

10-15-17 – Shaken by the Power of Christ

Luke 5:1-10

We are going to kick off a mini-series from a little book from Our Daily Bread called **Simon Peter – A Rock Moved by God**. We will be looking at the various ways Peter's life was shaken by God.

I was going to start off with an introduction to the main character of this series without telling you who it is, but since I gave you the title, I'm sure you all know it is Simon Peter.

Background:

John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River for repentance. He was warning people of their need to be purified before God in order to receive the coming promise. He knew that the Messiah was coming soon; he had the inside scoop.

One day while he was baptizing, he saw Jesus coming to be baptized. He stopped in his tracks and announced... **Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.** This declaration said a lot about who Jesus really was. Only God can forgive sin... Even the religious leaders knew this. **Mk. 2:7 - ... Only God can forgive sins!**

The term "**Lamb of God**" may have been understood by some, but they weren't thinking of an actual person fulfilling these words.

This all got the attention of Andrew. He was so impressed and convinced who Jesus was that he ran to tell his brother, Simon about this encounter. Listen to the words he said to his brother...

Jn. 1:40-42 - Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ").

Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"). NLT

Andrew got it, but Peter needed more proof or personal interaction.

It took Simon several encounters and time to really grasp who Jesus was and give himself fully to Him.

The first encounter was this time when Jesus met him and changed his name – What?

Simon to Cephas (Aramaic – Petros Greek) – a name that means Rock or Stone.

Simon was neither a rock nor a stone. He was just a fisherman. But God saw a deeper Simon than he even saw himself. He sees the same thing in all of us. He didn't change Simon's name for no reason. He changed it to show the potential God saw in this common man. He was uneducated, impetuous, and unpolished.

Yet, God chose to use him to accomplish mighty things for God.

Ray Stedman – *Simon Peter was erratic, impulsive, and brash. Whenever he entered the scene, it was with a crash and a thud.*

Yet the Lord chose to make him a steady, stable, dependable “rock.” He became a rallying point for first-century Christians in those days of intense persecution.

God sees our potential and who we will become in Him down the road. Unpolished, untrained, uneducated as we are – God can and does use us for His purposes.

God has a plan for your life. No matter where you are now or how much you have to grow, God knows where you will fit into His plan and has called you beforehand to make you into what He desires for you.

If you read the Daily Bread, you would have read this from last Friday...

A New Name... READ Daily Bread article.

In Luke 5 we read of a fish story that rocked Simon Peter’s world and brought him into a personal relationship with Jesus that would change his life forever.

Luke 5:1-3 - One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water’s edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

Jesus used the boat as a platform to teach the crowds waiting on the shore to hear the Word of God. There must have already been a following who thought Jesus’ teachings were divine. So He taught them the Word. When He finished, He turned to Peter and commanded him to set out to the deep water and let down the nets for a catch. What?

Most people today fish for recreation and sport, but back then, this was their livelihood. They were fishing for their salary or daily needs. Fishermen in this time were experts of the seas and fishing. Peter was a master of fishing and all its intricacies. He was an expert. Jesus was a carpenter by trade and background. What did He know about fishing?

On this occasion, Peter and his men fished all night and caught nothing in their nets. Nothing. So they retired to shore and washed their nets for the next day’s attempt. This is the scene Jesus walked into. Fishing was done at night and close to shore for the regular fishermen.

This was not Jesus first encounter with Simon as we have seen. It is recorded in the Gospels that Jesus met with Simon a few times. He commissioned him to become a fisher of men rather than fish. Up to now, Peter had become a nominal follower of Jesus (as many of us have become), but now Jesus was challenging Peter’s entire being to become a complete believer and follower of Jesus the Christ. He is

challenging us in the same way. Will we continue to be marginal believers or completely sold out to Him.

He challenges us all at some point. Here is Peter's challenge...

Luke 5:4-7 – *When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish.”*

“Master,” Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.” And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. NLT

So this carpenter, teacher, Rabbi, showed them something about fishing when they thought they were the experts. Everything Jesus asked him ran contrary to all he knew and believed about fishing this area. “Although it seemed utterly impossible, many, many fish were caught – at the wrong time and in the wrong way. This opened their eyes, especially Peter’s. His reaction was very unique and humble...

Luke 5:8 - *When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m such a sinful man.” NLT*

For Simon, everything Jesus asked was unreasonable. It went against everything he knew about fishing in the Sea of Galilee. Yet, Peter obeyed Jesus’ request regardless, and the yield was miraculous.

Jesus had his boat, and now He wanted his nets... and his will.

Peter had a crisis moment. Even though he knew better about fishing, he obeyed Jesus’ command and reaped the benefits of this decision. We all have a time when we can obey or disregard the Lord’s command to us. It is always easier to disregard rather than obey.

Peter did what he was told, even though all his professional skills told him it was a waste of time.

Eph. 3:20 - *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

- Who is able – “caught a great number of fish”
- Infinitely more – “their net was breaking”
- More than we might ask or think – “they came and filled both boats so that they began to sink.”

Luke 5:8-9 - *When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m such a sinful man.” For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. NLT*

Simon’s response was not so much about the number of fish caught, but more about recognizing who Jesus really is – God, the Creator. He realized Who he was standing next to, and it broke him down. What just happened was beyond reason, description, or explanation. Only God could have done this.

Jesus revealed Himself as supreme in the realm where Simon was most familiar, most skilled, and most adequate. “In the presence of a Holy God, he felt small and frail and weak.” His reaction was to fall at Jesus’ feet and recognize how inadequate he really was next to the Creator, God. It made him shrink back and want to hide. This is the exact feeling each of us needs to have in the presence of God on a regular basis. We all need an experience like this to recognize who Jesus really is and then yield to Him.

Before this, Simon referred to Jesus as Master and Teacher, but now he calls him Lord. This indicated Simon’s belief that he was face to face with deity – God.

He saw:

The incomprehensible difference between holy God and sinful man.

The overwhelming burden of sin that weighs down the soul.

The need for repentance so his sinful condition could be corrected.

This same Simon who Jesus renamed “Peter” (a rock), realized he was no rock at all, but a sinful man. Jesus should find someone else to call rock. Peter was reduced to unworthy in the presence of Jesus.

Bishop J. C. Ryle wrote this...

- *The words of Peter exactly express the first feeling of man when he is brought into anything like close contact with God. The sight of divine greatness and holiness makes him feel strongly his own littleness and sinfulness. Like Adam after the fall, his first thought is to hide himself. Like Israel [at] Sinai, the language of his heart is, “Let not God speak with us, lest we die.”*

But Christ’s love would not let him go. He was prepared to do whatever it took to make Simon into a rock (Peter). (p. 17)

Luke 5:10-11 - His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!”¹ And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus. NLT

Simon trusted Jesus’ words, ‘Don’t be afraid!’ Jesus says the same thing to each of us when we encounter him personally. It is an awesome thing to come into the presence of God. Our natural inclination is fear, at first. We need to hear the voice of Jesus telling us not to be afraid, but simply trust Him.

Jesus invited Simon on an adventure of faith that would radically transform his life.

He gave Simon:

- **A New Attitude** – “Do not be afraid.” Jesus already knew of Peter’s failures, past, present and future, but He called him “rock” anyway, knowing what he would become.
- **A New Day** – “from now on” – It breaks with the past and changes everything. The failures of the past are replaced with a new future.
- **A New Purpose** – “you’ll be fishing for people” – As God called Moses and David to leave what they were doing to shepherd His people, He now called Simon to leave his nets and fish for people.
- **A New Life** – “they left everything and followed Jesus” – This was an expression of radical commitment. For Simon, everything was becoming new. However, Peter’s transformation to become all that God planned, would not happen so quickly. The man He named “rock” would be slow in forming.

Peter’s journey had begun. He had been shaken by the power of Christ. He had felt his weakness. And he had sensed his need for One so much greater than himself. (p. 18)

Where are you on your faith journey? Has God challenged you to go deeper? What do you need to leave behind in order to follow Jesus more fully? I am like Peter. I came to an awareness of Christ through friends fishing for men and through the Bible, but I didn’t yield for quite some time. I was on a God planned journey. God knew where I was on this journey the whole time. He knew where I would fail and where I would grow and how long it would take for me to finally yield. I still struggle sometimes with my commitment to God. But, He loves me through those times and helps me get back on track with Him.

I am in a much deeper walk with God now than I was 30 or 40 years ago, and yet, I’m still not where He wants me to be fully. This is a constant growing experience. Don’t measure your rate of growth against anyone else. The only thing that matters is that you are growing. We all need to be shaken by the power of Christ – it’s for our good.