

Studies in I Peter (6)

Peter-- The Making of a Man of God

Introduction

- A. Experience is the best teacher only when we have the knowledge to interpret life correctly.
- B. In our study of Peter's life we have seen the various ways in which he was led into a more spiritual walk with God. Even his terrible disobedience -- the denial that he knew the Lord Jesus -- was turned to his good. God has the same goal for us. Nothing is more valuable.
- C. What did Peter learn about God and himself? As we examine his life and Epistles -- there are two great truths that stand out.
- D. The text: Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ I Peter 1:1.
 - 1. An apostle is one who not only belonged to Jesus Christ, but one commissioned by the Savior to speak authoritatively for Him.
 - 2. How can it be -- the one who denied the Savior -- is now chosen to be an apostle? The answer is divine grace. Peter was saved and called to serve by the same grace that has saved and called us.

I. Peter Learned God's Love Was Unconditional.

- A. The question raised in Peter's mind by his denial of the Lord.
 - 1. Peter had heard the Lord Jesus explain the meaning of His love.

"For God so loved the world " John 3:16

"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John 13:1

"A new commandment I give you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you " John 13:34
 - 2. Through the discouragement regarding his denial and the way he was restored to fellowship and service by the Lord Jesus -- Peter learned that the love of God was unconditional.
- B. The reminder -- love has three facets.
 - 1. Love recognizes a person to be a person -- not a thing.
 - 2. Love gives that person rightful place in one's life.
 - 3. Love does what is right by that person by sacrificial involvement in their life for their good.
- C. The Biblical affirmation -- God loves us with unconditional love -- we cannot earn His love -- we are loved freely.
- D. The warning -- unconditional love is not an unholy love.

E. The explanation.

1. There is a vast difference between how God loves us as a person and His approval of our actions. His love is not based on our actions. We are not loved less -- because we are imperfect.
2. Our disobedience is displeasing to God and because of His love and His holiness He must discipline us.
 - a. It may be the discipline of inner conviction -- particularly when we read the Bible or hear it taught.
 - b. If we fail to respond it may be the discipline of loss of joy, or fellowship, or fruitfulness, or spiritual growth, or worse.
 - c. When we persist in our neglect -- then we become deceived by our sin -- we no longer sense conviction -- and we fall into the trap of believing our life without joy, fellowship, fruitfulness, or growth is normal. There is nothing more serious.

II. Peter Learned God was Faithful -- Trustworthy.

- A. When Peter met the Lord Jesus and was converted -- the Savior gave him a new name -- Peter (rock). And when Peter was called to serve he was told he would become a "fisher of men." John 1:42; Matthew 16:18; 4:18,19
- B. In the days following his denial of the Lord, Peter undoubtedly believed all hope of service - and perhaps even of salvation -- was lost.
- C. In his restoration and early ministry Peter learned that God had a plan for his life -- and even though he had disobeyed -- because he had repented and was walking with God that plan was being carried out. God was faithful.
- D. The meaning of God's faithfulness.
 1. God is always true (faithful) to His character. He is holy, just, and righteous. Exodus 34:6 (NIV)
 2. God is always true to His Word. Heb. 10:23
- E. The practical application of the truth that God is faithful.
 1. God is trustworthy -- He will not not change in character nor will He fail to keep His Word.
 2. When we choose to do the will of God -- for His glory -- then we will know the blessing of God upon our life. I Thessalonians 5:24
 3. When we neglect to do the will of God -- we cannot but lose the benefits God desires to give us. James 1:6,7; I Peter 2:11

Conclusion: In the study of Peter's Epistles -- these two great truths are the foundation upon which his messages are built -- **God's love is unconditional** and **God is faithful**.

Victor M. Matthews