

# The Gospel of the New Beginning By Peter

An Introduction to the Gospel of Mark through Peter

I invite you to open your Bible to the second book of the New Testament, that second Gospel called \_\_\_\_\_. "Mark" is what this book has been called it through the centuries.

The Gospel by Mark records of the impact of Christ's Gospel of the New Beginning.

Last time we saw the impact of the Gospel of the new beginning in Mark's life.

Today we will see that impact in Peter's life; and in the days ahead we will see that power transforming person after person in these 16 chapters.

The Gospel by Mark is the premier book in God's Word about hope—hope for a new start, hope for complete forgiveness, hope in the God of the second chance.

On the pages of the Gospel by Mark, we hear the voice of Peter. Church History is almost unanimous in the affirmation that Mark sat next to the aged Peter and captured his words as the Holy Spirit breathed out through him this flawless portrait of Jesus Christ.

The Book of Mark<sup>1</sup>, hold **the words of Mark** capturing **the experiences of Peter**.

We saw last time with Mark how God gave Mark a second chance. Peter is an even greater witness to the new beginnings that Christ offers.

Few people ever knew the reality of hope that Christ brings—than Peter.

There was a man called Peter, who knew Jesus better than any other human on earth ever did.

## THE MOST WELL KNOWN MAN IN THE GOSPELS

Next to Christ no one in the New Testament is mentioned by name<sup>2</sup> more than Peter!

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<sup>1</sup> This message was first preached as 040118AM

<sup>2</sup> In the KJV the top name appearance reckonings are: Jesus 983 x; Christ 555 x; Peter 158 x; Paul 156 x; John 130 x; Moses 80 x; David 58 x; Elijah 30 x; Barnabas 29 x; Timothy 25 x; and Isaiah 21 x.

And among the Twelve, those chosen earthly representatives of Christ—none spoke more often and none have as many words recorded in God's Word as Peter!

Starting in the first Gospel, the Gospel by Matthew, watch what God's Word records about Peter.

- No one **ever was honored** like Peter. “Thou art Peter – and upon this rock...” (Matthew 16.18)
- No one **was ever rebuked** as sharply as when Jesus called Peter a tool of Satan. “Get thee behind me Satan...” (Matthew 16.23)
- No one **ever denied Jesus** like Peter. Not once, not twice – but three times. “I know not the man” (Matthew 26.74)
- No one **ever claimed greater loyalty** to Christ as did Peter “though all others may – I NEVER will!” (Mark 14.31)
- No one **ever was more totally smitten** by his or her sin in the sight of Jesus like Peter. “Then Jesus looked at him” (Luke 22.61)
- No one **ever grieved more completely** than Peter – for no one ever knew Jesus better, or loved Him more, or for that matter, wanted His approval MORE than Peter. “He wept bitterly” (Luke 22.62)
- Finally – no one was **ever restored more tenderly and completely** than Peter. “Feed my lambs” (John 21.15-17)

And what was the result of such close and careful nurture by Christ? Peter's life became perhaps the greatest life ever lived for the Glory of God. Peter stands tall among all that ever walked this planet.

Since Peter is the most mentioned man aside from Jesus in the New Testament<sup>3</sup> there is so much we could say about him; but a brief summary would be:

- Peter was:
  - ✓ the man Jesus chose,
  - ✓ the man Jesus trained,
  - ✓ the man Jesus plucked out of the raging waters of the Sea of Galilee and saved from death --
- Peter then became:
  - ✓ the man Jesus warned,
  - ✓ the man Jesus watched deny Him, and

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<sup>3</sup> Peter is mentioned 160 times by name in the New Testament (NKJV citations). And in the Gospels we find 93 of those references (Matthew has 24; Mark and Luke have 19 each; and John has 31).

- ✓ the man Jesus protected from the Devil --
- Peter ultimately becomes:
  - ✓ the man Jesus restored,
  - ✓ the man Jesus used, and
  - ✓ the martyr who hung humbly upside down on a cross because he was unworthy to die as Jesus died.

To understand Mark, look with me at the Peter who spoke these words captured by Mark. The real Peter, the Gospel witness Peter also wrote another letter that shows us who he really was.

## HUMBLER PETER

Remember what Peter wrote at the end of his life? It is one of the most moving and powerful tributes to a man who was dominated by a passion to serve. Peter declares that he is a fellow servant, a fellow elder—no better, no greater, and no more powerful than anyone else. He was just a servant.

Let's turn there this morning. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5.1-14. Stand with me as we read and then pray.

*1 Peter 5: 1-14 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

*5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be **clothed with humility**, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

*12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 13 She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

## A MAN NAMED PETER

This morning let's walk through the New Testament and examine the man behind this Gospel, a man named Peter.

In his fourth book written in 1906 called *Quiet Talks on Service*, S. D. Gordon (1859-1936) gives an imaginary account of Jesus' return to heaven after His ascension. As the angel Gabriel greets Jesus he asks,

*"Master, You died for the world, did You not?" to which the Lord replies, "Yes." "You must have suffered much," the angel says; and again Jesus answers, "Yes."*

*"Do they all know that you died for them?" Gabriel continues.*

*"No. Only a few in Palestine know about it so far," Jesus says. "Well, then, what is Your plan for telling the rest of the world that You shed Your blood for them?"*

*Jesus responds, "Well, I asked Peter and James and John and Andrew and a few others if they would make it the business of their lives to tell others. And then the ones that they tell could tell others, and they in turn could tell still others, and finally it would reach the farthest corner of the earth and all would know the thrill and power of the gospel."*

*"But suppose Peter fails? And suppose after a while John just doesn't tell anyone? And what if James and Andrew are ashamed or afraid? Then what?" Gabriel asks.*

*"I have no other plans," Jesus is said to have answered; "I am counting entirely on them"<sup>4</sup>*

Peter's gospel is our gospel - etched on our hearts, as are some of His most memorable words! And the gospels are full of Peter:

No disciple speaks so often as Peter. Listen to these words and think of how they so remind us of the man who just could never get enough time in Christ's Presence.

Oh how Peter longed to walk with Jesus. The depth of Peter's love can be seen in the exclamations that he just can't seem to hold in. Can't you feel his passion as I read these words?

Here is a list I call "Peter's Top 20"; the unmistakable footprints of a man who wanted Jesus with every ounce of his being!

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<sup>4</sup> Cited in Herbert Lockyer, *All the Apostles of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972], p. 31

1. ***Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.*** (Matthew 14.28)
2. ***Lord, save me.*** (Matthew 14.30)
3. ***Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*** (Matthew 16.16; also Mark 8.29)
4. ***Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be to Thee.*** (Matthew 16.22)
5. ***How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?*** (Matthew 18.21)
6. ***I know not the man.*** (Matthew 26.74; Mark 14.71; Luke 22.60)
7. ***Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*** (Mark 9.5; and Luke 9.33)
8. ***Lo, we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?*** (Mark 10.28; and Luke 18.28)
9. ***Though all men deny Thee, yet will not I.*** (Mark 14.31)
10. ***Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*** (Luke 5.8)
11. ***The crowd press Thee, and how sayest Thou, Who touched me?*** (Luke 8.45)
12. ***To whom can we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*** (John 6.68)
13. ***Thou shalt never wash my feet.*** (John 13.8)
14. ***Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*** (John 13.9)
15. ***I go a fishing*** (John 21.3)
16. ***Lord, Thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love Thee.*** (John 21.15-17)
17. ***Silver and Gold have I none*** (Acts 3.6)
18. ***Neither is there salvation in any other!*** (Acts 4.12)
19. ***Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*** (Acts 10.14)
20. ***Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us; what was I that I could withstand God?*** (Acts 11.17)

Wow! If there is ever a person that shows the love of Jesus, the compassion of Jesus, the patience of Jesus, the forgiveness of Jesus, the restoring power of Jesus, and the empowerment for ministry that Jesus can give—it is Peter!

## **PETER IS A HERO**

People need heroes. Part of life is looking up to someone, being inspired by them, and rising to greater levels of accomplishment in whatever field they represent.

There are

- golfing heroes who inspire;
- basketball and football heroes who inspire;
- entertainers and authors who become heroes and inspire;

- political and civic heroes who inspire;
- medical, rescue and military heroes who inspire...(can you even look at that 911 photo of the twisted cross of steel and the firemen raising the flag without a tear welling up in your eye?).

Heroes, we all consciously or unconsciously have them. And beyond all these I've mentioned there are the religious leaders that inspire often millions.

Peter is my hero.

If you have never picked a character in the Bible as a hero, someone you wish to be like and admire greatly—I hope you'll consider Peter. He is becoming more and more my hero the longer I live.

Why would I say that? Because –

- **If you ever think of being a leader:** Peter is a model of leadership from the first day he was called by Jesus at the shore. I imagine it was only moments later that he took over as commander and chief of the soon to be Twelve and remained so throughout Christ's ministry. That is leadership.
- **If you ever want to be fearless:** Peter was a model of fearlessness at Gethsemane when in Christ's presence he single handedly with only a short sword started to fight with a crowd numbering well over 600 soldiers and guards. That is fearless.
- **If you ever want to be forgiven:** Peter is a model of forgiveness at the moment he looked up into the eyes of Jesus at Gallicantu. After all his denials he wept bitterly and cried out in his heart for forgiveness. How do I know that? Because Jesus looked at him in love and forgave him that dark night. That is forgiven.
- **If you ever want to be bold:** Peter was a model of boldness as he stood up to the whole city of Jerusalem that has just crucified Jesus—and preached the powerful sermons of Acts 2 and 3! That is boldness.
- **If you ever want to be restored to ministry:** Peter is a model of restoration to ministry at the Sea of Galilee (John 21) when Jesus stood on the shore and clearly, completely, and tenderly forgave Peter for all his denials. That is restored.
- **If you ever want to be greatly used:** Peter is a model of incredible success. Standing nearly alone before his entire world on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Cross -- Peter turns the tide of the whole world, God's Way! He single handedly (with only the help of the Holy Spirit that is) started the greatest movement the world has ever seen. His message (Acts 2) of calling individuals to conversion in Christ, is now the most repeated message, for the longest period of time – in the history of this planet. Peter founded upon Christ what we know today as the church of Jesus Christ. That is success.
- **If you ever want to be humble:** Peter is a model of humility. Despite all the incredible achievements walking for 3 years at Christ's side, to Pentecost and beyond—Peter walked away from the miracle of Pentecost as just a servant that

God used; he took the Gospel to Cornelius, and started the Gentile Church we are a part of and walked away from that event again, as just a servant that the Lord chose to use. And that is the way Peter humbly stayed—to the last recorded words of his life (I Peter 5). That is humility.

Peter is one of the greatest humans to ever walk this planet.

He showed what God can do with a bully,  
And what God can do with a failure,  
And what God can do with a success.

Peter only needed to be around Jesus.

And that's the good news! After Christ's resurrection we see Peter no longer fearful because of the Holy Spirit within, Peter was never out of Christ's presence—and neither are we!

Through the Holy Spirit we like Peter can a model of boldness, fearlessness, leadership, forgiveness, restoration, success, and humility.