

The Life of Peter 1

Simon and his brother Andrew, owned a fishing boat moored at Bethsaida, on Lake Galilee, alongside a couple of their pals, brothers James and John who owned a similar boat. Together, they'd fish the lake, and that was their livelihood. Let's read Luke 5:2-11. What does this tell you about Simon? Of the four, three were caught up dealing with this record breaking haul of fish but Simon had lost all interest in the fish, his focus was on Jesus. He had a front row seat when Jesus was addressing the crowd and whatever Jesus said, it really struck a chord with Simon.

Jesus appears to thank Simon for the loan his boat with an extraordinary catch of fish. Immediately, Simon loses all interest in fish, and whatever that chord was, it forced Simon to take a long look at himself, and he didn't like what he saw, v8. Peter was a practicing Jew and held fast to his faith and up until he met Jesus, he was really quite content. But upon that meeting, a light was shone on a part of his life that disgusted Peter and made him so ashamed he couldn't bear to be in the presence of Jesus. Are there past, dark areas of your Christian life, that when you recall them, make you shudder?

I don't think that this was the first time that Simon met Jesus. John 1:35-42. To reconcile these two accounts, I assume Andrew was a part time disciple of John the Baptist and part time fisherman. Andrew introduced his brother Simon to Jesus and after his meeting, he resumed fishing. Days later, Jesus caught up with Simon and borrowed his boat. Two seemingly quite different accounts of an event can be reconciled.

One myth I do want to question is that being a fisherman in those days was some sort of subsistence level existence. Mark 1:20, Zebedee had hired servants as well as two sons working for him. It was like an industry. Nevertheless, on a 2 word invitation Peter and his brother Andrew ditched their careers to become full time disciples of Jesus. What they had left behind was of value to them in terms of a worldly career, Matthew 19:27. That said, there was never a hint that any of the Disciples regretted their choice, with one notable exception.

Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter in Luke 6:14, which according to John 1:42 means a stone. During His ministry Jesus switched between calling him Simon and Peter.

Peter had been married and had a mother in law Matthew 8:4-15. We don't know what happened to his wife.

Let's look at Matthew 14:22-33. Matthew is alone in recounting Peter walking on water. Mark and John record Jesus walking on water, but not Peter. Luke skips the story altogether. Background. Jesus had borrowed a boat (I wonder who from) and gone to somewhere remote. Crowds had followed Him by land, He taught them all day, fed 5,000 and at the end, He packed the 12 Disciples off in the boat and told them to go back to where they had started.

A storm brewed up, nothing as bad as Mark 5:35-41, in that they weren't in fear of their lives, but bad enough to stop them using the sail and so bad that they struggled to make any progress with hard rowing.

They were more afraid however, when they saw a man walking on the sea, towards them. This miracle was unique; all the other miracles had a good purpose to them. Someone was healed, devils evicted, hungry fed and even the water into wine saved the blushes of

a bride's father. This miracle had no tangible benefit. So why did Jesus perform it? The passengers weren't in peril, no rescue was needed.

V28. When he realises who this 'ghostly figure' is, Peter calls out to Jesus, make me do that.

V29. Jesus beckons him. Peter climbs out of the boat and starts walking on top of the water towards Jesus.

V30. Within minutes, Peter catches a glimpse of the waves and the boisterous wind, panics and starts to sink, panics more and calls out to Jesus for help - Lord, save me!

V31. Jesus picks Peter up and tells Peter off and they both climb back into the boat. Soon as they do, the wind miraculously stops.

Where did he go wrong? Was it getting out of the boat in the first place? Was Peter just wanting 'an experience' that seemed to have no purpose or benefit, maybe the equivalent of 'falling over in the Spirit' as happens in some Pentecostal churches. Alternatively, was Peter wanting to exercise and demonstrate his faith in Jesus? If the latter, he overestimated his faith and had to call upon Jesus to rescue him.

What about the 11 disciples sat in the boat? Were they being sensible and conservative, not wanting to get involved in a gimmick, or were they wishing they could join Peter but initially lacked his faith and later, glad they hadn't bothered?

How do you know that what you're asking will serve God's purpose and not what subconsciously has questionable motives?