

Snapshots in Acts: The Power of the Spirit in the Life of a Believer

Homework: Peter ~ The Rock

Day 1: Insights into Peter's life

- Look up the following verses and record your observations.
 - Matthew 4:18; John 1:40-44
 - Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:12-16
- Acts 4:13 describes Peter as being 'uneducated and untrained' ~ the words in the Greek – agrammatoi (without learning, illiterate) and idiotai (a common man as opposed to a highly educated man) carry slightly different meanings than our English words. Although we derive our English word 'idiot' from idiotai, it is a far different usage as our word essentially means without the capacity for understanding. This is not the same in the Greek, where it simply meant that a person had not been formally educated.
- Look up the following verses. Record Peter's future according to what Jesus tells him he will do.
 - Matthew 4:19
 - Matthew 16:18-19
 - John 21:15-17
- Journal Exercise: Take a few moments to reflect on Peter's background and the likelihood that he could be used to do the things that Jesus had described to him. Put yourself in Peter's shoes. What might you be feeling/thinking at that point? Have you ever had similar thoughts about something you believed that God might be asking you to do? Explain.

Days 2 & 3: Peter's character

- Yesterday we saw in Matthew 4:19 that Jesus told Peter to follow Him that He was going to make him a fisher of men. Read Matthew 4:20. How did Peter respond? What does this say about Peter's character?
- Read Matthew 16:13-17. How did Peter identify Jesus? How did Jesus say Peter knew this? Re-read 1 Corinthians 12:3 from last week's homework. What does this verse say about knowing Jesus? Since Peter had not yet received the Holy Spirit, what does this verse suggest about our relationship to the Holy Spirit before we come to faith?
- Read Luke 5:1-11. What further insights do you glean about Peter's character in this account that we didn't see in Matthew's?
- In Matthew 16:21-23 we see Peter as he rebukes the Lord Jesus. Thankfully Peter had the good sense to pull Jesus aside when he did so! Why was Peter's rebuke ineffective?

- Read Matthew 26:26-35. What did Jesus say would happen that night because of Him? What did Peter tell Jesus he would 'never' do? What event had occurred just prior to this conversation? Why was this significant?
- Read the rest of the story from John 18:15-27. What eventually happened? Whose words came true, Jesus' or Peter's? What might Peter have been afraid of here?
- Journal Exercise: In what ways can you identify with Peter? Have you ever felt or acted the way he did ~ declaring your love and devotion to Christ with your mouth, yet denying Him later with your words and actions? How do you think this could harm Peter's/our witness for Christ? (Remember our conversation about what makes a credible witness.)

Day 4: The Fulfillment of a Promise

- Read Acts 1. In verse 4 and 5, what instructions did Jesus give to the apostles? What did the apostles do? What was Peter's role at this time? Does this seem like a bold leadership move? Why or why not?
- Read Acts 2:1-40. What came upon the apostles at this time? What had Jesus said would happen when this occurred? (Hint: Acts 1:8)
- What does Acts 2:14 say that Peter did at this time? What is significant about the whole of Peter's message?
- Read Acts 2:41-47. What is being described here? How does this relate to Matthew 16:18-19?
- Journal Exercise: Whether you came to faith as a young child, or sometime later, perhaps as a young adult or even an adult, can you point to a change in your own life because of the Holy Spirit in you?

Day 5: Peter ~ The Rock

- Peter gave many powerful sermons throughout the first several chapters of Acts. (2:14-38; 3:11-26; 4:8-13; 10:21-46) What were the results of these sermons?
- At one time, Peter rebuked Jesus to no effect. Read Acts 5:1-11 and Acts 8:9-24. Think back to why his former rebuke was ineffective. What makes his rebuke effective now?
- In the gospels, we see that Peter denied Christ three times. Contrast this with Acts 4:18-20 and 5:28-29, 41. Why won't Peter stop speaking the name of Jesus? Have you ever experienced a time when you couldn't stop talking about Jesus? If so, why was that?
- Finally, read 1 Peter 3:13-17; 4:1-2, 12-19; 5:1-4. These are Peter's words to other believers. Does he sound 'illiterate and not formally educated' to you? Do you see any difference in his letter here from the person he was in the gospel accounts? Does he deal with any of the topics that Christ may have addressed with him? Explain.

- Journal Exercise: Think about the life of Peter. How does fear play into our ability or desire to witness for Jesus Christ? How does walking in or by the Holy Spirit empower us to move past those fears? Are there any fears that you are hanging on to, which prevent you from being an empowered witness for Christ? Tell God about them. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to do about it.