

Peter and His Epistles

Lesson 4: Peter's First Big Mistake

I. Introduction: See Matt. 16:21-26, Mark 8:31-37, Luke 9:22-27

- A. Consider the setting: Peter has just made the amazing confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One. Moments later as the Lord begins to predict His own death, Peter is severely rebuked by Christ.
- B. "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite term for Himself. It is used 81 times in the N.T.

II. Peter Has a Better Idea!

- A. Peter rejects the concept of a suffering savior (Mark 8:31)
 - 1. Notice how the people reacted a few days later on "Palm Sunday" (Mark 11) as they cried out "hosanna" (which means save us!)
 - 2. For some details on the "Suffering Savior" see Isaiah 52:13-53:12
 - 3. A word about the Sanhedrin:
 - a. A council of 70 Jewish men who served for life and ruled (under the Romans) the civil (and some criminal aspects) of the affairs of the Jews
 - b. They were drawn from three distinct groups:
 - 1). Chief Priests (current, previous and their families)
 - 2). Elders (lay leaders)
 - 3). Scribes (professional OT teachers)
- B. In spite of the strong glare of Jesus (see also Luke 22:61), Peter rebukes Christ. He declares, "This shall never happen!" (Matt. 16:22)

"Peter's strong will and warm heart linked to his ignorance produce a shocking bit of arrogance. He confesses that Jesus is the Messiah and then speaks in a way implying that he knows more of God's will than the Messiah himself." (Expositor's Bible, Vol. 8, pg. 377)

III. Christ Rebukes Peter

- A. "The tempter speaks in the voice of friend" so "get out my sight!" Jesus "cuts him off" (Matt. 16:23)
- B. The rebuke: it is the same word used for the silencing of demons (see Mark 1:25 and 3:12)
- C. Peter has gone from being "the ROCK" to the "STUMBLING BLOCK"
This is a very unique word, "SKANDALON"
 - 1. In the OT, it was a trap set with bait. The "skandalon" always denotes an enticement to conduct which could ruin the person in question." (Word Study Dictionary, pg. 1292)
See Lev. 19:14, Josh. 23:13 and I Sam. 18:21
 - 2. In the NT, it is used in a figurative, moral sense. "It is concerned mainly with the fact that it produces certain behavior which can lead to ruin." (Word Study Dictionary, same page)
See Rom. 9:33, 11:9, 14:13, I Cor. 1:23, Gal. 5:11

"No wonder Jesus turned so sharply against Peter, He saw the satanic trap set for Him in Peter's words." (Lanski)
 - 3. "Satan": Christ is stating that Peter is acting "diabolically." He is at odds with the spiritual purpose at hand. In order to secure a place for sinners in the presence of Almighty God, the perfect sacrifice had to be made. Christ was the propitiation for our sins and MUST be offered up on our behalf.

IV. Christ Outlines the Requirements of True Discipleship (Mark 8:34-37)

- A. Deny Yourself
Deny: to turn off, refuse association, to disown – yourself!

"Subjugate all your works, interests and enjoyments."
 - 1. The flesh needs to be crucified daily. Learn to say no to yourself. Gal. 2:30, 5:24
 - 2. The devil must be daily resisted
 - 3. There is a daily battle

B. Take Up Your Cross

“Cross”:

1. “An instrument of dreadful and agonizing torture”
This method of severe punishment was known to the Persians (Ezra 6:11 and Esther 7:10) and the Carthaginians. The Romans used it on slaves and criminals.
2. Refers to the whole passion of Christ
3. “That portion of affliction which is endured by pious and good men as a trial of their faith and to conform them to the example of their crucified master. (Word Study Dictionary, pg. 1308)

“The wicked have many sorrows (Ps. 32:10) but no crosses” (Lenski)

C. Follow Me (verb denotes a long and continuous course of action)

1. Say goodbye to self
2. Carry your baggage (your cross)
3. Proceed on the journey

D. Finding life by losing life

E. The supreme value in life

1. “There is nothing so precious as a man’s soul.” (Ryle)

v. **So what?**

The most important doctrine in Scripture is Christ’s atoning death. We dare not diminish its importance in our daily life.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Peter’s comments were so wrong? How do you think you would have reacted?
2. What are some practical ways you might deny yourself?
3. What is your cross/trial of faith?