

The Simple Life ... of a Fisherman

By Shari Miller



[For Bible study leader notes and Bible passages, click on the Quarterly icon at www.lwml.org or contact the LWML Office.]



Introduction: A television show that was once aired featured two rich and spoiled socialites who leave tinsel-coated, plush Hollywood to live in much “simpler” and radically different surroundings. They joined different households and lived by that household’s rules. The girls lived and worked in households such as a family farm or a factory worker’s home. They even lived in a Christian family’s home with more household rules than they had ever experienced! Needless to say, much mayhem ensued! The premise of the show is interesting in that the lifestyle of the girls was radically changed.

For discussion: If you were to change your lifestyle, what kinds of feelings, emotions, or even regrets do you suppose you would have? Have you ever imagined living in different surroundings? What did you imagine?

As we consider the apostle Simon Peter today, look for ways that his life was radically changed by Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

Opening Prayer: Dear Almighty Father, We glorify Your name and praise You every day for Your goodness and mercy in our lives. We confess that we sin daily and need Your forgiveness. Thank You for that forgiveness because of Jesus’ redeeming work on the cross and for the hope of eternal life because of His resurrection and victory over death. Please send Your Holy Spirit to be with us today as we study Your Word. We thank You for that awesome Word! In Jesus’ great name we pray, Amen.

The Simple TRUTH

Peter (also called Simon and Cephas) was a fisherman. What kind of life would a fisherman have led? For clues, see **Matthew 13:48; Mark 1:16, 19; and John 21:3**. See also the quotes below from modern-day fishermen. Would you classify this life as a “simple” one? Why or why not?

“I had no idea what I was getting into ... I had envisioned a fishing rod off the back of a boat for a couple of hours out of each day. The reality was 20 hours a day for 12 days straight. When people complain about their 9 to 5 jobs, I just have to laugh.”

Kariann Kiehl, *Deep Sea, Pacific Ray and Ocean Roamer* in *Saltwater Women at Work*

“You have to be a self-starter, independent, an innovator, a hard worker and mentally tough.”

Vince Fiamengo, *Reubina* from *The Westcoast Fisherman* (August 1996)

Peter was first introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew (see **John 1:40–44**). Peter was then called by Jesus from his life as a fisherman to be one of the Lord’s disciples, observing and learning from the Master Teacher (see **Matthew 4:18–20**).

What did Peter leave behind to follow Jesus?

Matthew 4:18

Mark 1:30

Mark 10:28 (Luke 18:28)

What radically different and life-changing truths did Peter discover in his new life?

John 14:6

Matthew 16:16

Luke 8:49–56

John 6:68

Acts 2:22–24; 32–33; 38–39

Peter's life was changed! He learned the simple truth of salvation in Christ alone. When and how does the Holy Spirit simply "change" our lives?

Romans 6:4

Ephesians 2:1–9

Psalms 119:105

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

Faith Talk: What would be your confession of faith...or the simple truth...that you know about Jesus? Share a simple confession of faith with a partner.

The State of Missouri is nicknamed the "Show-Me" State. Peter might well have been nicknamed the "show-me" disciple. Peter readily followed Jesus when called and boldly confessed his faith. What more do the following accounts reveal about Peter?

Matthew 14:25–33

Mark 14:27–31

Luke 24:12

John 13:5–9

John 18:10

John 21:7

Mark 14:72c

The Simple TASK

Consider Peter's denial of Jesus in **Mark 14:66–72**. Read **Mark 16:7**. Why do you think the angel specifically mentions Peter in this passage?

Read **John 21:15–17**. As Jesus reinstates Peter, how many times does Jesus ask Peter "Do you love Me?" Why is that significant? What task is Jesus asking Peter to do in these verses?

Read **John 21:18–19**. What is Jesus predicting for Peter? (Note: Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome.)

Did this prediction keep Peter from his task to tell others the good news about Jesus? For an example, read **Acts 4:1–12** about Peter and John before the Sanhedrin after they healed a crippled beggar in Jesus' name. Now read **Acts 4:20**. What a bold re-statement of the task Jesus had given to Peter...and to us all!

If time permits: Skim Acts chapters 1 to 15 to find other examples of Peter's work in the early church, most notably in Jerusalem. Share your findings with a partner or in small groups.

Bonus question: Peter wrote two books of the New Testament. What were they?

Simply "GO"!

Peter experienced Jesus' forgiveness, death, resurrection, leadership, and commissioning. Simon's life was radically changed from the "simple" life of a fisherman to the "simple" life of a "fisher of men" for Jesus. We, as God's children through baptism, have experienced by faith a radical life change. We know Jesus' forgiveness and leadership in our lives. Jesus commissions all His children to "simply go"! Read **Matthew 28:18–20** together:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Sing or pray the words of "Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling" (LSB # 827; TLH #496; and LW #318).

Faith Walk:

Make a list of other Old and New Testament characters whose lives were radically changed by Jesus Christ.

This week, share your faith story with one other person, telling them how your life was changed because of Jesus.

Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry and mother of Joshua and Johanna, is the District President of the Montana District LWML. She lives in Helena, Montana, and has written various articles and studies for the LWML.