



# ALL NATIONS COMMUNITY CHURCH

321 Normandy Street  
Waterloo, Iowa 50703



Mary Robinson, J.D., M.Div, Pastor

## **“BIBLICAL SIGHTS AND SOUNDS”**

### **“Peter – Upon This Rock!”**

**1. Welcome.** Welcome to Biblical Sights and Sounds. Biblical Sights and Sounds is the Bible Study that helps us to do the job of daily living by uncovering truths and promises found in Scripture. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide you in this study so that your life will be enriched. Please take the time to pray before beginning. In prayer, give to God whatever is on your mind. Remember to thank Him for His many blessings, both seen and unseen and known and unknown. Ask the Holy Spirit to inform, give spiritual insight, convict when and where needed, and to bless. And above all, relax, as you prepare to reach higher heights and deeper depths in the glorious splendor of God’s Holy Word.

### **2. A Diversity of Followers – Series.**

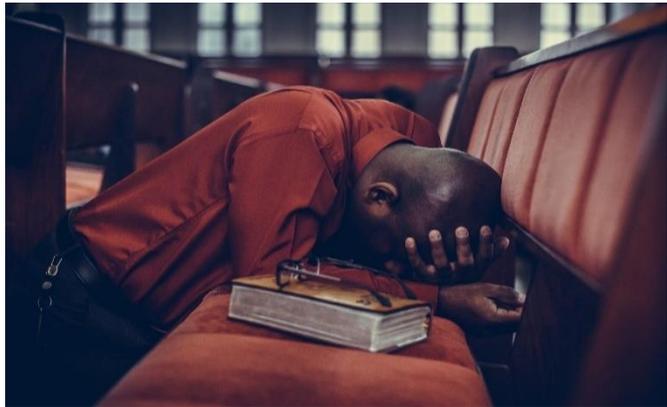
Recently, as I was cleaning out boxes in the basement after water damage caused by a leaky pipe, I ran across a handout written by one of my Seminary Professors, Barbara A. Pursey. It is entitled “A Diversity of Disciples” and as near as I can tell, was written in the early 1990’s. It really captivated my attention. It begins by stating, “The New Testament reveals that Jesus’ followers were quite a diverse group of people. They had different personalities, different skills, different interests, different spiritual gifts. Yet Jesus had a deep love for each one in their unique relationship to Him, and a particular need for every one of their gifts and talents in His Kingdom.” Wow, what profound statements! As I reflected on the truths found in the Handout, the idea for this Series came into being. In it we will take a look at some of the Disciples as well as other followers of Jesus, during his sojourn on earth and those who never met Jesus, but nonetheless believed in His Mission and Teachings. Who were they in terms of their personalities, character traits, idiosyncrasies, strengths, and weaknesses? Afterall, they were mere mortals, just like you and me. But, why did they matter? How are they speaking to us today? Were they so very different from us? What can we learn from their story, life, and experience that will help us to be more faithful followers of Christ? Which person(s) am I most like? To begin the Series, we will look at Peter.

### **3. Peter, the Initiator. Spokesman for the disciples, impulsive, emotionally intense, followed his heart more than his head. One of the inner circle of three.**

Peter was one of the most important of Jesus’ twelve Disciples. Peter is known as Simon Peter, the son of Jonah (or John) and brother of Andrew. The name Peter comes from the Aramaic term for “rock” and Simon comes from the Greek for “hearing.” Peter’s name appears on all of the lists of the Disciples and his being called by Jesus appears in three Gospels as well as the book of Acts. The Gospels describe Peter as coming from the fishing village of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. There is also an indication that he was a native of Galilee, based upon his having an accent typical of the region. Peter is the main spokesperson of the Disciples. He is frequently present in the gospels and in the first half of Acts, is mentioned in the letters of Paul, and has two letters attributed to him in the New Testament. He is mentioned as Peter, 154 times; as Cephas, nine times; and as Simon, 75 times.

#### 4. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke list Peter as one of the very first disciples called by Jesus. Matthew and Mark’s accounts are almost identical. Luke goes into more detail.

(Luke 5:1-11) <sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, **Lord; I am a sinful man!**” <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.



#### 5. Peter was impulsive, impatient, sometimes foolish, and made mistakes time and time again.

- a) **Faltering Faith While Walking on the Water.** (Matthew 14:28-31) <sup>28</sup> “**Lord, if it’s you,**” Peter replied, “**tell me to come to you on the water.**” <sup>29</sup> “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “**You of little faith,**” he said, “**why did you doubt?**”
  
- b) **Failed to See the Necessity of the Cross.** (Matthew 16:21-23) <sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. <sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” <sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! **You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God,** but merely human concerns.”

c) **Joined Others in Flight When Jesus was Arrested.**

- i. (Mark 14:50) <sup>50</sup> Then everyone deserted him and fled.
- ii. (Matthew 26:56) <sup>56</sup> But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Peter fled, despite the fact that he had once said that he would never leave Jesus.
- iii. (Matthew 26:31-35) <sup>31</sup> Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ <sup>32</sup> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” <sup>33</sup> Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.” <sup>34</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” <sup>35</sup> But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

d) **After Jesus’ arrest, Peter denied Jesus Three Times. (Mark 14:66-70)** <sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. <sup>68</sup> But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway. <sup>69</sup> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” <sup>71</sup> He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” <sup>72</sup> Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

e) **Withdrew from the Table of Fellowship. (Galatians 2:11-14)** <sup>11</sup> When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. <sup>13</sup> The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. <sup>14</sup> When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

f) **Impulsive and Acting Strangely.**

- iv. **At the time of the arrest. (John 18:8-11)** <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” <sup>9</sup> This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup> Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”
- ii. **When Jesus appeared after the Resurrection. (John 21:7)** <sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

## 6. On the other hand, Peter had milestones of faith!

- a) **Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah.** Three Gospels declare that, among the 12 disciples, he was the one to declare that Jesus was the Messiah. **Mark 8:24-30** and **Luke 9:18-20** are almost identical. However, Jesus follows **Matthew 16:13-16** with tremendous statements placing His trust in Peter and great implications about the power given to the Church and Christians in general. (**Matthew 16:13-16**)<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.**”
- b) **On this rock I will build my Church.** (**Matthew 16:17-19**)<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.<sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter and **on this rock I will build my Church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.<sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
- c) **Our Lord had a close relationship with Peter and saw him as a leader.** (**Luke 22:31-32**)<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.<sup>32</sup> But **I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.**”

## 7. Jesus chose Peter, taught Peter, rebuked Peter when necessary, worked powerful miracles through Peter, established the Church upon Peter shoulders, forgave Peter for his desertion, and above all, reinstated Peter.



- a) (**John 21:15-17**)<sup>15</sup> When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “**Feed my lambs.**”<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “**Take care of my sheep.**”<sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “**Feed my sheep.**”
- b) (**John 21:20-22**)<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”)<sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, “**If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.**”

## 8. Why Was Peter Important?

**Peter is important for many reasons.**

- a) **He is a model for Christians to follow.** Sound strange? Yes, because, we have seen the many examples of Peter’s faults. But these faults remind us of how much like Peter, we tend to be. Peter’s failings are treated as symptoms of our sinfulness and weaknesses which can only be overcome through faith in Jesus. Peter admirably showed this to be the case because, after Jesus’ resurrection, he traveled widely to preach Jesus’ message and convert people to Christianity. And in Acts, Peter is portrayed as a model disciple for others to follow.
- b) **Jesus calls Peter his “Rock” upon which the future church would be built.** So true! This unschooled man traveled all over sharing Jesus’ message, enduring persecution and imprisonment; but converting thousands. He showed his maturity by living a Spirit-led life; speaking and bringing the Good News of Christ, performing miracles, healing the sick, and bringing the dead back to life (**Acts 9:36-43**).
- c) **Along with John, in Acts 4, Peter showed that it is okay to defy leaders,** if it means that doing otherwise will be to disobey or to compromise the Gospel of Christ. (**Acts 4:18-20**)  
<sup>18</sup>Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to Him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup>As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
- d) **Peter showed the world that Gentiles (non-Jews) can be Christians.** This is huge! The importance of Chapters 10 and 11 in the book of Acts is monumental. After a vision, Peter went to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius. It was “*against our (Jewish) law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile.*” (**Acts 10:28**). Yet, knowing what the Lord wanted, Peter led Cornelius and his family to Christ and witnessed them receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter then baptized the family in the name of Jesus. Peter is questioned about this by the Jewish believers. He told them his story, saying, “*if God gave them the same gift (the Holy Spirit) he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?*” (**Acts 11:17**).

God wanted it known that Jesus gave His life for all. This means for **ALL OF US**; *for each and everyone, without exception!* It does not matter the gender, ethnicity, race, geographic location, economic situation, or political affiliation. Peter was gladly used to make this clear, to show us just how big God’s love is and just how capable His grace is—that it can forgive the sins of each and everyone and give everlasting life. Peter, the Disciple who had the nerve to rebuke Jesus. Peter with his rough edges, his boldness, and brashness. Peter, the “in your face kind of guy” was the right one to stand up to defy the Jewish Christians with the message that Salvation was for all! Indeed, it worked! For the Jewish Christians responded by having “*no further objections and praised God saying, ‘So then, even to the Gentiles (non-Jews) God has granted repentance that leads to life.’*” (**Acts 11:18**).



**OUR RESPONSE  
SHOULD BE: “Halleluiah  
and Praise the Lord!”**

e) **Peter was responsible for the Two New Testament Epistles (Letters) bearing his name.**

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter deal with various themes, including:

- The suffering of Jesus led to our salvation.
- God will judge our actions at the last judgment.
- The hope we have in the return of Jesus.
- Judgment will start in the household of God (**1st Peter 4:17**).
- God's has established order in both society and the Church, at all levels.
- Time spent with Jesus should produce maturity in our relationship with Him. "Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (**1 Peter 2:2**)
- Scripture is our guide. We must "recall the words spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of our Lord and Savior spoken through the apostles" (**2 Peter 3:2**).
- Great emphasis is placed on how Christians should treat each other. Apart from knowing the truth, believers should live the truth, too.
- Those who know Christ are: "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that we may declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once we were not a people, but now we are the people of God; once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy." (**1st Peter 2:9-10**).

**So, here it is; through Peter, God is reminding us of our identity in Christ. It may not come easily, though. Along the way, He convicts and forgives us when we mess up; He comforts us when we are hurt and bruised; He gives us His Peace and Joy as He restores us to Himself; He helps us to mature in Him; He gives us the titles of "chosen people and royal priests"; He declares that He will return for us so that one day we will live with Him for all of eternity. It doesn't get any better than this! Is it any wonder that, as with Peter, He tells us to follow Him?**



## REFLECTION AND MEDITATION:

- a) In Peter's first encounter with Jesus, upon seeing the miracle during their fishing trip, Peter realizes his sinful state and gives glory to the Lord by falling to his knees and crying, "*Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!*" When is a time that I admitted my sinfulness to God?
- b) Peter left everything and followed Jesus. Which of these statements reflect my current situation of following Jesus?
- **I'm not worthy right now, I've got stains on my soul.**
  - **Lord, I don't like where You are going, and the people you want me to talk to and hang out with make me uncomfortable.**
  - **Lord, I'm so busy; can't You see my work schedule; all these classes I have to take; all this homework I have to do; when can I find time to sleep; or find time for myself?**
  - **Lord, can't You see the good things that I am doing; the groups that I'm working with; my meeting and social schedule; and how important I am to the Community, can't it wait until I'm less busy or when I retire?**
  - **Lord, I've made plans, and there's simply no room for you.**
  - **Lord, I want to, but I'm scared; and besides what will my family or friends think?**
  - **Yes, Lord, I have listened and I have left everything; I am following.**
- c) Peter had to grow into maturity. During this growth period, he often made mistakes. For example, he stepped boldly onto the rough sea to meet Jesus walking on water, yet after safely taking a few steps, he looked at the wind, became afraid, doubted, faltered, and plunged into the sea. When was a time that I did not finish what I had started? What or who made me afraid? What were my doubts then? What are some of my doubts now? Have I given them to God? In what ways have I taken my eyes off Jesus as my solution finder and burden bearer?
- d) What part of Peter's personality is closest to mine? How so?
- e) Do I believe that Peter's close-knit relationship with Jesus proves that Jesus longs for an intimate one with me? Does seeing how Jesus took an uneducated, sinful man and loved him give me assurance He can do this for me as well? If yes, then how so? If no, then why not?
- f) Are there things you disagree with or do you have questions for Pastor Mary about this Study?

REMEMBER, Peter’s story is a model for all believers. It remains a symbol of faith in Christ, of church leadership, of sinful weakness, and of the power of forgiveness, reconciliation, and re-instatement.

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLEASE END WITH PRAYER.**

**BLESSINGS AND THANK YOU!**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **RESEARCH AND SOURCES:**

Unless otherwise noted, quoted Scriptures are from the New International Version (NIV)

A number of ideas contributed to this study and resources used, in part came from:

1. Barbara A. Pursey. Handout for Gifts in Ministry Resource. #1. University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.
2. <https://www.thoughtco.com/peter-the-apostle-simon-peter-important-248821>
3. <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/peter-in-christian-tradition>
4. <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/who-was-peter-and-why-was-he-so-important.html>
5. <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2017/06/22/major-themes-1-and-2-peter>