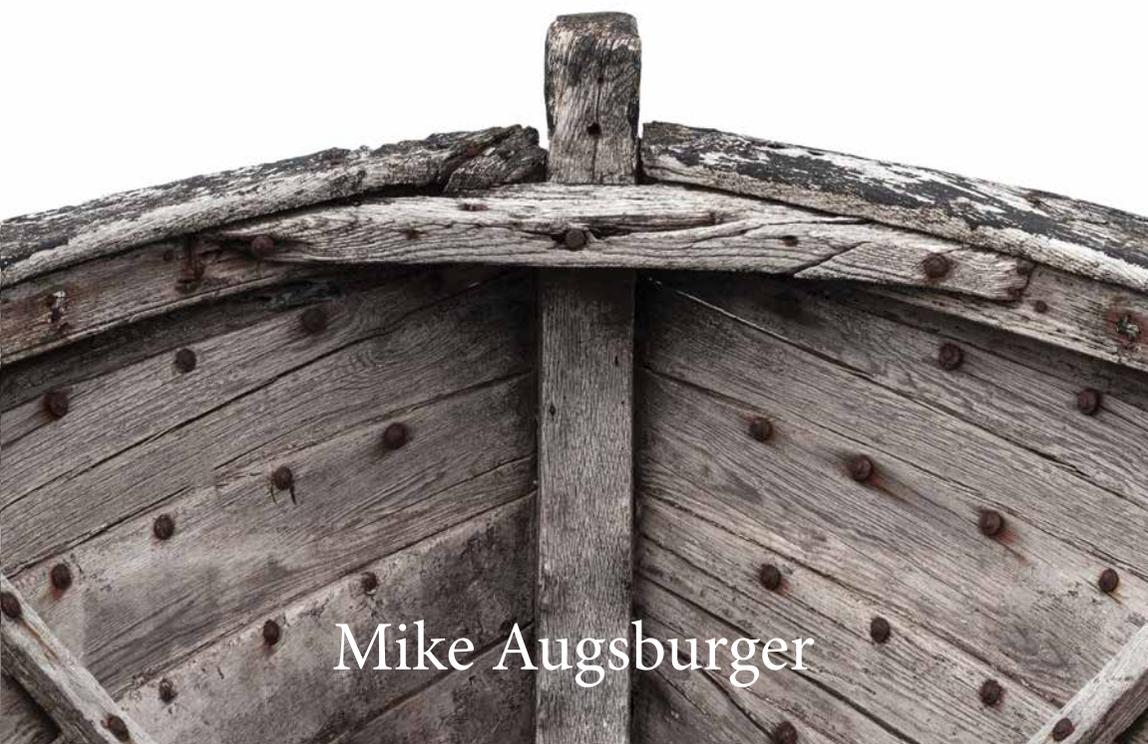


FOREVER FORGIVEN

A Study of the Life of Peter



Mike Augsburger

FOREVER FORGIVEN

A Study of the Life of Peter

Mike Augsburgur

 REGULAR BAPTIST
Press

FOREVER FORGIVEN: A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF PETER

© 2018 Regular Baptist Press

www.RegularBaptistPress.org • 1-800-727-4440

Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved.

New King James Version • RBP31965 • ISBN: 978-1-62940-706-7

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982
by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Lesson 1 Under Construction	7
Lesson 2 A Men's Retreat	15
Lesson 3 A Serious Problem	23
Lesson 4 A Pat on the Back and a Slap in the Face	31
Lesson 5 The Wind and the Walk of Faith	39
The Gospel	47
Answer Key	48

INTRODUCTION

AMERICAN CULTURE carries on a love affair with celebrities. The infatuation runs deep. Even buying milk and eggs at the grocery store ends with a checkout line tantalizing you with the latest juicy tales of people you'll never meet. But what if you could meet them? What would they look like in person? Are they real people who hunger, thirst, and wake up with bedhead?

The most famous person to ever walk the planet is Jesus Christ. Could you imagine meeting Him in person? What would He be like? What would He want you to know about Him or about God? Here's the tough one: What parts of your life would He challenge you to change?

The apostle Peter enjoyed a special relationship with Jesus, and fortunately for us, many of Peter's interactions with Jesus are recorded in the Bible. The two laughed together and chatted together. Jesus also pushed Peter hard in his spiritual growth. Let's discover together how Jesus challenged Peter, how Peter grew, and how we can grow by peering into some windows of Peter's life.

LESSON 1

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Luke 4:31–41; John 1; 3:16, 17

Maybe you've had this thought before: "I'm sure glad people don't judge me for who I was in high school or college!" Aren't you glad employers don't interview your high school principal before hiring? Thankfully, there's this thing called maturity, and most people grow up (at least partially). We are all "under construction." We are all a work in progress from start to finish.

1. If you're willing to share, what was one of your most embarrassing moments while you were growing up?

After volunteers share these stories, vote for who has the most embarrassing story.

2. What did you learn from your embarrassing experience?

A Man of Contrasts

Read Luke 4:31–41.

The New Testament records many stories about the apostle Peter. If he were sitting in the room with you, he would probably win "the most embarrassing moment" competition every time. But Peter also enjoyed some phenomenal victories. He was truly a man of contrasts.

3. What is something you've heard about Peter?

Most likely some remember moments of Peter's failure, while others remember moments of his victory. Peter was a man of contrasts, which the Bible lets us see close-up. Because of this, sometimes Peter gets characterized negatively. People often jokingly refer to Peter's big mouth. Some have even said Peter had "foot-in-mouth" disease. In some ways that is true, but it may not be a fair assessment.

Consider the history of your own life. Have you ever tripped up and failed big time? Any major sins or indiscretions? Have you ever struggled to trust God? Have you lived out your faith half-heartedly? All of us are under construction and are works in progress.

The Bible lets us see Peter's life close-up so we can learn from him and grow in our faith. So, next time you think of Peter as the man with the foot-shaped mouth, ask yourself this: "Would I volunteer to have my mistakes chronicled in the pages of Holy Scripture for millions of people to read?" Any volunteers? It's fun to imagine Peter in Heaven asking God, "Do You seriously need to include that story about me in the New Testament?" Maybe God would assure Peter that it's to help millions of other Christians grow in their faith and knowledge of Jesus. We can only imagine.

4. What part of Peter's life has challenged you the most in your faith?

Jesus hung an "under construction" sign around Peter's neck. Sometimes shopping centers will hang signs that read, "Please excuse our mess while we make improvements." What improvements was Jesus trying to make to Peter? In the Bible's accounts of Peter, a couple of key themes surface again and again:

Jesus wanted Peter to know Who He really was and to love Him more deeply.

Jesus wanted Peter to learn to trust and obey because of knowing and loving Him.

5. How does knowing and loving Jesus result in trusting and obeying Him?

A Man We Can Relate To

Who was the apostle Peter? Religious art depicts him as a robed saint donning a crucifix and holding a scepter in his right hand. That couldn't be further from the truth. Peter smelled like fish! He was an average guy working a blue-collar job. Sometimes

it's easy to forget that the people we read about in the Bible were real people just like us. Peter was about as real as it gets.

In fact, God specializes in using ordinary people to do extraordinary service. The Bible is inspired by God, infallible, and without error, yet He used human writers to compose His inspired Word. Some of the writers were trained professionals and kings, but many were average people: a doctor, a tax collector, a tent maker, fishermen, and many others.

6. How does knowing that God loves to use regular people in His service encourage you?

7. How has God used you, or how do you think God could use you?

Peter was a fisherman by trade, along with his brother Andrew. They operated a family business. They lived in Capernaum, the key town on the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is a well-preserved historical site in Israel today. The gate of the city says, "Capernaum, the town of Jesus." Early in His ministry, Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum because Capernaum offered a strategic location for ministry.

Capernaum also had a synagogue. This is another reason Jesus made Capernaum His home base. The ruins of the synagogue in Capernaum are still visible today. Jesus read from the Old Testament scrolls at that site. Today visitors can stand in the very place that the Son of God stood to read the Scriptures! It is a captivating experience. It's not, however, nearly as captivating as personally witnessing Jesus teach and heal in that synagogue. Simon Peter had a front row seat for witnessing Jesus' ministry.

You see, what many believe to have been Peter's personal residence in Capernaum was located a stone's throw away from the synagogue. The ruins of that house are still visible today. Jesus may have acquired His own home in Capernaum, but the weight of evidence suggests that when He went "home," He was staying with Peter's family in Peter's house.

8. Where does Luke 4:31 tell us the events in verses 31 to 41 took place?

9. (a) How did the unclean spirit address Jesus?

(b) How did the people respond after Jesus cast out the unclean spirit?

10. Reread Luke 4:38–41.

(a) Where did this next scene take place?

(b) Whom did Jesus heal?

From this text we learn that Peter was married and had a family. Some churches teach that Peter was unmarried. However, that teaching is in direct conflict with this passage. Peter was married, for he had a mother-in-law. Peter most likely had kids. And Jesus was a frequent houseguest in his home.

11. Why do you think Jesus gave Peter a front row seat to witness His ministry?

12. How do you think it changed Peter to live alongside Jesus for three years?

A Man Called by Jesus

Read John 1:29–34 and 40–42.

The Rock

John 1:29–42 records the first time Peter met Jesus. It was clear from the beginning that Jesus had big plans for Peter. He looked at him and asked, “So, you’re Simon, huh?” He didn’t even give Peter time to respond. Jesus continued, “In time, you will be known as ‘The Rock.’” Jesus gave him quite the nickname!

13. Simon Peter is often known as “Peter,” which was a nickname given to him by Jesus. Can you think of other historical figures who are known by a nickname?

14. (a) What do nicknames tell you about a person?

(b) What does the nickname “The Rock” tell you about Jesus’ expectations for Peter’s life and ministry?

15. If you were to meet Jesus and He were to say, “From now on you shall be known as _____,” how would you want that blank filled in?

Jesus’ nickname for Peter demonstrated that Jesus had a great deal of confidence in him. However, over the next three years, Peter would show himself to be more like wet cement than a solid rock. Wet cement has great potential—it just needs to mature. Just think of the ups and downs of Peter’s maturity as a disciple. In the Bible,

- no other disciple is addressed more than Peter, yet no other disciple is rebuked more than Peter;
- no other disciple proclaimed loyalty for Jesus as boldly as Peter, yet no other disciple denied Jesus as publicly as Peter;
- no other disciple received stronger praise from Jesus, yet no other disciple was told, “Get behind Me, Satan,” as Peter was; and
- no other disciple put his foot in his mouth like Peter did, yet no other disciple was used by God to preach as powerfully as Peter preached.

Jesus intended to transform Mr. Wet Cement into The Rock! It would take time, but God completed the good work He had started in Peter (Philippians 1:6).

16. God sees potential in people that the world disregards. How is that encouraging to you?

17. Peter made some colossal mistakes, but God used him anyway. How has God used you despite your sins, mistakes, and unfaithfulness?

Different agendas

18. Read John 1:41.

(a) What title did Andrew attribute to Jesus?

(b) Why was this significant?

Israel had been waiting for the Messiah for hundreds of years. The prophetic books of the Old Testament speak gloriously about the time when Messiah would come. In Jewish thought, there are two “ages” of human history: the present age and the age to come. The age to come is the Messianic Age, which will be characterized by peace and prosperity. The Messiah was predicted to establish an earthly Kingdom headquartered in Jerusalem. He would reign as Israel’s king, but he would rule the rest of the planet as well. His Kingdom would make Israel prominent again, and the world would be free of starvation, famine, and war.

In short, the prophesied Kingdom of Messiah would bring prominence, authority, and greatness to the land of Israel once again. Every Jewish person in Israel longed for this day. Andrew was obviously excited about meeting Jesus, and he was excited to introduce his brother Simon to Jesus (John 1:41). Could He be the long-awaited Messiah? If so, might it be wise to make His acquaintance? That’s exactly what Andrew and Simon (Peter) did. Once Peter met Jesus, no doubt he was thrilled when Jesus gave him the nickname “The Rock.” He probably thought, “I must be special! Maybe He wants to use me in His Kingdom. Maybe He wants to give me a special place of authority to help Him rule the planet.” You can imagine Peter’s mind was spinning a thousand miles per hour.

We can’t be too hard on Peter. All the disciples, for that matter, were following Jesus initially because they wanted to ride His coattails into power and prestige. Generally speaking, Jesus’ widespread popularity at the beginning of His ministry was due to a lust for power and prosperity in the prophesied Kingdom. Like everybody else, Peter had his own agenda for following Jesus. Even today people have their own agendas for following Jesus.

19. In what ways do people think Jesus will make their lives better?

20. What are some “false gospels” that are taught concerning Jesus?

People like the idea of Jesus because they believe He'll make their lives better, give them better luck, or make them rich and prosperous. That is not why Jesus came. That's not the point of the gospel at all!

21. Read John 1:29. John the Baptizer loudly proclaimed Jesus' purpose for coming, but the crowds (including Simon Peter) ignored it. What was that purpose?

22. Read John 3:16 and 17. What do these verses say about Jesus' purpose for coming to earth?

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that God created this earth as a perfect place. He created humans as perfect and sinless beings. He created to display the greatness of His glory to His creation. His design was for us humans to enjoy Him and find ultimate satisfaction in Him. Genesis 3 records how Adam and Eve (the first humans) sinned and rebelled against God. They attempted to find satisfaction their own way—outside of God. That sin and rebellion spread to every human being. The purpose of the gospel is not for us to have our best life now. The purpose of the gospel is for us to be reconciled to our Creator and to be restored to His original design of being perfectly satisfied in Him. In the next four lessons, we will investigate Peter's life and discover more deeply this wonderful plan of God called the gospel.

Memorize: John 3:16, 17

Prayer: God, please show me the true meaning of the gospel and help me to find my ultimate satisfaction in You.