

## Studies in I Peter (5)

### Peter -- The Making of a Man of God

#### Introduction

- A. Peter's progress toward spiritual maturity is an example of the truth that God can use the good as well as the bad -- for our good.
- B. The goal the Lord had in mind for Peter had to do with his character. The objective was to make him into a spiritual person -- that is where the true value of any person is found.
- C. In the last sermon we considered Peter's denial of the Savior. Now we wish to understand how the Lord responded to His disciple in the light of such a dark and tragic event.

#### **V. Peter's Depression.** Luke 22:60,61

*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

Comment: This may have been the very first time that Peter realized the great potential he had to do evil. Emotionally and mentally he was committed to serving God -- but the ability to make the right choices of faith and to follow through with the correct actions -- were not yet a part of his spiritual life. When he denied the Lord Jesus he became depressed and wept.

Each of us must understand the power of our sinful nature. It is not enough to know what to do and to desire to do it. The Lord Jesus took our old fleshly nature to the cross in such a way that we died in Him (Romans 6:6). When we are willing to give up our self-centeredness and receive the cleansing work of the Crucifixion and Resurrection -- then we can live in a measure of spiritual freedom (enablement).

#### **VI. Peter's Discovery.** Mark 16:6,7

*And he (the angel) said unto them (the women at the tomb), Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is risen. He is not here, behold the place where they laid him. But go your way. Tell his disciples and Peter ....*

Comment: These few words were surely the most important Peter ever heard as a believer. It must have been overwhelming to him that the Savior would do more than include him in the term "disciples" but would name him specifically. It meant the Savior wanted to meet with him. We can only imagine what that meeting was like.

The lovingkindness in these two words, "and Peter" is surely a comfort to all believers. God had not put Peter aside.

**VII. Peter's Disclosure.** John 21:15-17

*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agapao) thou me more than these? He said unto him, Yea, Lord thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agapao) thou me? He saith unto him, Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (phileo) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (phileo) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

Comment: The Lord Jesus, in order to help Peter become the man he could be, led him in this public declaration of his love. At first the Savior used the strong word (agapao) for love but Peter did not profess anything beyond (phileo). In the third question the Lord Jesus used Peter's word - as if to say -- "Is this all you have for me?"

Through this lengthy discussion Peter takes a humble and realistic position which was in sharp contrast to his former boasting. When we fail we must confess our sins as Peter did and learn how to obey the Savior. (I John 1:9; 5:3)

What is our answer to the Savior's question? Do we profess to have strong love for Him - when our actions prove otherwise?

**VIII. Peter's Directive.** John 21:21,22

*Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man (John) do? Jesus saith unto him. If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.*

Comment: We can only imagine the turmoil in Peter's life in these days. While he knew immediately after the Resurrection that the Savior had forgiven him -- perhaps he thought his call to serve the Lord had been revoked. The way the Lord Jesus had told him to feed His sheep and now told him to follow him gave him added assurance. Peter was beginning to grow in the realization that Jesus Christ loved him with agapao love. Peter had to learn (and that is what Jesus was teaching him) to assume total responsibility for his spiritual life.

Our sins are a horrible and death-dealing reality. But in the Lord Jesus our Savior we have One Who conquered sin and its death for us. If we are willing to follow Him -- in all that it means for Him to be our Savior -- then we too can know the grace of God which will enable us to live in His will. Only God can deal with our sin and sins. Our part is to yield to Him -- and live by faith.

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