lifetime (Lk. 5:1-11). If Peter had been like some Christian businessmen today, he would have said something like this to Jesus, "Lord, this is fantastic. Let us - you and I - be partners. You do the preaching and I will support you financially. If my fishing business is going to be like this, I will soon be the richest businessman in all Israel; and my tithes will support not only you but a host of other Christian workers in many parts of this land and abroad as well!" Peter could then have gone around the world giving his testimony at various conferences for businessmen and taught businessmen about a Christ who could make their businesses prosper.

Such is the reasoning of the carnal mind. But Peter didn't do that. When Jesus called him to leave his nets, He left his fishing business immediately and followed Jesus. He passed the test. Little do Christians realise when God prospers their ways so that they earn more money that they are being tested. Most Christians fail the test here. They settle for being empty millionaires when they could perhaps have

become apostles. Years later, Peter, far from being a wealthy businessman, could only say, "I do not possess silver and gold."(Acts 3:6). But he had something far better than silver and gold. He had given up the rubbish of earthly wealth for the eternal wealth of Christ's kingdom. Christian bookshops are flooded these days with books that claim to teach Christians how to become materially prosperous and to make money, with Jesus as a partner in one's life! Christians are encouraged in these books to claim expensive cars, and houses and lands - all by faith in Christ.

Even though a child can see the earthly-mindedness of these writers, yet many believers are being deceived. The testimonies given therein of people receiving material things may all be true - but how many of them realised that God was testing them when he gave them wealth? They were being tested when they became rich to see whether they would learn to give away their wealth and become 'rich towards God' (Lk.12:21). But they all failed the test - unlike Peter. Self is the centre of every child of Adam. When we are converted, Self does not die, but seeks in subtle ways to make God also to serve its own interests. This is the source of the carnal Christianity that majors on getting material and physical blessings from God and that comes to us nowadays in these books, clothed in the garb of 'faith'. Yet these books serve a purpose too, in that they reveal what the hearts of their readers truly desire - the earthly or the heavenly. Thus the wheat is sifted from the chaff in Christendom!

We see how Jesus tested Peter in yet another way when He rebuked Peter publicly with the sharpest rebuke that He ever gave any human being. When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to be rejected and crucified, Peter, with intense human love for the Lord "took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You'"(Mt.16:22). Jesus turned around and publicly said to Peter (in the hearing of the other apostles), "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me" (Mt.16:23). It is quite insulting to our ego to be rebuked publicly. It is far worse to be called 'Satan'. Yet Peter never got offended.

When many of Jesus' disciples got offended with the message of death to Self that Jesus preached, and left Him, Jesus asked the twelve apostles whether they would like to go away too. It was Peter then who replied saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go. You have words of eternal life"(Jn.6:68). These words were uttered by Peter soon after he had received that strong rebuke from Jesus' lips. That is what makes Peter's words even more wonderful. He felt that any words of rebuke from Jesus' lips were only words of eternal life! Our ability to accept rebuke from an older brother is a test of our humility. Peter passed the test with flying colours.

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