



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

August 20, 2017 “The Call of Simon Peter, the Fisherman”

Scripture: Luke 5:1-11

One day Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret when the crowd pressed in around him to hear God’s word. Jesus saw two boats sitting by the lake. The fishermen had gone ashore and were washing their nets. Jesus boarded one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, then asked him to row out a little distance from the shore. Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he finished speaking to the crowds, he said to Simon, “Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch.”

Simon replied, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I’ll drop the nets.” So they dropped the nets and their catch was so huge that their nets were splitting. They signaled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They filled both boats so full that they were about to sink. When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Leave me, Lord, for I’m a sinner!” Peter and those with him were overcome with amazement because of the number of fish they caught. James and John, Zebedee’s sons, were Simon’s partners and they were amazed too. Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.” As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Questions in this GPS marked with ► are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

“You will be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter)

MONDAY 8.21.17 John 1:35-44

Enter Simon (his given name) Peter, perhaps the most colorful, outspoken, and brashly human of all Jesus’ first disciples. Spoiler alert: no other follower of Jesus except the apostle Paul (who at this point was either a boy in Tarsus or a rabbinical student with Gamaliel in Jerusalem) played as large a role in carrying on Jesus’ mission in the world as this man Simon. So why do we most commonly know him as “Peter”? Read on.

- Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, with big news: “We have found the Messiah.” “John translates “Messiah” into Greek; probably most hearers in the Mediterranean Diaspora, including some Jewish ones, did not know the Hebrew title.... For a people who actively looked for the appearance of the Messiah, this was a joyful and serious message.”* Who first introduced you to Jesus as the Messiah, God’s anointed savior?
- John said Jesus promptly called Simon, not Peter, but *Cephas*. *Cephas* “means ‘rock’ in Aramaic, as ‘Peter’ does in Greek. (*Cephas* is pronounced *kay-fas*).... Many people had nicknames, which usually communicated something about the person.” ** Jesus gave Simon a serious nickname, the main name by which we know him today, that meant “Rock,” promising stability and strength. In what ways have you grown stronger or more stable since you started to follow Jesus? What growth do you look forward to in the future?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to discover and live into both the joyful and the serious dimensions of meeting you as the Christ, God's anointed king. Rule over my life every day. Amen.

* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 239526-239528). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 239530-239532). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

“They left their nets”

TUESDAY 8.22.17 Matthew 4:18-20

Matthew's account (and the one in Luke 5, which we'll read tomorrow) may suggest that for a time Jesus intrigued Andrew and Peter, but they hadn't yet decided to follow him all the time. Jesus' call, couched in language that related to their everyday work, pointed to a larger, more demanding call. Fish may be difficult to catch, but often nowhere near as challenging to understand and draw in as people.

- “In the ancient world, fisherfolk were peasants.” * Why might Jesus have walked along the shores of Galilee as he sought followers, instead of seeking out the day's most eminent religious experts? One outcome: by going beyond “the system” of his day, Jesus found people who were more open to his radical ideas about what it meant to be the Messiah. In what ways has Jesus called you beyond “the system(s)” in which you grew up and studied?
- Jesus' disciples changed their lives a lot to follow him. In addition to leaving their nets, going to “fish for people” was a big change. “From the very beginning the calling of disciples suggests missionary activity.” ** In what way(s) is Jesus calling you now? What spiritual practices help you keep your heart and life open to hear and answer Jesus' call?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, whether I think I've got my life all figured out, or whether I'm searching for direction, keep me open to hear your calling. Even more, keep me open to making changes when responding to your call requires them. Amen.

* Eugene Eung-Chun Park and Joel B. Green, study note on Matthew 4:18-22 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 11 NT.

** *Ibid.*

“When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees”

WEDNESDAY 8.23.17 Luke 5:1-11

Luke made it clear that Jesus and Simon knew each other before this story (cf. [Luke 4:38-39](#)). Jesus did much of his ministry around the Sea of Galilee's shoreline, and most of his first followers came from that area. But his vision always reached farther than any one location. He asked the first disciples to “push into the deep water,” hinting at the ultimate task he had for them. “Fishing for people” would push them into the deep waters of a whole world filled with suffering and spiritual hunger.

- Jesus was a rabbi, a teacher. Peter and his partners caught fish for a living. Why should “pros” like them listen when Jesus said, “Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch” (verse 4)? They agreed “because you say so.” Have you ever had a sense that Jesus was calling you to something that was more than “usual” or “logical”? Were you open to saying, “Because you say so, Lord”? Are you open to that today?
- “When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, “Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!” (verse 8) When did you most vividly realize, “God is God—and I'm not”? Did you feel any fear, as Peter seems to have in this passage? Did you take in Jesus' reassurance: “Don't be afraid” (verse 10)? How has realizing who God is, who you are, and who God wants to be in your life changed things for you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are my heavenly friend and brother—but you are also Lord of the universe. As I love and trust you, help me to also hold you in awe and respect. Amen.

“He appointed twelve and called them apostles”

THURSDAY 8.24.17 Mark 3:13-19

We learn a lot about Peter from the fact that in Mark’s list of the twelve, and also in the lists in [Matthew 10:2](#), [Luke 6:13-16](#) and [Acts 1:13-14](#), Peter’s name was always first. That no doubt reflected his vivid, outspoken personality, but also (here’s another spoiler alert) the words Jesus spoke to Peter in [Matthew 16:15-18](#). (We’ll look at that passage in greater depth later in this series.) Peter was an important leader and spokesperson during Jesus’ time on earth and after.

- Scholar William Barclay wrote, “It is significant that Christianity began with a group. The Christian faith is something which from the beginning had to be discovered and lived out in a fellowship. The whole essence of the way of the Pharisees...separated; the very name Pharisee means ‘the separated one;’ the essence of Christianity was that it ...presented [people] with the task of living with each other and for each other.” * Why is this reality essential for Christians in an age of division? How, if at all, have you experienced this?
- We also see key strength of Peter’s. Strong leader that he was, when God later called Paul to a key responsibility, he recognized and supported Paul’s calling, rather than opposing or minimizing it (cf. [Galatians 2:7-10](#)). What enables leaders whose character God has shaped to be confident in their calling while accepting others with important leadership gifts and responsibilities? Have you ever seen a competitive spirit become corrosive to the mission of Jesus’ kingdom?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give me a spirit willing to step up to whatever responsibilities you call me to, while never feeling rivalry with others you call. Make me a humble leader like Peter. Amen.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Mark (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976, pp. 73-74.

“You are...a people who are God’s own possession”

FRIDAY 8.25.17 1 Peter 2:3-9

Peter saturated his description of what it meant to belong to God’s people, the church, with quotations and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures. Peter, like Paul, saw the Jesus movement as an extension and fulfillment of the call God first gave to Abraham in [Genesis 12:1-3](#). Peter’s reflection on belonging to Christ expressed what scholar N. T. Wright wrote about the story in John 1: “What Andrew and Simon Peter thought they were doing was looking for the Messiah. What they didn’t realize was that *the Messiah was looking for them.*” *

- Pastor Paul Cedar wrote, “A spiritual temple requires a very specific kind of building material. It is to be built of living stones—the very lives of those who have become spiritually alive through faith in Jesus Christ. And such building must begin with Jesus Christ.” ** How did you come “spiritually alive,” to become a “living stone”? How has that shaped your life? What connects you with other members of this “temple” God is building?
- In what ways do you resonate with the idea that you have been “called out of darkness” into God’s amazing light? What type(s) of darkness has God had to dispel in your life? Have you ever stopped to ponder the idea that, in Christ, you are a member of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession”? How can that reshape your sense of mission and purpose in life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you came looking for me, maybe before I even knew I needed you. Thank you! Help me to live a life built on you, not one that stumbles over your call. Amen.

* N. T. Wright, *John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–10*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 14.

** Paul Cedar, *The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 34: James / 1 & 2 Peter / Jude*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, p. 137.

God trusted Peter (and us) to speak of his wonderful acts

SATURDAY 8.26.17 1 Peter 2:9-10

Peter carried a profound sense of responsibility. Jesus had called him, not just to relax and bask in God's love, but to "fish for people." That was the calling for all the Christian converts to whom he wrote, too. "Peter uses OT words and images to apply Israel's special identity to his Gentile audience. Israel is God's *chosen race* (Isaiah 43:20), *royal priesthood* (Exodus 19:6), *holy nation* (Exodus 19:6) and *a people who are God's own possession* (Exodus 19:5). The same can now be said of these believers in Jesus." * Peter knew that God calls all Christ followers, like Israel, to be a blessing to all the people of the world.

- As one of God's people ("a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God's own possession"—wow!), how do you or will you live so that others can know God's love and mercy? How can the faith community to which you belong show God's grace and light in ways you can't do alone? How can a sense that together we are God's hands in the world help you more clearly and deeply understand the meaning of "church"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you changed Peter from an ordinary fisherman to a man from whose life and writings we learn over 2000 years after his death. Empower me to live in ways that will have eternal value as a member of your "royal priesthood" on earth. Amen.

* Jeanine K. Brown, study note on 1 Peter 2:9-10 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 464-465 NT.

Family Activity: Jesus was an incredible encourager. He saw the best in everyone no matter what they had said or done, as he did in Peter. Read [2 Thessalonians 2:16-17](#). As a family, think of the people who see the highest potential in each of you. Create a list of those encouraging people in your lives. Talk about who cheers you on, builds you up and offers you hope. What characteristics do they have that identify them as encouragers? Find a way to thank those people this week. You might bake a treat, create a card or simply thank them for who they are in your lives. Ask yourselves how you can be more encouraging to others. How can you lead others by living out this quality of Christ? How can you see the best in people? Pray together, thanking God for seeing the best in you and in everyone. Ask God to help you grow as an encouraging person.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer

Prayers for Peace & Comfort for:

- Ruth Jones and family on the death of her sister Elsie Maxine Majewski, 8/12
- Tiffany Anderson and family on the death of her husband Stanley L. Anderson, 8/11
- Laura Gray and family on the death of her mother Carole Gray, 8/11
- Sheila Gill and family on the death of her father David Cole, 8/11
- Timberly Apple and family on the death of her husband Craig Apple, 8/10
- Tony Collichio and family on the death of his nephew Mike Marino, 8/5
- Katie Howe and family on the death of her father Daniel Rollheiser, 8/4