

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2017: “Feed My Sheep”: 1 and 2 Peter

Lesson 1 “The Person of Peter”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 5:1–11; Matthew 16:13–17; Matthew 14:22–33; Luke 22:31–33, 54–62; Galatians 2:11–14.

Memory Text

“But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ “ (Matthew 14:30, 31, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Depart From Me!
- III. Confessing the Christ
- IV. Walking on Water
- V. Denying His Lord
- VI. Peter as Church Leader
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. The Apostle Peter is the author of the two books (1 and 2 Peter) that we are going to study this quarter. “Peter knew what it was to make mistakes, to be forgiven, and to move forward in faith and humility. Having experienced for himself the grace of God, he remains a powerful voice for all of us who need to experience that same grace, as well.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. “Peter sensed something more in Jesus, something holy in contrast to his own sinfulness. Peter’s realization of his sinfulness, and his willingness to admit it publicly, shows just how open he was to the Lord. No wonder He had been called! Whatever his faults, and they were many, Peter was a spiritual man who was ready to follow the Lord, regardless of the cost.” (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Is it possible that Christ is asking for our help with his own work and then telling you to do something which may seem pointless, a waste of time and effort? And is it possible that it might be a beginning of something wonderful, on a scale you never dreamed of?

4. Jesus is saying to us today: You and I are going to be working together from now on. Can you sense that if this man is not worth following, nobody is?
5. The next story is Peter's confession of Christ and his rebuke of him (Matthew 16:13-23). "Peter here spoke boldly of his faith in Jesus. And it's clear from Matthew 16:20 that his confession of Christ as the Messiah was shared by the others, as well. This was to be a turning point in the ministry of Jesus, even though the disciples, including Peter, had much more to learn." (Monday's lesson)
6. "As soon as the disciples recognize Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus begins teaching that He must suffer and die (see Matthew 16:21-23), a concept that Peter could not accept." (Monday's lesson) Is there any significance in the fact that Jesus starts talking about what kind of Messiah he is going to be just 6-9 months before his death? Is it possible that just like the disciples we are not ready for some concepts that God longs to teach us?
7. What's the crucial message we can take away from the story of Peter walking on water for ourselves to help us in our own walk with the Lord (Matthew 14:22-33)?
8. Jesus' words to Peter are, as so often, a combination of rebuke and encouragement: "Is that really how much faith you have? Why all this doubt?" The moment we are most strongly tempted to give up is probably the moment when help is, if only we knew it, just a step away.
9. "Peter's intentions were good. And, in fact, he showed more courage than did the other disciples. He actually followed Jesus in order to discover what would happen to Him. But in doing so, he decided to hide his true identity. This compromise, this deviation from the path of what is good and right, led him to deny his Lord three times, exactly as Jesus had warned him." (Wednesday's lesson)
10. All of us have heard sermons on the text that Peter "followed Jesus at a distance" (Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54). But Jesus says to the disciples that they cannot drink the cup he is drinking and be baptized with the baptism he is baptized with (Matthew 20:22; Mark 10:38,39).
11. Only when we have been there and failed like Peter, can we start to live and work in a new way, no longer out of our own energy and determination, but out of a fresh call of God.
12. "Even as a church leader, even as someone clearly called of the Lord (Jesus told Peter, "Feed my sheep" [John 21:17]), even as the one who received the vision about not calling "any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28), Peter still had some important growing to do." (Thursday's lesson)
13. The gospel the early Christians preached was an announcement that the crucified and risen Jesus is Lord of the world. And if he is Lord of the whole world, then those who believe in him, must form a single family. There cannot be divisions based on nationhood or race. For Paul, the issue is not simple inconsistency, that Peter has been doing one thing one minute and the opposite the next. No masks of

respectability are needed. In the kingdom of God, all those who are in Christ must be who they truly are. It is fundamental to the gospel, to righteousness by faith alone.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Just a few hours later, Peter was cursing and swearing to prove that he didn't even know this Christ. Then the cock crowed, just as Jesus had said it would, right after Peter's bold speech in the upper room, "Though all the others would desert you, I give my life." You remember, after Peter had done this, he wondered if Jesus had noticed. And though Jesus was on trial for his life and had suffered so, he was more concerned about his erring disciple out there in the courtyard than he was about himself. Luke says that Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. Imagine yourself standing there. As Peter knew God up to that time, he may well have expected to see indignation; he deserved it, and disapproval in Christ's face. Instead he saw sorrow to be sure, disappointment, and pity. Why, it was the face of the one who had washed his dirty feet the night before. When Peter saw that look on Jesus' face, he ran out of the courtyard and wept bitterly.

Imagine how Peter felt all that Sabbath. During the last twenty-four hours he had made a fool of himself repeatedly, twice with his impetuous statements in the upper room. Then twice he had disgraced himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. Now the cowardly behavior in the courtyard, denying that he had even known Christ.

Now Christ was dead, and there was no way he could make it up to him, no way he could make it right. No wonder when he heard that the tomb was empty, he was the first one down there on Sunday morning.

Listen to Jesus calling the disciples his brothers—the men who had let him down so seriously when he needed them so much. And then when the angels confirmed Jesus' command to go and tell the disciples, they added something that must have overwhelmed Peter when he heard it. Look at Mark 16:7. They said: "Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: 'He is going to Galilee ahead of you.'" (GNB)

How very Godlike of the angels to add, "especially tell Peter." The angels admire and worship God for the incredibly gracious way in which he has handled sinners in his family. How much those angels must have enjoyed adding the words, "And especially tell Peter." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13, "How God Treats His Erring Children" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

In the New Testament Peter was stunned to find he was supposed to take the good news to the Gentiles. In fact, it took a dramatic event to lead him to be willing to do it. There came that sheet, you remember, with all those inedible items in it, and Peter heard the voice from Heaven saying, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." And he said, "No, I won't."

By the way, would you dare say no to a voice from Heaven? Doesn't faith say, no questions, whatever you say, I'll do it? Then should Peter have said, "Lord, hand me a knife and fork." It's very wonderful that Peter on the authority of what God had clearly said already, replied, "God, no, I can't make sense out of that." The voice came again, a second time he said no. The third time the voice came, "Rise Peter, kill and eat."

Can you imagine the quiver in Peter's voice when for the third time he said to Heaven "No"? And then there was a ring on the ball bell or a knock on the door and Peter understood the point. He was right about the things in the sheet, wasn't he, absolutely right, but the message from Heaven was, that's one of your brothers there at the door. Don't treat a fellow human being like one of those creeping things in the sheet. You're right about those things in the sheet but you're wrong about that man at the door. To the Jew it didn't really make much difference, did it? You could be unclean by taking the things in the sheet and you could be unclean by associating with that good Gentile at the door. And Peter got the message. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapters 15 & 16, recorded February, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/29MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/30MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Now, one thing we need to do is to look back at Acts, to the record of this meeting. They did mention a few more things, didn't they, like abstaining from immorality, and from food offered to idols; though Paul didn't follow that precisely, did he? "But then later, when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face." Why is he mentioning that here? Is he still underscoring the fact that he did not bow to anyone's authority with respect to gospel? But that he felt so certain about the gospel that even when someone like Peter acted in a manner that was not consistent with the gospel, he would correct him, to his face and in public. I think he's still on the same subject, because not until Galatians 3:1 does he really pick up his original question again.

When Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came [from headquarters], he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party [which seems to suggest that the folk at headquarters tended to lean that way].

And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity.

You see, after the vision of the sheets on the roof, Peter had learned something about the proper treatment of his fellow human beings, and he went and treated Cornelius as one should; and he began to enjoy the new freedom. He could eat with Gentiles without feeling guilty and contaminated. But when brethren came down from headquarters, he was scared, and he withdrew. Paul suggested that Peter lacked the conviction about the gospel that he had himself.

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel [see, he mentions that. Circumcision, then, seems to be involved in the perversion of the gospel, doesn't it, and what circumcision implies], I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

And he goes on with that argument. But not to get too involved in that. Did he do the right thing, correcting Peter to his face and in public? Well, heads went both ways on that! And that's interesting. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

Do you think Peter had grown up in thirty years? Ah, yes. Tremendously. It's magnificent. If a man as impetuous as Peter, who could make such a fool of himself five or six times in twenty-four hours the night before Jesus died, could grow up like this, then there's hope for most of us, it would seem to me. I think it's very wonderful how he matured. And that is the whole meaning of perfection. He grew up. He became more mature. He became more settled into the truth. And in Revelation, to be sealed means to be so settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, that we cannot be moved. Was Peter settled into the truth that way in the courtyard? He'd been with Jesus for three and a half years. But he wasn't settled yet. And Jesus said, "When you are converted, then help others", you remember? He'd been converted a little bit. He needed some more.

But finally Peter was so settled into the truth he could go into the coliseum and stand before the cross, and not run away this time; and give a testimony. Read these two letters. They really are magnificent testimony, not only to the truth, but to the power of spiritual milk followed by stronger food, to nourish a man and lead him to grow up. And now Peter could speak the truth in love, and he's not easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, with their ingenuity in inventing error.

I think he loved that paragraph in Ephesians that Paul had written, and it had happened to Peter himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter & James, recorded July, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}

Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and Peter and their brethren did not leave Him. Notwithstanding the reproofs, they chose to be with Jesus. And the Saviour did not, because of their errors, withdraw from them. He takes men as they are, with all their faults and weaknesses, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and taught by Him. {Ed 91.2}

The first work that Christ entrusted to Peter on restoring him to the ministry was to feed the lambs. This was a work in which Peter had little experience. It would require great care and tenderness, much patience and perseverance. It called him to minister to those who were young in the faith, to teach the ignorant, to open the Scriptures to them, and to educate them for usefulness in Christ's service. Heretofore Peter had not been fitted to do this, or even to understand its importance. But this was the work which Jesus now called upon him to do. For this work his own experience of suffering and repentance had prepared him. {DA 812.4}

Peter was prompt and zealous in action, bold and uncompromising; and Christ saw in him material that would be of great value to the church. He therefore connected Peter with Himself, that all which was good and valuable might be preserved, and that by His lessons and example He might soften whatever was harsh in his temper and smooth whatever was rugged in his deportment. If the heart were indeed transformed by divine grace, an external change

would be seen in true kindness, sympathy, and courteousness. Jesus was never cold and unapproachable. The afflicted often broke in upon His retreat when He needed refreshment and rest, but He had a kind look and an encouraging word for all. He was a pattern of true courtesy. Peter denied his Lord, but afterward repented and was deeply humbled because of his great sin; and Christ showed that He forgave His erring disciple in condescending to mention him by name after His resurrection. {4T 488.1}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

Jesus teaches the same thing when He says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. . . . Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:4, 5. You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness. Abiding in Him, you may flourish. Drawing your life from Him, you will not wither nor be fruitless. You will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. {SC 68.3}

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. {SD 23.2}

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock. {MH 162.1}

The infinite God, said Jesus, makes it your privilege to approach Him by the name of Father. Understand all that this implies. No earthly parent ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made you pleads with the transgressor. No human, loving interest ever followed the impenitent with such tender invitations. God dwells in every abode; He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, regards the treatment that is given to father, mother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He cares for our necessities, and His love and mercy and grace are continually flowing to satisfy our need. {MB 105.2}

In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in

the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—Immanuel, “God with us.” {DA 26.3}

The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. {MH 470.1}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God.” Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man’s true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. {Ed 80.1}

Christ bound them to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service. “Freely ye have received,” He said, “freely give.” Matthew 10:8. {Ed 80.2}

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways,

and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The father of the prodigal son is the type that Christ chooses as a representation of God. This father longs to see and receive once more the son who has left him. He waits and watches for him, yearning to see him, hoping that he will come. When he sees a stranger approaching, poor and clothed with rags, he goes out to meet him, if perchance it may be his son. And he feeds and clothes him as if he were indeed his son. By and by he has his reward, for his son comes home, on his lips the beseeching confession, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” And the father says to the servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry” (Luke 15:21-23). {HP 10.3}

There is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins” (Isaiah 44:22). “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). . . . {HP 10.4}

Heaven is waiting and yearning for the return of the prodigals who have wandered far from the fold. Many of those who have strayed away may be brought back by the loving service of God’s children. . . . {HP 10.5}