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 Fishereman (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.]

22Men 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, 24put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 25But 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  
We 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
1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in 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. 3 All 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. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Psalm 119:105  
His Word
105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
Holy Communion; The Lord’s Supper
23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In 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." 26 For 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
25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But 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. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then 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. 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'" 29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." 30 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—even, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." 31 But 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
12 Peter, 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
5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus 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." Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

**John 18:10** defensive

> Then 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

> Then 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**

> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway. When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about." Immediately 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

> When 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." Again 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." 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.)

> 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."

Jesus 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!

> The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John
brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then 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. He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." When 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.

For 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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