

BIBLE HEROES-Peter, Broken and Blessed

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort
those in any trouble with the comfort, which we ourselves have received from God.
For just as the sufferings of Christ flows over in our lives,
so also through Christ our comfort overflows.
If we are distressed it is for your comfort and salvation...”* II Corinthians 1.3-6a

We're now in our series on Bible Heroes.

And I've chosen Peter to talk about today.
Peter, broken and blessed, as are most of the Bible characters,
as are most of us.

The sermon style will be a little different in that it'll be more storytelling.
It will be some of the story of God's work in Peter's life.

JESUS SHAPES AND MOLDS PETER'S CHARACTER like a potter with a piece of pottery.

One day on the beach of the Sea of Galilee Jesus decided to do a little preaching.
He told Peter to take him out in the boat.
After preaching he wanted to do a little fishing, so he told him to take him out deeper.

What does he know, Peter's thinking.
My friends and I have been fishing all night
and we got skunked, and this he is telling me where to fish.

And little did Peter know, but would soon learn, that Jesus was after bigger fish.

That day caught a net full of fish.
*“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' feet and said,
'Go away from me, Lord: I am a sinful man.'*
...then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid: from now on you will catch men.'
So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.” Luke 5.8, 10b-11

Next we know Peter was part of and witness to many, many incredible events.
Jesus came to Peter's home and healed his mother of a severe fever.
Jesus cured the ill and injured, calmed storms, cleansed lepers,
cast out demons, and literally created life out of death,
He raised the dead.

It was an exciting time. Jesus teaching was always so right on.
But you had to listen close and had to think because Jesus often spoke in riddles.
Some of the things Jesus said were confusing and hard to understand.

Jesus used things of this world to teach not only about our lives in this world but the things not of this world.

One time he talked about seeds being the word of God and different soils being people's hearts and minds.

He said some people have hard hearts and won't let themselves be loved. Then there are others who are very shallow in their faith and when stressed, their faith withers.

And then there are people who are doing well in their faith life. Then they just become too busy, too preoccupied, and too distracted to pay attention to the things of God. The busyness strangles the life out of their faith.

And, then there are those that accept God's seed, grow, and are very productive in the faith.

Another time Jesus told them to be sure to take the log out of their own eyes before they tried to take the speck out of their brother's eye. The disciples thought it was pretty funny at first until they figured out he was talking about them.

As any good teacher, Jesus taught by using experience. He sent Peter and the rest of the disciples out to heal people and cast out demons.

They did and they came back pretty fired up. Jesus said, ***"However do not rejoice, that the spirits submit to you, But rejoice that your names are written in the book of life."***

Peter was compulsive and impulsive, always ready to do or say something. Sometimes he'd get it right and sometimes not.

Jesus took his disciples on a field trip to Caesarea Philippi. He asked them, ***"Who do you say that I am?"*** Keep in mind Jesus stood beside a marble temple dedicated to Caesar, God of the Roman Empire, And Jesus is standing in front of a mountain full of carvings of Pan, the Greek God of fertility, in an area in which there were 14 temples of the Assyrian fertility God, Baal. In this midst of this smorgasbord of Gods, these pagan and demonic gods, Peter gets this one right, he answers "You are the Messiah."

But then about two minutes later after Jesus says that he's going to Jerusalem to die. And Peter tells him he can't do that. Jesus has to pull him up short.

Peter also acted impulsively, he was always willing to jump in and get his feet wet. I mean that literally. In the midst of a storm Jesus came to the disciples walking on water.

Peter wanted to try it. He asked Jesus to let him try walking on water.
 Jesus said ok and Peter did pretty well for a couple of steps, then thooooo, he went down.
 He took his eyes off of Jesus.

Ah, but Jesus would pick him up and shape him up.
 There is hope for you and I.

**IN A MOMENT MORE OF THE STORY
 FIRST, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSER**

Psalm 51.17 *“I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered.
 Heart shatter lives ready for God’s love don’t go unnoticed.”*

First, we had the picture of a potter at the potter’s wheel shaping a pot.
 Now picture the potter’s hand reaching down into broken pieces pottery.

Our first point was, Jesus shapes and molds Peter’s character.

Next, **JESUS EXPOSES THE CRACKS IN PETER’S CHARACTER**

After the Transfiguration experience,
 Jesus and the disciples come off of the mountain and begin the walk to Jerusalem.
 And on the way the disciples argued about their future positions in Jesus’ Cabinet.

They got scolded for that and Jesus gave them some riddle
 about the first being last and the last first.

They also got scolded when they tried
 to make sure children didn’t interfere with all the important things Jesus had to do.
 Again some riddle about the children, “let the little children come unto me,
 for such belongs the kingdom of God.”

They get to Jerusalem and during Passover week Peter saw Jesus get very angry and upset.
 Jesus even turned over the tables of the moneychangers in the temple for cheating the people,
 for making his father’s house a den of thieves.

Jesus always turned the tables on the religious establishment in heated debate.

Jesus also turned the tables on people’s thinking with paradoxes like
 to win-lose, or to get-give, or weakness brings strength, foolishness brings on wisdom.

Actually, that is what Jesus is really about, turning lives around.
 He turned things around on Peter in the night in which he was betrayed.

At the Passover Feast, Peter should have been washing the Master’s feet.
 Instead Jesus washed Peter’s feet reminding him and reminding us to serve one another.

During the Passover Feast.they broke bread and then Jesus said some very disturbing words.
 He said that one of them was about to betray him, big time.

In fear and trepidation they all asked, "Is it I, Lord?
 Peter with great and obnoxious confidence assured Jesus that it wouldn't be him.
 But Jesus with quiet and absolute confidence informed Peter
 that that night, before the cock crowed twice, Peter would deny Jesus three times.

Yet the strange words and strange behavior of Jesus still would not wipe out
 the festive spirit of the freedom feast.
 Full of food and drink, Jesus, Peter, and the disciples headed to the Mount of Olives
 singing praise to God and seeking a good night's rest, which was not to be.

Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to stay awake and pray three times
 but three times, Peter failed to pray and fell asleep,
 only to wake up to the clamor of the guard and the clinking of their armor.

The neat night was about to become a nightmare.

As the temple guard came to take Jesus,
 Peter true to form, takes a sword and cuts off of a soldier's ear.
 Jesus, true to form, takes the ear and puts it back on.
 And the temple guard, true to form, takes Jesus to the high priest's house.
 And Peter, again true to form, takes to following the guard, ending up in the courtyard.

Warming himself by the fire Peter is accused of following Jesus.
 The first time he says, "I don't know him,
 The second he was accused he said, "I'm not one of them!!!"
 And the third time he cusses, "I don't know what you're talking about."
 The rooster crows and he sees Jesus looking at him.

Peter wept bitterly. He sobbed! He's broken.

(BREAK POT!!!)

IN A MOMENT, THE REST OF THE STORY

NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSER

Psalm 51.17, "I learned God worship when my pride was shattered.

Heart shattered lives ready for God's love doesn't go unnoticed."

When a pot breaks, an African potter doesn't just throw it all away.
 He picks up some of the broken pieces and puts them on a shelf.

Then, when working on a new pot,
 He will go to the shelf and carefully sort through the broken pieces of pottery.
 He will select one, redeem one (our churchy word) to be used to shape, mold, and mark a new pot.

Jesus shapes and molds the character of Peter.

Jesus exposes the cracks in Peter's character and,

JESUS USES PETER TO SHAPE THE CHARACTER OF OTHERS

Jesus made several appearances to his followers after his resurrection.

One was when Jesus fixed them breakfast on the beach.

They'd been fishing all night and got skunked.

Jesus appeared on the beach at dawn and asked tongue in cheek, if they'd caught anything.

As if he didn't know.

He told them to cast on the other side and guess what?

It happened again, a net full of fish.

After breakfast Jesus really stuck it to Peter.

It was a teachable moment.

Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him.

It was irritating and embarrassing but very necessary experience for Peter.

He answered every time, "You know I do. You know I love you."

Another appearance was forty days after the resurrection.

Jesus tells them to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem and then ascends into heaven.

Ten days later at 9:00 in the morning the Holy Spirit came upon them.

It was the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church.

They were filled with the Spirit and so happy someone said they were drunk.

And guess who sets the record straight?

Peter jumps up and says they're filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then he shared with the people the Good News of Jesus Christ.

He told them to "***repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.***"

And on that very day, 3000 of them did. Praise God.

God sure used Peter in a mighty way didn't He?

And He continued to use Peter.

Peter healed the crippled and raised a godly woman Dorcas from the dead.

From Joppa God gave Peter a vision to go to Caesarea

There, he was to share the good news with a Gentile, Cornelius.

Peter learned that God shows no favoritism and accepts all who will love him.

Peter, a man once broken, continued to speak boldly for the cause of Christ.

He continued to let his light shine that all may see and glorify his Father in heaven.

He did so until he himself was crucified.

He chose to be crucified upside down.

He felt unworthy to be crucified like Jesus.

And THAT'S THE REST OF THE STORY.

Well, some of Peter's story anyway.

Now, there is a final word from our sponsor.

***“For God, who said, ‘Let the light shine out of the darkness,’
made his light to shine in our hearts to give us light of the knowledge
of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

***But we have this treasure in jars of clay (unadorned clay pots) to show this
all surpassing power is from God and not from us.”*** II Corinthians 4.6-7

Peter’s life, broken and blessed certainly impacted the lives of others, didn’t it?
In the hands of God, your life and my life,
our brokenness given to God will impact the lives of others as well.

And that will be THE REST OF THE STORY.

We’ll stay tuned.

Now let’s talk to our sponsor.

Let us pray.

Father God, you tell us our broken hearts,
shattered hearts ready for your love won’t go unnoticed,
broken and contrite hearts you will not despise.

So confident in your faithfulness we ask the Spirit to search us,
to try our thoughts and know our hearts, expose those cracks in our character,
and if there be any evil in us to lead us into everlasting life.

You tell us that if we confess our sin you are a just and righteous God
and will not only forgive us,
but will continue to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,
to continue to work with us, to continue to use us for our good,
the good of others, and for your glory.

We pray this in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.

Let’s stand and sing the prayer, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord.”

