
Simon Peter

Mark 3:16

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00:01

Well, today we're beginning a study of the 12 disciples or 12 apostles. So let me invite you to take your Bible this morning and turn to Mark, Chapter 3. Mark, Chapter 3. In our last time together, we looked at verses 13 through 15 as we introduced them. And today we're looking at verse 16. Mark, Chapter 3, verse 16.

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Notice what it says, and he appointed the twelve and he gives the first disciple whose name is Simon to whom he gave the name Peter. Now from this point except for in chapter 14 and verse 37, Mark will use this name for Simon, though this is not the place where it was first given. We'll mention that in just a moment. But

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Simon is Simon Peter, or just simply Peter, who became a central figure in the New Testament of the Bible. In fact, he's the most mentioned apostle in all the Gospels. His name appears more than any other biblical character besides Jesus himself. He's portrayed as a passionate and impulsive disciple.

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He's often spoke before he would think, and he would often make bold declarations. Many of us may see ourselves in one of these disciples or many of

these disciples, but the encouraging thing is these were common everyday people, but they had an uncommon calling. God used these men to change the world.

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And I pray that God will use us to do the same.

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Let's begin this morning by looking at his early life, as well as his call to discipleship. He was born in Bethsaida. Bethsaida was a village in the Galilee region of Palestine. It was a fishing village. And so was Capernaum, where he later moved. His father's name and parents were known by their last name.

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and you would be known as the son of or the daughter of. And his father's name was Jonah, who's also named John in John 1.42. And everyone knows that Peter had a brother whose name was Andrew. Andrew was actually the one who brought his brother to Jesus.

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Both of them worked as fishermen. They had that trade as full-time fishermen. They worked on the Sea of Galilee, where they caught fish for a living. They also had partners in their endeavor, which was James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They, too, were fishermen. But Peter, just like the rest of the apostles, had an encounter with Jesus.

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And that encounter changed his life. There's a number of passages I want you to look at with me this morning. The first one is found in John chapter 1. So turn

over to John chapter 1 and let's pick up around verse 35 as we hear how these disciples began to come to know the Savior.

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It says, On the next day John again was standing with two of his disciples and he looked at Jesus as he walked and said, Behold, the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. And when Jesus turned and noticed them following, he said to them, What do you seek? And they said to him, Rabbi, which translated means teacher, where are you staying? He said to them, Come and you will see.

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So they came and saw where he was staying and they stayed with him that day and it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Now notice verse 41. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which translated means Christ.

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Greek word there, Christos. It means anointed one. The Hebrew equivalent of that is Messiah. What's that sound like? Messiah. So he says we have found the Messiah. And I love verse 42, and he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus looked at him, he said, you are Simon the son of John, you shall be called, and here's the Aramaic.

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Cephas, which is translated Peter.

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So Peter's original name was Simon, or the Hebrew name would be Simeon.

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Simeon would mean to hear, to listen. And there were actually eight other men in the New Testament that bore that same name. It was a very common name. You had Simon the Zealot, you had Simon the brother of Jesus, you had Simon the leper, Simon the Pharisee, Simon the Cyrene, Simon the father of Judas Iscariot, Simon the Sorcerer, and Simon the tanner of Joppa.

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But here, Jesus gives Peter this name, Petros. Peter. It means rock or stone. He was also known as Simon Bar-Jonah. And that just simply means Simon, son of Jonah.

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But here Simeon, to hear, to listen, would now be the rock, the stone. And he would be that rock and that stone, that foundation, along with the rest of the apostles to the church.

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And when we think about this, we have to think about his discipleship and think about his ministry with Jesus. And just a couple introductory things. First of all, we understand that he was prominent among all the twelve disciples. Every time you look at the list that's found in the New Testament, and there are four places in the New Testament where there are lists, every time you look at the list, whose name appears at the first?

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The top part of the list. It's Peter.

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In fact, their names are in three groups of four, and they're based on how close they were to Jesus. The first group had two brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John. The second group had Philip, Nathaniel, Matthew, and Thomas. The third group had James, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot, who was later replaced by Matthias.

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The order may change slightly, but they're always in the same groups, and each group is led by the same person. So the first group is led by Peter, the second group led by Philip, the third group led by James.

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And we know more about the first group than we know about the other groups.

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And so when we look at Peter appearing at the head of each of the group, it tells us that he was a leader among leaders, because all of these men were leaders. And we really learn a lot of things about this when it comes to the church, because in the church, you have more than one leader. And you may have, even in that leadership, a leader among leaders.

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But he was a leader. And he dominated the first twelve chapters of the book of Acts. And as we see him, he's always taking the lead. Now whether he says the right thing or does the right thing, that's to be, you know, questioned. In fact,

sometimes he is referred to as the disciple with the foot-shaped mouth. How many of you have that kind of mouth? That you're always putting your foot in it.

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You're always saying something. You're always impulsive. Well, that would be Peter. If he wasn't making a statement, he would be asking a question, and that's a good thing for leaders, to always ask questions. But let me just show you three things here as we see him taking the lead. First is found in Matthew 16, 16. Jesus had asked his disciples,

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Who do men say that I am?" And then they answered. Some say Elijah, some say one of the prophets. And then he says, but who do you say that I am? And Peter immediately speaks up and he says, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now that was the right answer. And that was an answer that came from above. Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father.

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who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and here it is with the name, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." We'll talk more about that in just a moment. But we see him taking the lead in declaring that Jesus is the Christ, he is the Messiah.

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Then we also see him taking the lead in Acts chapter 1.

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Next chapter one, they're in the upper room.

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And as they're in the upper room, it says that in those days, verse 15, Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers, a crowd of about 120 persons was there altogether. And he said this, men, brothers, the scriptures had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry. Now this man acquired a field.

11:04

with the price of his unrighteousness and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle of the earth, and all of his intestines gushed out. It became known to all who were living in Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field was called Hekaldama, which is field of blood. For it's written in the book of Psalms, Let his residence be made desolate, and let no one dwell in it. And let another man take his office. Therefore it's necessary that the men be made to be

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who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning with the baptism of John, until the day that he was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness of his resurrection." And they put forward two men, Joseph called Bar-Sabas, who is also called Justus and Mathias. And they prayed and said,

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to take the place of this ministry and apostleship from Judas, who turned aside to go to his own place, and they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias, and he was added to the eleven apostles. And so we see Peter taking the lead even here, and choosing a replacement for Judas.

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A third place we see him taking the lead is in Acts chapter 2. In Acts chapter 2, you have the coming of the Holy Spirit. They heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and it said, languages of fire rested on each of these apostles, and they spoke the word of God.

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And as they spoke the word of God, we understand from the chapter that everyone there on the day of Pentecost heard them speak in their own language the wonderful works of God.

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Now the crowd didn't understand what that meant, and they were perplexed. In fact, some of them began to say, well, these men are drunk. That's what's going on. Well, Peter stood up, verse 14, took his stand with the eleven, raised his voice. He declared to them, men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words that these men are not drunk as you suppose, for it is the third hour of the day.

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that this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel. And then he quotes that prophecy from Joel and explains to them that this mystery that you are witnessing right now is the promise from the Father. Remember Jesus said it was to their advantage that I go away and if I go away then I'll send the Helper, the Holy Spirit. And that's exactly what is taking place here. The coming...

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of the Spirit of God.

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And Peter takes the lead here. Takes the lead in explaining what's taking place. And then when you go into chapter 2 and verse 22, then you hear him preaching to the people. And explaining who the Lord Jesus Christ is whom they murdered. They murdered their Messiah. So he indicts the entire nation of Israel.

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for killing their messiah.

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Yeah, this is Peter doing this. It's really amazing that we hear this because the last time we heard from Peter was when he denied the Lord. And when he denied the Lord, it says he went out. And he went bitterly and I looked all over the place to find out where he went. Couldn't find it.

15:02

But you know the wonderful things about that when you fall, the Lord is there to restore you. And when Jesus resurrected, you know who He appeared to? Besides the rest of the disciples, He appeared to Peter. And all the word about the resurrection came to Peter. They came and spoke these things to Peter when the women...

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went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body and they're discussing who's going to roll this stone away and they come to the tomb and they see the stone is rolled away already.

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And then as they come to the tomb, there are two angels there that speak to them. And they're told to go into Galilee, and to go to the disciples, and to go to Peter. Why? Because Peter needed to be restored.

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Peter would be a pillar to the church.

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Well, he did just that.

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And so the next time you hear Peter speak, you hear him on the day of Pentecost, preaching with the power of the Spirit of God.

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Peter saw a lot of things in his day.

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as he had the opportunity to see and witness the miracles of the Lord and to hear his teaching. And they embedded deep into his heart because as you read the first and second letters that he wrote, 1 and 2 Peter, you'll find these things that he was exposed to coming out in his writings.

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But if you took just a little survey of what we've covered so far in the Gospel of Mark, Peter would have witnessed all these things. In fact, we know that John Mark, who wrote this letter, was heavily influenced by Peter. Many believe that Peter was the one that told him all these things.

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Peter would have witnessed Jesus driving out the demon in the synagogue in Capernaum. That's in chapter 1 verse 21 and following. He would have witnessed the healing of his own mother-in-law. You remember that in chapter 1 verse 30? He would have witnessed the healing of the leper. In chapter 1 verse 40, he would have witnessed the healing of the paralytic. In chapter 2, he would have witnessed Jesus eating.

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at Matthew's house with other tax collectors and sinners. Also in chapter 2 he would have witnessed the healing of the man with the withered hand. That's in chapter 3. All those situations he would have seen this.

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And in spite of all of that...

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He had moments of faith and courage and he had moments of doubt and failure.

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This is why I'll say this at different times. I'm thankful that the Lord has given us a book.

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Because having a book, we have frozen print on a page that we can go back and re-read. And in those moments of discouragement, those moments of doubt, you can go to the Word of God and be encouraged and be strengthened.

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Well, his moments of faith and courage, and we could cover many, but one that I want to mention is found in Matthew 14. If you'll turn in your Bible to Matthew 14 and beginning at verse 22.

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And here's the story, and you know it very well, but I'm not going to give it away yet. I want to read it to you. Says, immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side while he sent the crowds away. And after he had sent the crowds away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. And when it was evening, he was there alone. But the boat was already many stadia away from land. Being battered by the waves where the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night.

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He came to them doing what? Walking on the sea. Now when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified and they said, It's a ghost! And they cried out in fear, but immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid. And Peter answered and said to him, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. And he said, Come.

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And getting out of the boat, Peter walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him and said to him, You of little faith, why did you doubt? And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, You are truly God's Son.

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Pretty amazing story, isn't it? Of course, the skeptics are out there questioning whether this really happened. Do you believe the Word of God? I believe the Word of God. I believe this happened.

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And before you talk about the moment of doubt that he had, think about the other 11 that were in the boat that never got out of the boat.

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Peter had a lot of faith to get out of that boat. Peter was a professional fisherman. He knew when you stepped on the water, you went down. But he had great faith in Jesus.

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Lord, if this is you, command me to come to you on the water. Come. He steps out and he starts walking on the water.

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And only when he begins to see the wind and how the waves are billowing up that he begins to doubt and begins to sink. It doesn't say he just went boop down into the water. He began to sink.

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That was a high moment for Peter, wasn't it? You think of the stories that he could tell his wife? Yeah, Peter was married and she accompanied him on some of the journeys. Could you imagine the story that he had to share? What about a story to share with your kids and your grandkids? You know, this is how things were passed along was by oral tradition.

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But even in the midst of having such a high moment, there are also moments that right on the heels of that.

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you have the opportunity for doubt and failure.

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A doubt and failure came shortly after.

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Peter had announced that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Because when you go to Matthew 16 verse 21, it says, From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised up on the third day. And notice this, Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. And he said, God, forbid it, Lord. That shall never happen to you.

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The Lord turned and said to Peter, get behind me Satan. You are a stumbling block to me for you're not setting your mind on God's interest, but man. So you have in one instance where Peter is being used by the Lord as a mouthpiece for the Lord, proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And then the next moment, Satan is using his mouth.

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And he's even called Get Behind Me Satan.

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But I think the highest moment of doubt and failure, of course, was found in Matthew 26.

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And in Matthew 26, after Jesus has been arrested, Peter is following. And before again you knock Peter, where's the rest of the disciples? Strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter, and that's exactly what happened. But Peter was following behind. John was too.

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And here Peter, he's sitting outside in the courtyard and verse 69, a servant girl said to him, you too were with Jesus the Galilean, but he denied it before them all saying, I do not know what you're talking about. And when he had gone out of the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to those who were there, this man was with Jesus of Nazareth, and again he denied it with an oath, I do not know the man.

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Little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, surely you two are one of them for even the way you talk gives you away. I actually like that statement. Your speech gives you away.

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Then he began to curse and swear, I do not know the man. And immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times. And he went out and cried bitterly.

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In fact, in one of the Gospels it says that whenever he made that statement denying the Lord, it says the Lord turned around and looked at Peter.

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Imagine the penetrating eyes of the Lord.

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Me times if you've doubted. Me times if you doubted the word of the Lord. Me times if you denied Him in those moments when you had opportunity to proclaim Him.

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after he had went out and wet bitterly.

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He was later forgiven.

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Again, that's the beautiful words that we find in Scripture. The righteous man may fall seven times, but he gets back up.

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unlike Judas. Judas Iscariot, he went out and wept also. He even went back to the scribes and the Pharisees and he threw the 30 pieces of silver

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and they picked it up and ended up buying a field with it.

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they're righteously saying that we can't do anything because this money has blood on it.

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But it had two different responses. You had Peter weeping bitterly, but he doesn't abandon the Lord.

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And then you have Judas. He wept bitterly, and he went out and hung himself.

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He didn't repent, Peter did.

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Over in John chapter 21, I think this is one of the passages where we hear that restoration.

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And the interesting thing about this story is.

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They've been out there fishing.

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And Jesus said to them when they came to the shore, children, do you have any fish? And they said, no.

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And Jesus said, Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find a catch. And so they cast and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. And therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, that would be John the apostle, he said to Peter, It is the Lord. And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on, for he had stripped for work, and he threw himself into the sea.

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But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish. And so when they got on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread. And Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish which you've now caught. And Simon Peter went up and drew the net to the land full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

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And Jesus said to them, Come, have breakfast. None of the disciples ventured to question him, who are you, knowing that it was the Lord? And Jesus came and took the bread, gave it to them, the fish likewise. And it says this was now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. And it says so when he had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon, now here's your story to Simon.

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Simon, son of John.

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Do you love me more than these?

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He said, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said, Tend to my lambs.

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Interesting Jesus asked him. Do you love me? It was agape. Do you agape me and Peter's response was not Lord, you know, I agape you know, it was Lord, you know, I fillet you

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Filet is like, like. You know I like you.

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So, Jesus uses his word. He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you like me?

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He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. And he said to him, Then shepherd my sheep.

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He said to him a third time, Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you. And Jesus said to him, tend to my sheep.

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See, Peter had, after the resurrection, went back to his old life. He went back fishing.

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And Jesus never intended him to go back to that life. But now to be a fisher of men.

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and even in this encounter.

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we hear restoration. And we really hear it, as I said a moment ago, in Acts chapter 2.

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In Acts chapter 2, he preaches. He even performs miracles in Jerusalem, Acts chapter 3 and 4. He ministers to the Gentiles, specifically Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. But first, he had to receive an object lesson about what is clean and what is unclean.

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God is not a respecter of persons and I believe he was doing all of that because the Jews had such a horrible view of Gentiles and and God was sending Peter to the Gentiles.

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We also find later on in chapter 15, he plays a very prominent role in the council there in Jerusalem as they're trying to decide some important matters. Peter's involved in that. And then of course we talk about the very books that he wrote, the two letters, 1st and 2nd Peter, and you see that contribution as well. The Lord forgave him, the Lord restored him.

32:17

Well, before we wrap this up, there's a couple things that I just want to mention to you. What were some of the lessons that he learned, that you and I could learn? Well, the first lesson, and going back to him stepping out of the boat and walking on the water, what lesson would you learn about that? Trust?

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Jesus said aside, do not be afraid. Peter says, if it's you, command me to come out on the water. What did Peter need to do at that point? Step out of the boat and trust Jesus, right?

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Step out on that water, Peter.

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This defied logic, this defied understanding, especially for an experienced fisherman. You don't walk on water.

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That's why you have a boat. Right?

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but he learned to trust Jesus with the impossible. What about you? Do you trust Jesus with the impossible? We all have many different things going on in our lives, many different challenges that go on in our life from the Lord, but all of

those are not to drive you away from Him, all of those are to bring you to Him. And all of those are to strip you of your dependence on yourself.

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They're to show you where your dependence lies. Do you trust yourself? Do you trust your circumstances? Or do you trust the Lord Jesus?

34:01

That's one lesson that I see here. A second lesson that I would mention is that Peter learned that God could use him to say the miraculous, you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you Peter but my Father who is in heaven. How many times has God used your mouth to say the miraculous?

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Sometimes when you're witnessing to someone, you're sharing with them, maybe you're sharing your testimony of how you came to know the Lord and you're moving into the direction of the gospel and you're you just kind of step back for a minute and hear some of the things you're saying and you're going, wow, this is amazing.

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Would I have just come up with this on my own? I see that all the time. I see that all the time in my life. I see also those times when I don't say the right things.

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But I'm pretty encouraged when the right thing does come out, aren't you?

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And then the third thing, he learned that crushing defeat and deep humiliation often follow hard on the heels of great victories.

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He had a great victory many times. But again, going back to his bold declaration of who Jesus is, then all of a sudden,

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He's a mouthpiece for Satan. Lord, you'll never go to the cross.

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One minute he's proclaiming the supernatural, the next minute he's saying the most foolish thing ever.

36:07

There's a lot of lessons that you and I can learn from this. We also see here in Peter's life that there was a lot of raw material, but it was what Jesus had to work with just like us. We're raw material. And God uses us where we are, and He does not leave us where we are. He transformed us at salvation, but He's continuing to make us into His image. It says in Philippians 1, 6,

36:34

for I'm confident of this very thing that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. And since God used Peter, God can use us. And he does.

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That's the reminder we get from Peter's life story. His life shows a journey of transformation from a simple fisherman to a powerful leader in the early church. And we see from this, God can use ordinary people with flaws and weaknesses for His divine purposes.

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You know that Peter also encouraged others at his death?

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Here's what we know about how he would die. John 21, 18 and 19. Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wish, but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you and bring you where you do not wish to go. Now this, he said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God, and when he has spoken this, he said to him, follow me.

37:49

Now tradition tells us...

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that he was crucified on the cross, but before that occurred, his wife was also crucified too, and they crucified her first and he had to watch.

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And tradition says that he kept encouraging her to remember the Lord. Remember the Lord. And then when it came time for him to die,

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He felt that he was unworthy to be crucified the same way his Lord was crucified. So he recommended or requested from them that they crucify him upside down.

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What kind of encouragement do you get from that?

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Well, here was a man, impulsive, yes, said some of the...

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craziest things. That's why he had the foot-shaped mouth.

39:04

But yet God used him. God spoke through him. God used him in pinning his word. God used him as a pillar in the church. And God used him at his death. He was faithful unto death.

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He did not cower when he had that second opportunity to affirm or deny. First opportunity, he denied. Second opportunity, he died. No denial.

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We see in the life of Peter, God is a God of second chances, right?

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Though he had many failures, he had many triumphs. And the Lord was patient with him just as he's patient with us. I'm thankful for that.

40:09

Listen, before you can learn any of these lessons, you have to make sure that you know the Lord Jesus, right? That you are a believer in Christ, and my hope and prayer and trust is that you are. But if you're not...

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The way you come to know the Lord is by repenting, turning from your sin, confessing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

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And if that describes you this morning, I want to encourage you to come to the Lord, turning from your sin, embracing Him as Lord, believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. The Bible says that you will be saved.

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Father, we thank you for this privilege and this opportunity you've given to us to look at your Word. And we thank you for a life that we got to look at, though in a very general way, and a life that you changed. A life that you changed for your glory. A man that you used and are still using today.

41:23

Lord, may we learn from Peter and may we learn from you and how you dealt with Peter. Thank you for these things. We give you praise and we give you thanksgiving today. In Jesus' name, amen.