

The Simple Life ... of a Fisherman

Leader's Notes and Bible Passages Available Online

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited. These sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

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 They even lived in a Christian family's homes with more household rules than they had ever experienced! 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? *Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group.*

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 from modern-day fishermen. *Hard work; preparation; long and flexible hours; disappointment; time away from family.* Would you classify this life as a "simple" one? Why or why not? *Answers will vary; probably most would say it is no more "simple" than the life they lead...just different.*

"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)*

Matthew 13:48 ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

Mark 1:16-19 ¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets.

John 1:3 ³"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Peter was first introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew (see **John 1:40-44**).

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

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**).

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

What did Peter leave behind to follow Jesus?

Matthew 4:18 *business*

¹⁸[*The Calling of the First Disciples*] As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Mark 1:30 *wife, family*

³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her.

Mark 10:28 (Luke 18:28) *everything (all)*

²⁸Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" (²⁸Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!")

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

John 14:6 *Jesus is the Way, Truth and Life*

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Matthew 16:16 *Jesus is the Christ*

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Luke 8:49-56 *Peter was an eyewitness to Jesus' healing*

⁴⁹While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher any more." ⁵⁰Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." ⁵¹When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵²Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." ⁵³They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

John 6:68 *Jesus gives eternal life*

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Acts 2:22-24; 32-33; 38-39 *Jesus came into the world to suffer and die for our sins and to rise again that all who believe might have eternal life (John 3:16)* [Adding Acts 2:14 lets the reader know that Peter is addressing the crowd.]

²²"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, ^[a] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

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? **Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace**

Romans 6:4 baptism

⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Ephesians 2:1-9 His grace makes us alive in Christ

Made Alive in Christ

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

Psalms 119:105 His Word

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Holy Communion; The Lord's Supper

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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. **This might be about one-minute each – encourage all to try!**

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 ready to try anything, to take the “plunge” of faith

²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" ³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Mark 14:27-31 boisterous, emphatic

²⁷"You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." ²⁹Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." ³⁰"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." ³¹But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Luke 24:12 inquisitive, quick to act, had to see for himself

¹²Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John 13:5-9 enthusiastic

⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never

wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

John 18:10 *defensive*

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

John 21:7 *impulsive*

⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

Mark 14:72c *emotional*

And he broke down and wept.

The Simple TASK

Consider Peter's denial of Jesus in **Mark 14:66-72**.

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. ⁶⁸But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway. ⁶⁹When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." ⁷⁰Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about." ⁷²Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Read **Mark 16:7**. Why do you think the angel specifically mentions Peter in this passage? *possibly to reassure Peter that his sin of betrayal was forgiven*

But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'

Read **John 21:15-17**. As Jesus reinstates Peter, how many times does Jesus ask Peter "Do you love Me?" *three* Why is that significant? *because Peter denied Jesus three times – Peter was forgiven!* What task is Jesus asking Peter to do in these verses? *Peter is to lead the early church and be an eyewitness to the saving work and resurrection of Jesus*

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

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

¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Did this prediction keep Peter from his task to tell others the good news about Jesus? *No!* 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!

¹The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ²They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. ⁵The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John

brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." ¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." ¹³When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

²⁰For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

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? **1 Peter and 2 Peter**

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:

1. Make a list of other Old and New Testament characters whose lives were radically changed by Jesus Christ
2. Share your faith story of how your life was changed because of Jesus with one person in the next week

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