### FIRST BAPTIST ROGERS

# valiantwarrior

### SEMESTER ELEVEN

FLAWED, FAITHFUL, AND FRUITFUL: A STUDY OF SIMON PETER

## introduction

#### TO VALIANT WARRIORS

In the Old Testament, certain groups of men were noted as "valiant warriors" or "men of valor." These men displayed courage and determination in battle. King David had his "mighty men." These men proved themselves to be trustworthy in battlefield situations. These brave warriors were not limited to one tribe or people group. They were only limited by their courage and determination.

Valiant means possessing or showing courage or determination. Obviously, a warrior is one who is engaged in a war. A war has been underway since the Garden of Eden. The kingdom of God has been under assault by the kingdom of darkness. Satan's temptation to Adam and Eve that led to their sin resulting in the Fall of all mankind was the declaration of war against God's kingdom.

Biblical manhood and masculinity was also attacked in the garden on that day. Adam had been created first, given dominion over the earth and even named his wife. Satan did not initially go to Adam but to his wife, Eve with the temptation. It is understood that Adam was most certainly right there while his wife was being tempted. Adam abdicated his leadership responsibility in protecting his wife. He then followed her into the same sin that she had committed. Since then, God's people have battled against the kingdom of sin and darkness. But also, men have battled for biblical manhood and masculinity.

Men are at their best when they are valiant warriors, battling for the kingdom of God and rescuing the disadvantaged in the name of the King. Robert Lewis subtitled "Men's Fraternity," A Quest for Authentic Manhood. Valiant Warriors hopes to be another leg in the race or step in the journey in this quest. David challenged his son, Solomon in 2 Kings 2:2-4, "I am going the way of



all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"

We hope to show men how to be men, valiant warriors through this study. We believe that the key to men being transformed is first by the Word of God. Another key is men in small groups for discussion, prayer, accountability and encouragement. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. It is out of that desire and vision that we have embraced the following guidestones.

Another key is men in small groups for discussion, prayer, accountability and encouragement. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. It is out of that desire and vision that we have embraced the following guidestones.

#### **Valiant Warrior Mission**

To disciple men to follow Christ and to live and lead in their homes, churches, and communities for God's glory.

#### **Valiant Warrior Vision**

To see an army of men devoted to Christ leading their families and this church to serve Christ and bring Him glory until Jesus returns.

### **Valiant Warrior Strategy**

To disciple men in small groups to lead their families and their church to serve Christ and bring Him glory until Jesus returns.

#### **Valiant Warrior Promise**

Judges 6:12 "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior."

#### Valiant Warrior Code of Honor

To grow in Christlikeness personally. To be committed to my family and Christ's church. To intentionally encourage other men in Christlikeness and commitment to the church.

### **Valiant Warrior Scripture References**

2 Chronicles 14:8 "Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors."

Deuteronomy 3:18 "Then I commanded you at that time, saying, 'The Lord your God has given you this land to possess it; all you valiant men shall cross over armed before your brothers, the sons of Israel.'"

Joshua 1:14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them."

Joshua 8:3 "So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night."

Joshua 10:7 "So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors."

Judges 6:12 "The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, 'The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior.'"

Judges 11:1 "Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior..."

Judges 18:2 "So the sons of Dan sent from their family five men out of their whole number, valiant men from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it;"

- 1 Samuel 10:26 "Saul also went to his house at Gibeah; and the valiant men whose hearts God had touched went with him."
- 1 Samuel 14:52 "Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff."
- 1 Samuel 18:17 "Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles."
- 1 Samuel 31:12 "All the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of

Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there."

- 2 Samuel 2:7 "Now therefore, let your hands be strong and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."
- 2 Samuel 17:10 "And even the one who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will completely lose heart; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man and those who are with him are valiant men."
- 1 Chronicles 28:1 "Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that served the king, and the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds, and the overseers of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, with the officials and the mighty men, even all the valiant men."
- 2 Chronicles 13:3 "Abijah began the battle with an army of valiant warriors, 400,000 chosen men, while Jeroboam drew up in battle formation against him with 800,000 chosen men who were valiant warriors."

### VALIANT WARRIOR

SEMESTER 11: FLAWED, FAITHFUL, AND FRUITFUL: A STUDY OF SIMON PETER

This semester of Valiant Warrior brings us to the New Testament. All our previous character studies have been from the Old Testament. Our subject during this six-week study is none other than Simon Peter. He proves to be an interesting character. Simon was a common name. Two of the twelve disciples carried the name Simon. Simon Peter is distinguished from Simon the Zealot. Simon Peter is also known as Simon bar Jonah or Simon, son of Jonah (John or Jonas). Jesus called Simon the rock, petras. It is Peter or Cephas in Aramaic. He is called Simon, Peter, Simon Peter, and Cephas in Scripture.

Simon Peter was one of the twelve disciples or apostles. This position gives him a unique position in redemption history. Despite what some misguided, at the least, and heretical teachers, at the worst, might contend, there were only a select few of the apostles. Apostles were chosen by God specifically. They were eyewitnesses of Jesus and His resurrection. Jesus chose twelve men to fulfill this role of disciple/apostle. Judas betrayed Jesus and was lost. Matthias was selected to replace Judas (Acts 1:26). Paul was also called an apostle repeatedly in Scripture. In my opinion, these were the only apostles in the official sense.

Simon Peter was considered the leader of the apostles. The New Testament mentions the disciples in three groups of four. The first group is always Peter, James, John, and Andrew. Peter is always mentioned first in this group. These were the first disciples called by Jesus. Brothers, James and John, along with Peter were closest to Jesus, but Peter was considered their leader and the leader of the twelve. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts list the twelve disciples. In each list, Peter is listed first. In each list, Peter is mentioned with James, John, and Peter's brother, Andrew.

Peter was not only the leader of the apostles, but he was well-known for his zeal and confidence. His zeal and confidence were often offset by his misspeak and emotional overreactions. His flaws stand out. Jesus would say to him on one occasion, "Get behind Me, Satan." As most know, Peter would deny Jesus three times on one night. Peter represents a lot of us.

Peter wanted to follow Christ and was passionate about following Jesus most of the time. His zeal would often get him in trouble as he would over promise and under deliver, like we sometimes do. Peter had his moments, like when he gave the confession Jesus is the Christ the son of the living God. Only later to allow his zeal to misunderstand Jesus' purpose of coming to die for sin. Obviously, Peter's denial of Christ on the eve of His crucifixion was the low point of Peter's life. Many would think this was an unrecoverable offense. It was unrecoverable from a human perspective. Only Jesus could initiate a restoration, which He did.

Peter was a great leader. He made frequent mistakes of a young leader pre-crucifixion. But he also possessed some great leadership qualities that would be shaped through time and experience to make him a great and fruitful leader post-Pentecost. His three years of following Jesus up close refined and developed him into one of the greatest leaders the Church ever had. Peter was clearly the one who took the baton of the faith from Jesus and led decisively up through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Paul was not saved until Acts 9 and did not go on the first missionary journey until Acts 13. In Acts 15, at the Jerusalem Council, it was Peter who carried the day in clarifying the gospel expectation and church planting standards Paul had presented. So, it was not really until Paul and Silas left on the second missionary journey (Acts 16) that the torch of leadership moved from Peter to Paul. Peter's influence would continue in his epistles, 1 and 2 Peter.

Discuss what you know about Simon Peter. What do you like about him? Where do you find fault in him?

What would you like to learn from studying about Simon Peter?



Peter and Andrew were in the family fishing business. Fishing was hard but honorable work. It was for rugged men who could endure the elements of weather. Their hands were calloused from the pull of the nets and fish. Their skin was sun baked and leathered. They often net fished at night while most people were sleeping. If you have fished all day or all night in the heat, then you are familiar with the smell associated with human sweat and B.O. combined with the smell of the fish being handled throughout the day and night. The slime and the sweat mixing only to dry on the side of the boat, the clothes of the fisherman, the hands of the fisherman, and on anything touched including the brow and the face.

I had the opportunity to travel in Northern India to Dharmsala in the Himachal Pradesh state. One of our IMB missionaries had located an UUPG in a remote area about a year earlier. They were fisherman. It had been a year since his initial contact with this particular family. They were far away from others and isolated in their location. The multitude of UUPGs unfortunately outnumbers the missionaries and national partners. So, over a year later, Lisa and I accompanied our IMB missionary for his second visit to this family.

One of the men permitted us to take a photo of his hand. His fingers were extremely enlarged around his fingernails. We believe this was caused by great amounts of time having his hands in the water and pulling up nets. You can imagine having your hands underwater, unprotected for hours of the day and much of that time holding onto and pulling up a net that is hopefully full of fish.

It was rugged man's profession. Fishermen worked hard in order to survive to feed their family.

It was in this fisherman context Peter first met Jesus. Some (F. B. Meyer) have suggested Peter was a John the Baptist convert. He most likely heard and saw John the Baptist and his preaching. We do know Peter's brother Andrew was one of John the Baptist's disciples who heard John declare "Behold, the Lamb of God" (John 1:35). So, it is not unreasonable to think Peter was influenced in some significant ways by the ministry and preaching of John the Baptist.

Peter is mentioned more than any other disciple. He is mentioned more than any person in the New Testament, except for Jesus. So, let us begin our biblical journey into this fisherman who became the leader of the disciples.

#### Matthew 4:18-20

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, **Simon who was called Peter**, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

#### Mark 1:16-18

As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw **Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon**, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

#### Luke 5:1-11

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was **Simon's**, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. When He had finished speaking, **He said to Simon**, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

#### John 1:40-42

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was **Andrew**, **Simon Peter's brother**. **He found first his own brother Simon** and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. **Jesus looked at him and said**, "You are Simon the son of **John**; you shall be called **Cephas**" (which is translated **Peter**)."

Fishermen were hard-working, honorable, tough, rugged, hands-on, and engaged in dirty (smelly fish) and necessary work. Peter was a man of the water. He lived much of his life on the water and made his living out of the water. He is called Simon bar Jonah which means the son of Jonah. These Hebrews were well-acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures speaking of Jonah and the great fish.

His profession caused him to be a real man.

He was in the family business. He was in business with his brother Andrew and evidently also in business with James and John (Luke 5:10). Andrew met Jesus first and brought his brother, Simon, to Jesus. I have been a part of two Billy Graham Crusades where Billy Graham was the preacher. In each of those crusades, a key element to the success of the crusade was what they called "Operation Andrew." This was basically writing the names of three to five people on a card that you committed to pray for and would invite to the crusade. Like Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, we were committing to bringing our friends to Jesus.

It was obvious Andrew had a significant impact on Simon Peter. They shared the family business of fishing for fish. Andrew introduced Simon Peter to a new family business of fishing for men. Andrew actually introduced him to Jesus, who introduced him to a new family and new family business.

Much of Peter's life was lived on a particular body of water, the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is actually a freshwater lake. If you have been to Israel, I am sure you have visited the Sea of Galilee. This lake is the lowest freshwater lake on earth and the second lowest next to the Dead Sea. One of the highlights of the trip to the Holy Land is typically a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. It brings to life many of the biblical stories in the New Testament. The area around the Sea of Galilee is largely undeveloped even to this day. Tiberias has some hotels and some population, but around the Sea of Galilee is mostly like it was in Jesus' day.

It is easy to see how an unforseen storm could suddenly arise on this lake in a moment's notice. You can see the white capping of the waves that could produce life-threatening situations on the water. That is typically one of the challenges of the Holy Land tour, finding a time when the water is calm enough to make the trip out on a boat.

On the north shore, a fishing village called Capernaum served as the hometown for Simon Peter and the home base for much of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee. It was in Capernaum that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. Peter evidently relocated from the east side of the lake to the hometown of his wife. So, we know Peter was married. Today, there are significant ruins along this northern shore that could possibly be Peter's home and a church from the first century. Peter never wondered far from home, probably just a few days walking around Israel. He was the apostle to the Jews. His ministry would be to establish the church in Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

Peter was a commercial fisherman. His method of fishing was a net. It was out of this family business that Jesus stepped into Peter's life. In the same way today, Jesus steps into the lives of men wherever He finds them. Some may be fisherman. Some may be hunters. Some may be mechanics. Some may be truck drivers. Some may be farmers. Some may be plumbers, electricians, doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, loggers, IT specialists, and the list goes on and on.

Jesus related a familiar and common activity or job to life's most important task. Jesus would later tell His disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations. This is the beginning of the Great Commission call. Jesus did not start with the nations in calling Peter, but He certainly had the nations in mind. He started with where Peter was and called him at that place.

While what Peter did was important, what Peter was called to do would be more important. Where Peter had been was important, but where Peter was going was more important. Who Peter knew in the past was important, but Who Peter knew now was more important.

The same is true for you. Jesus wants to step into your life today and lead you in the direction that will give meaning and significance to your life. Jesus told Peter you have been fishing for fish. And as great as that is, fishing for men will be even greater.

I like to catch fish or have a successful hunt. But what Jesus invites us to do is more important, more challenging, and more fun than even catching fish. It is amazing to me some people do not like fishing. Many have never been fishing, so they do not know what they are missing. Others have never caught fish. I agree catching fish is more fun than fishing. If you never catch anything, then you might as well be doing something else. But the possibility of catching a fish keeps the fisherman going. Also, like other recreational and work activities, we do those with other people. This is especially illustrated with net fishing. It is not a one man's sport. It is a team sport.

Fishing for men is a team sport. Our community of Valiant Warriors is a brotherhood that agrees God has called us to join Him and other brothers in reaching lost men for the sake of the gospel. This is what Jesus is doing when He calls Peter.

Someone (Andrew) brought Simon Peter to Jesus. Our first questions are:

Who was instrumental in bringing you to Jesus Christ? Sharing the gospel with you? Bringing you to church? Initiating introducing you to Jesus?

How has that impacted you in sharing Christ with other people?

Who are you bringing to Jesus these days?

Jesus called Peter specifically and personally. Discuss how God has called you first to salvation. Then discuss how Jesus has called you to be a fisher of men (partner in the Great Commission).

Discuss some lessons you have learned from fishing that apply to reaching men with the gospel.

Some people like to fish. More people like to catch fish. As we study Peter's life, we will see there were times when Peter was not catching fish. We also see some occasions when Jesus directed Peter to go catch fish and he did.

You can only catch fish where there are fish. You are most likely to catch fish where there are more fish or a lot of fish. Many times, fish hang out together in schools of fish. Sometimes you will catch a lot of fish in a particular place disproportionately than another place where you did not catch any fish. Some days you catch a lot of fish. Some days you do not catch any fish. Some people say you need to fish when and where the fish are biting.

Some remote lakes that are hard to get to have a lot of fish to catch if someone would go and fish in that remote lake. Our friend Joey and his son, Jason, fished in the boundary waters on the border of Canada. My friend Paul and his family have done this for years. The lakes are isolated and remote. The only way to get to these lakes is by planes that land on the water. Some other lakes are only accessible by hiking to them carrying all your gear, including your canoe. Because of the difficulty of accessing these lakes, very few people go and fish there. But the adventurers who do go catch a lot of fish. If you like to catch fish and a challenge, then this is it!

I am sure you know where this is going. There are many areas in our nation and world that have multitudes of people who have never been reached. Some of these areas have people who would respond to the gospel if someone would just go and fish in that lake.

Peter was called to fish for men. It would lead him to leave his livelihood and job of fishing out of Capernaum as homebase. He would travel (not really far from home by today's standards) to follow Jesus and be mentored by Jesus. Peter was under Jesus' internship for three years learning and observing and doing ministry alongside Jesus. Peter's future ministry was a ministry to the Jewish people. He would travel to Joppa and Caesarea and serve the church in Jerusalem.

We will also see over and again Peter was a flawed fisher of men. Peter's well-documented failures will serve as an example of hope for all of us flawed disciples. Peter learned some hard lessons along the way.

Discuss and contrast how Peter's failures should encourage us to keep moving forward despite our failures as opposed to giving up and quitting on ourselves and God's mission.

Discuss the importance of fishing where there are fish and when the fish are biting. Discuss the importance of continuing to fish until you find the fish or until they start biting. Make the connection with fishing for men.

Sometimes God calls certain men to follow Him into vocational ministry to provide ministry leadership in order to make more disciples. Peter would enlist in a three-year residency program under the direct tutelage of Jesus in preparation for leading the movement in its early days of expansion. This is no different than going to college, then medical school, then residency before being fully on your own in the medical profession. A commitment to becoming a fisher of men is a commitment to training and discipleship. We need more Valiant Warriors to be trainers and mentors along with more Valiant Warriors to join the residency program.

Peter maintained some connection with the fishing business since we find him fishing again after Jesus has been raised from the dead.

When Peter left the nets to follow Jesus, we understand where Peter went was always within a few days walking distance from Capernaum. In today's world with jet airplanes, we are just a few days away from any place in the world. God is still calling men to be pastors and missionaries and that will require leaving where you are to go where God calls. God is also calling people to be engaged in the Great Commission in and around their current locations.

I believe until God says to go, then we should stay where God has put us. But when God says to go, then we must go. I heard Adrian Rogers once say, "Plan on staying your entire life, but be prepared to leave in 10 minutes." The call of God to Peter appears to be immediate. Jesus said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." The Bible says they immediately left their nets and followed Him.

I have often taught when Jesus says "Follow Me" He is on the move. So, we have to be on the move to follow Him. Jesus is not standing still saying come and stand by Me. But on the other hand, in some places in Scripture we are admonished to watch and pray and wait on the Lord. Jesus told the disciples to go to the upper room and wait on the Holy Spirit to come. Responding immediately when we have a clear word and waiting until we have a clear word are both biblical responses to the call of God.

I know for me, a vocational call to ministry leadership was a process over time. I was serving in responsible ministry as a layman in our church and as a volunteer in prison ministry. These ministry opportunities helped to sharpen my skills as a speaker and teacher and my knowledge as a Bible student. It also helped give me practical experience in personal evangelism and dealing with a variety of people and situations. It was also a time when my passion for ministry did not wane, nor did I grow weary of ministry. Just the opposite was happening. I was gaining more passion, confidence, and biblical independence. I did not need to be propped up or supported by outsiders for me to do what I was called to do. My prison ministry involvement was completely independent of my home church. My love and commitment to my home church did not wane in any way. There were circumstances that occurred at my home church that could have been discouraging to Lisa and me. I have seen many people leave churches for a lot less than we experienced. It was decades ago, or I probably would not use myself as an example. But I do know what it is like to overcome discouragement and less than ideal circumstances. You do not have to be a superstar, because I know I am not. You do have to trust in and follow Christ no matter what.

There is always noise and discouragement out there. But if Jesus is your passion, then ministry with Him and for Him will also be your passion. It was my passion wherever I went. It was a calling I could not escape. It followed me around. It was constantly on my mind. It was always there, but the clarity was not there yet until it finally came. I knew. I stepped out in faith when the clarity came.

It was not logical, but it was reasonable to me. It was supported by some people and questioned by others.

God did not waste any of my experiences at work and volunteer ministry in preparing me for what has been over three decades of vocational ministry leadership. At the right time, His time, God clarified my next steps of faith and preparation. God called me to take a step of faith. I needed to personally trust Him if I was going to be teaching others to trust Him. My job was a lot of security for me. I loved my job. As many know, I was a Civil Engineer. Most engineers letting others know they are engineers has been my observation through the years. It was probably the biggest faith step I could take at that time. God called me to leave a job I loved. It was a job that provided security in finances for our family. The job also provided a sense of self-worth and importance to me. I did not grow up with great accolades and recognitions. I always felt I worked hard in school and at work to achieve where I was. I never felt like I was given anything. I felt I had to earn everything as far as academics and career goes. God was asking me to walk away from what I had worked for and earned to follow Him. It was hard on one hand, but it was easy on the other hand (Philippians 3:1-14).

It was hard also because we loved our church and our friends. That is a whole different story. But sometimes when we follow God, we must leave friends, family, familiarity, and comfort in exchange for the unknown. That is faith. God is pleased with faith.

It is easy to look back now and see how God blessed that decision. That view and perspective was not nearly as clear the first months and years of that faith step. Serving a church with less than 70 people attending most every Sunday for three years and then going to a church averaging 75 in attendance did not have the accolades of instant success in ways the world measures success. I will say Lisa and I were content and developed some great friendships in those early days of vocational ministry. That is enough about my story. I hope it helps some of you who may be considering vocational ministry leadership. Trust the Lord to make His will known. Be faithful. Be obedient. Be fruitful where you are. That is the best place to be to hear God's call to join Him in ministry.

Discuss what a call to vocational ministry leadership looks like for some people (maybe you). Consider what preparation (Peter's, Wes', and yours) looks like.

Discuss some of the challenges of following God into vocational ministry and missions.

Discuss ways you can be engaged in global missions from Northwest Arkansas. This includes your business and travel and internet and Teams/Zoom Meetings and technology.



This lesson will focus on some key experiences Peter had with Jesus. Certainly, the calling of Peter by Jesus was the inaugural and key experience Peter had with Jesus, but it was not his only connection with Jesus.

One way to validate the call of Jesus on our life is that it is not the last time Jesus touches our life and heart. Throughout our Valiant Warrior study of Peter, we need to be looking for leadership lessons from the life of Peter. Remember Peter was the clear leader of the disciples. So, every time you see a reference made to the disciples, then you should keep in mind Peter was front and center in those situations.

Jesus did not just want to enlist Peter to lead a group of men to do His work while Jesus moved on to more important or different work. Jesus enlisted Peter to share the work with Him. Peter was the leader of the disciples, but he was not the leader. Jesus was the clear leader. It would not be until Jesus ascended that Peter would actually be the primary leader of the disciples. Jesus was training Peter to become the leader when He left.

This lesson will focus primarily on the experiences Peter shared with the other disciples and with Jesus. While Peter was mentioned more than any of the other disciples by name, many times he was not mentioned by name but was present and included in the reference "disciples." Peter had a shared experience with the other disciples. This shared experience impacted him uniquely.

I hope to show you how the shared experience with other men contributes to you becoming the man God intended you to be. The fact Jesus spent more time with groups of men than he did alone with a particular man communicates the importance of a community of men.

It is also notable some men can have the same experience and hear the same thing and see the same thing, but it impacts different men differently. Our next lesson will deal with some unique experiences Peter had that all the other disciples did not necessarily experience. So, Peter was impacted by the common experiences he shared with his disciple brothers, and he was also impacted by the unique experiences he had with Jesus.

It is notable that in these passages Simon Peter did not stand out nor was he highlighted. So much of life is not about us being the center of attention. We have experiences that are shared with others that can have a significant impact on us personally, but also, these shared experiences can knit our hearts together, especially with other Valiant Warriors.

After calling them to follow Him, Jesus quickly gathered His disciples and began teaching them what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying...

Jesus sat down in a relaxed and deliberate manner, one that you would expect from a wise teacher. His first audience is His disciples and there was also a crown gathered there. Jesus' teaching was for Simon Peter, although not mentioned here. His teaching was for His disciples. His teaching is for everyone. Jesus then spoke the beatitudes. This teaching is a series of statements that begin with the word "Blessed." These statements address the character of a man. In Valiant Warrior semester 10, "The Man God Blesses," we discussed these beatitudes. These are the summary statements associated with each beatitude.

#### God blesses the humble.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

#### God blesses those who mourn.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

#### God blesses the meek.

"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5

#### God blesses the passionate for Him.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Matthew 5:6

#### God blesses the merciful.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Matthew 5:7

#### God blesses the pure in heart.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

#### God blesses the peacemakers.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9

#### God blesses the persecuted.

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10

# Peter heard this teaching of Jesus. As you consider this initial teaching of Jesus, what areas above do you think Peter needed a lot of work in?

In this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples that His way was a higher and better way. It was more than just outward behavior. The heart attitude was most important. Jesus also warned His disciples it is a narrow way to follow Him (Matthew 7:13-14). He taught them you know a tree by its fruit. He also warned not everyone who says they are a follower of Jesus really is (Matthew 7:21-23). He told the story of two foundations. Storms are surely to come, but the house built upon a strong foundation will withstand the storms.

#### What teaching from the Sermon on the Mount challenges you and other Valiant Warriors?

# Discuss how the Sermon on the Mount presents the case of salvation by grace and sanctification by grace.

Peter not only heard the great teaching of Jesus, but he also experienced the miracle-working power of Jesus. In Matthew 8, Peter's mother-in-law was healed.

#### Matthew 8:14-17

When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."

The miracle power of Jesus was experienced personally for Peter. He was not only a witness to His miracles, but his own family also experienced His miracle power. This story lets us know Peter was married. We also see many others came to Jesus for healing. Remember, Peter lived in Capernaum and this was the headquarters of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Discuss the importance of personally receiving the healing power of Jesus in your life as compared to seeing the healing power of Jesus in the lives of others. Do not let "healing" be restricted to physical healing.

Peter saw Jesus perform numerous miracles. He cast out demons (Matthew 8:28-34).

When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

Discuss what Peter learned from seeing Jesus cast out demons from these demonpossessed men.

This story is frequently used in gospel presentations before handing out compassion kits or storying among UUPGs. Why do you think missionaries and mission organizations include this as a primary story in sharing the gospel among the unreached?

Peter saw Jesus heal a paralytic man (Mark 2:1-13).

When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this." And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.

This is one of my favorite stories of friends bringing their friend to Jesus. This story is a great illustration to be used in personal evangelism. The initiative of the four men bringing the paralytic challenges all Valiant Warriors to be engaged in bringing people to Jesus.

Another important lesson is the faith of the friends is recognized by Jesus and rewarded by Jesus. It was their faith Jesus responded to, not the faith of the paralytic initially.

Another important lesson Simon Peter learned was the authority of Jesus. Jesus had authority to forgive sins. Jesus had the authority to say rise and walk. He then asked the question, "Which is harder?" He knew the speculation of His critics.

I have always loved the way this paragraph ended: "...so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.' And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them." Mark 2:12-13

"Amazed and glorifying God" is always the goal. We get to be amazed at Him, and He gets the glory.

# What are some key lessons Peter observed from this miracle of physical and spiritual healing? Teamwork? Hard work? Concern for others? Risk? Jesus' authority?

Peter saw the compassion of Jesus and heard the compelling call to pray for the harvest (Matthew 9:35-38).

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

This experience for Peter and the others should have shown them the emotional heart of Jesus for hurting people. It also emphasizes the priority of the ministry in "proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." Jesus saw the people. He did not look past them on His way to the cross. He was going to the cross for them. What He saw caused Him to have deep emotion for them. It was a gut-wrenching feeling. He was also perceptive beyond just feeling for them. He saw they were distressed and dispirited. They were fearful and depressed. They were anxious and had given up. The reason was because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus certainly is the Good Shepherd who came to save His sheep and keep them. But God has also called pastors to serve as shepherds. I believe husbands and fathers are to shepherd their homes. I believe LIFE group leaders shepherd their LIFE group. I believe our deacons share shepherding responsibilities with the pastors.

So many churches view their deacon body as an organizational, authoritarian group to make decisions and keep the pastor and staff in line. In reality, deacons are the servants who meet the needs of the congregation so the pastors can provide spiritual leadership through ministry of the Word of God and prayer. I really do not think God is looking for better leaders. He is looking for faithful servants.

Jesus said His children needed a shepherd. Is it any wonder that Jesus told Peter to "Feed My sheep" three times after Peter said he loved Jesus? Peter saw the raw emotion and the insightful assessment of the dispirited and distressed sheep. Shepherd the flock.

Jesus turned to prayer. In all His assessment of the situation, the solution was to pray and ask the Lord to send forth laborers into the harvest field. We are back again at fishing for men. Involving more people in the fishing for men task and assignment. Valiant Warriors are called to be fishers of men. We talk about courage and character for Valiant Warriors. The calling of the Valiant Warrior is to reach other men and share community with them so other men can join in their hopeful, life-giving community. Our Valiant Warrior groups must be open enough that complete strangers can come and feel and be welcomed in.

First, they must feel welcome. The feeling part is on the new person. It is the responsibility of those already there to create that feeling of being welcomed. Some guys are so focused on themselves and their close friends they are oblivious to the awkwardness and crying out of others who have no connections. Sometimes our close-knit friendships come across to others on the outside of that friendship as a discouragement or impossibility for them to break into that close-knit group. Close-knit groups are great. Let me ask you this. What does your close-knit group do together that serves others who are not in your group economically, socially, or culturally? Close-knit groups that go to the Amazon, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. are typically more in line with the community Jesus advocates.

Second, they must be welcomed. Welcome is not when the guest takes the initiative to come and you just say "welcome." Think about it. The guest found the church, drove to the church, walked into the church, walked into your LIFE group or your Valiant Warrior group. They have taken so much more initiative in some cases. The better story is when the Valiant Warrior has befriended someone outside the church. They have had lunch or coffee or breakfast before ever coming to church. They are then invited to church and lunch afterward. They are never alone for one minute the entire time they are at church the first time. Then at the follow up coffee, the Valiant Warrior asks the guest, "How did you like church?" He communicates, "Man we really liked having you in our LIFE group. I hope you will come back again next week. There are some other people who would like to meet you and maybe grab lunch with us."

Pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. It is not that there are no fish to be caught. There just are not enough fishermen.

Discuss the activities Peter saw Jesus doing.

Discuss the compassion and reasons for Jesus' feelings towards the people.

Discuss the solution to the plight of these distressed and dispirited people.

What should be the activity and emotion of the Valiant Warrior in response to the troubled lives of those around us?

Jesus sends Peter and the disciples out on mission (Matthew 10:1-23).

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes."

Jesus sent His disciples out after "instructing them." It is important to understand the end goal is not instruction, but it is sending them out. Many Valiant Warriors live most, if not all, their life in the instructing stage. In a way, if you never get out of the instruction stage then you probably are not a Valiant Warrior. What made those Old Testament men earn the title of Valiant Warrior and Might Men was what they did, not what they learned. Learning and instruction is great. But if a man stays in medical school training for 30 years and never serves helping sick people get well, then he is no doctor.

Jesus gave them specific instructions as to what to do and not do. Our study does not permit the time to do a deep dive into this passage. But it is certainly worthy of personal study or an outside Valiant Warrior session intensive study. Jesus gave instruction on entering houses and not expecting pay and trusting God for all your needs. He warned about being wise and shrewd and also gentle. Expect to be persecuted.

# What are some lessons about the mission Peter heard from Jesus? What are some lessons that apply to you being on mission with Jesus today?

Jesus explained the high cost of discipleship (Luke 9:23-26).

And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.'

These are a power-packed few verses Peter heard. These are the key verses of the Disciple's Cross found in Avery Willis' MasterLife Discipleship Study. Avery wrote this material for missionaries. Lisa and I took this course almost 40 years ago and have taught it to multiple groups through the years. It all centers around Luke 9:23. Consider the discussion below.

Discuss the three things required to follow Jesus from 9:23.

Discuss the paradox of saving and losing your life for the sake of Christ.

Discuss gaining the world and losing your soul.

Discuss the problem of being ashamed of Christ (Peter's future denial and Romans 1:16).



Peter continued to see the miraculous hand of Jesus. One of the miracles recorded in all four gospels is the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus' popularity as a teacher and healer grew and so did the crowds. On this particular day, a large crowd gathered and the people were being healed by Jesus. Jesus provided healing to the sick and food for the hungry.

#### John 6:1-15

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Remember the purpose of the book of John.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31

Peter was an eyewitness to this miracle along with the others. The greatest thing about this story is the faith it produces. That faith was directed towards Jesus. Peter's faith, along with the other disciples', grew through this miracle.

#### Discuss the purpose of John's Gospel and the purpose of all the miracles Jesus performed.

No problem is too big when you know where to turn.

Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."

Philip is mentioned here, but Peter must be right there in the middle of this dilemma.

Jesus lifted His eyes and saw the large crowd coming to Him.

Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him...5

Jesus was aware of the people. He saw the people coming to Him. He was looking and He saw. As in Matthew 9:35-38, Jesus sees the people. This is a lesson Peter would have to learn. Are you looking? Do you see? Yourself, your family, how about others? Many are not even aware of how closed off they are to others.

Jesus tested Philip concerning the needs of others along with all the disciples who were there with him.

...said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. 6

Jesus did not ask to multiply food but rather to multiply Philip's faith.

God does not need us to help Him. He allows us to be involved in what He is doing. Jesus was about to do a miracle, and He was inviting His disciples, Philip particularly, to join Him.

Jesus made it clear He cared about these people eating.
He proposed consideration of a human solution, "Where are we to buy bread?"
He proposed consideration of a human need, "So that these may eat."
Jesus cares for you, but not only you and your family.

Jesus knew what He was going to do. 6

Jesus does not ask questions because He does not know the answers. He asks questions to bring people along to discover His will and way. Philip and Andrew were about to discover what Jesus already knew He was going to do.

Jesus wanted to involve Philip in what He was about to do.

Jesus can do it without us, but He wants to involve us.

Philip answers the question with a business, financial answer.

Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." 7

He also answered with what we do not have instead of answering how can we feed these people. Everyone can tell you why you cannot do something. It would take eight months' wages to provide a little for everyone. Philip's resources were too small.

There was also the reality that missing a meal would not have been the end of the world. Most likely in that life circumstance, people often missed a meal here and there. What was in view here was the will of God and the plan of God. It was the message of the miracle as much as the miracle. We have learned from our study of John's gospel and the miracles of Jesus the message behind the miracle is more important than even the miracle.

If Philip had faith, he would have said, "You are greater than Moses and the people were fed with manna." He would have said, "Man does not live by bread alone." But instead, he said why it could not be done and then gave Jesus a lesson in accounting, costs, and money.

Jesus knew what He was going to do. There has never been an emergency session in heaven. When God provides His strength, nothing is too hard or impossible. Jeremiah 32:27

Philip was looking strictly at the physical need and the impossibility of meeting that need.

He missed the message of Jesus and its importance.

He missed the miracle-working power of Jesus and its purpose.

Peter is not in the bullseye on this narrative, but he was there. Maybe he was looking, listening, and learning from Philip's mistakes.

No person is too small for God to use.

One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" 8-9

Actually, there are people who are too big for God to use but no one too small.

While Philip was looking at the enormity of the problem with numbers of people and lack of funds, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, seemed to get a little further down the road of ministry vision, but still falls short of the finish line. Andrew took an honest look at resources.

Andrew identified the young lad with his personal lunch, but at this point, he questioned the ability of that lunch to feed the large crowd.

So, Andrew said they did not have enough food. Philip said they did not have enough money. Andrew did advise of what they did have but concluded that it was not enough. But he did provide the information. He was thinking. John is the only gospel writer to mention it was barley loaves, which was the inexpensive bread of the poor. One thing they both got right is that it would take a miracle outside their ability to feed all these people.

The impossibility of the situation requires a miracle.

Jesus does miracles.

The opportunity of the situation results in a miracle.

Now let us consider the boy with the five loaves and two fish.

The providence of God is our provision. Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous. The Providence and grace of God rules over our lives.

Availability is more important than ability. Just showing up is a big part of the job.

Availability can elevate over obscurity. We do not know the boy's name, but we know the boy's work and availability. The goal is always to know the Lord's name not your name.

Availability can mitigate quantity. Not how many but what kind.

Availability can accelerate quality. Equips the called, not calls the equipped.

Availability can activate the extraordinary.

God is just looking for a vessel.

He is not looking for power because He has the power.

He is not looking for wisdom because He has the wisdom.

He is not looking for the plan because He has the plan.

He is looking for a vessel.

He is looking for availability not ability. Because He has the ability. God is able to do far more abundantly than you can ask or think according to the power that is at work within you. Now to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

What others think is not as important as what God does. What Philip and Andrew thought was not as important as the boy's availability and participation. What Philip and Andrew thought was not as important as Jesus' ability.

Giving your all does matter. It appears the lad gave all he had because that is what Jesus asks. He gave all that he had, but he had all that he wanted to eat.

Whoever saves his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save his life. Mark 8:35

#### God's purpose is greater.

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 10-14

Peter, along with his disciple brothers, learned the lesson of provision. God is Jehovah Jireh, which means the God who provides. Peter observed several things about how God provides.

Jesus provided personally.

Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; 11

He took the food and distributed it himself. This is the key to the miracle "Jesus then took the loaves." Jesus makes all the difference in the world. If Jesus was not there, no miracle occurs. Always remember who the star of the show and it is not you nor me. We want the touch of Jesus, the hand of Jesus, the work of Jesus.

Jesus provided sufficiently.

...likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. When they were filled,... 11-12

Jesus is sufficient. His grace is abundant. His provision is more than enough. Jesus satisfies. The world and the things of it never satisfy. We think if only we made more money or our kids got out of trouble or something else we will be satisfied. But we are never satisfied with the things of this world nor circumstances. Only Jesus satisfies. Only Jesus is sufficient. In the end, only Jesus matters.

Adam and Eve were in paradise and perfection. They had everything they needed and more. But they were not satisfied with God and they fell into sin.

Jesus provided miraculously and generously.

When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 12-13

Jesus transforms a little into a lot. He takes our little and can make it a lot. There was food left over-12 baskets of barley loaves.

Again, like the miracle at the wedding of Cana, probably not everyone knew where the food came from. With that many people, some may not have been able to see or hear what was going on right at that moment. Some probably only wanted to make sure they got something to eat.

See the miraculous and generous hand of Jesus. Do you see it? Are you aware of it? Some of you have grown up with all your needs being met with little hardship. You could be taking for granted the miraculous and generous hand of God over your life. When you do not see His hand, you become ungrateful and entitled and dissatisfied. When you see His hand and His generosity, you will be grateful. You will be amazed. You will be filled with joy.

Jesus provided purposefully.

Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 14

Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal. John 6:27

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst." John 6:35

Jesus is spiritual bread. Jesus is sustaining bread. Jesus is satisfying bread. Jesus is saving bread.

## What lessons on provision that Peter learned resonate with you? How have you seen God provide for you and your family?

The greatest thing Jesus gave them that day was not fish and bread, but it was faith.

One defining experience of Peter with Jesus was walking on water in the storm on the Sea of Galilee.

#### Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

Jesus led His disciples into danger while He went up to the mountain to pray.

The disciples were in a storm and according to other Gospel writer accounts, they were very afraid.

Jesus walks on the water out to them. Initially, the disciples were afraid of Jesus walking out to them on the water. Some thought it was a ghost.

Jesus spoke to the disciples which calmed them. They recognized His voice.

This event is one that Peter shared with his disciple brothers, but it is also one in which he literally stepped out alone. It was specific and particular for Peter.

Peter had a vision of joining Jesus on the water. He asked Jesus to command him to come out of the boat into the water. In some ways, we must commend Peter by exercising faith in the command of Jesus. Peter did not want to get out on the water if Jesus was not going to be with him and for him in this risky adventure. It could also be argued Peter wanted to be where Jesus was. It was not just the thrill of walking on the water, but it was to be where Jesus is. He was willing to abandon the safe boat so he could be with Jesus.

#### Discuss Peter's desire to be with Jesus, to stand with Jesus, and risk for Jesus.

Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus. The text then says, "...seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink..." He first took his eyes off Jesus and began to "see the wind." Jesus was better and stronger than the wind, but Peter could not be looking at Jesus and the wind at the same time. The wind reminded Peter of his weakness and lack of command over the wind. His focus on the wind led to fear. And then his fear led to him sinking. A lack of faith gives way to fear and to sinking.

Discuss the sinking of Peter. What caused his sinking? How does what Peter did, stepping out of the boat in faith and then in a matter of moments sinking, compare with what you have done? Be specific about a time you started out in faith but ended up in fear.

The only solution to sinking is to cry out to Jesus. That is exactly what Peter did. He cried out to Jesus. The text says, "he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'" The content of his cry is significant. "Lord, save me!" He first called Jesus Lord. With all Peter's faults, the one thing he understood and believed is Jesus is Lord. Knowing Jesus first and foremost will be enough to get you out of your mess. His next words were "Save me!" He was not looking for just a little help. He knew he needed to be saved. He was in over his head. He was incapable of overcoming gravity to stay afloat. He was unable to swim out of the grip of the storm. He needed an all-out rescue squad to save him.

#### Discuss the biblical action of crying out to God. Who else in Scripture has cried out to God?

#### What does a biblically appropriate cry out to God include?

Jesus took Peter's hand, ushered him into the boat, and rebuked him for having little faith. It is always a matter of faith. Before we get too down on Peter, let us consider a few things. First, Peter did walk on the water. He did sink, but before sinking, he experienced the miracle of walking on water.

What did Jesus do in response to Simon Peter's cry out to Him? What has Jesus done for you when you have cried out to Him?

Also, Peter was the only disciple to walk on water. So, he indeed was the leader. Although he was rebuked by Jesus for having little faith, he had more faith than all the other disciples. Not only was he the first one to get out of the boat, but he was also the only one to get out of the boat.

Discuss the reality of Peter being the only disciple to step out on the water. Consider David was the only one who faced Goliath. Discuss the idea someone has to go first.

In Peter's case, no one went second. Peter's action did not lead to a movement of walking on water. What is the significance of Peter walking on water, albeit it not lasting long? Was his walking on water a failure or an exercise of great faith?

Another personal experience Peter had with Jesus was what we call the Transfiguration.

#### Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

This is one of the occasions Jesus distinguished between the three disciples He was closest to and the other nine disciples. Peter, James, and John were taken by Jesus up to what we call the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, as always in Scripture, is listed first in the list of disciples. Jesus pulled "the rock" and the "sons of thunder" away from the others on two other occasions: Jesus healing Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56) and in the Garden of Gethsemane. The reason for pulling these three aside is mostly speculation on our part. But it is reasonable to consider they were destined for particular leadership roles in the future church planting movement.

Some certainly believe Jesus' statement in Matthew 16:28 pertaining to some standing here will not die until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Most early scholars believe this mountain is Mount Tabor. Mount Herman has also been proposed. Recent scholars tend to suggest Mount Meron which is the highest mountain in Israel as the best suggestion. There is a location today we visit as this possible sight. The Catholic Church, like many sites in Israel, have built a church on what they consider this holy site.

The precise site is not as important as that it actually happened. In general, most scholars believes this was glimpse into the future glory of Jesus that is on the way.

#### What happened?

Matthew records very succinctly and specifically Jesus was "transfigured." The word is where we get our word "metamorphosis" from. It means to be transformed. It is an agrist passive verb that speaks that Jesus did not transform Himself, but He was transformed. Basically, what we know is His appearance changed. Certainly, Jesus did not change from His essence because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light 2

His skin and clothes shine with dazzling brilliance and whiteness, suggesting glory, sovereignty, and purity.<sup>1</sup>

Then, Moses and Elijah appeared with them talking to Jesus. What an amazing experience the Lord Jesus was giving Peter, James, and John.

Then, Peter opened his mouth.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 4

Instead of basking in the glory of the moment and listening to learn what he could, Peter had to say something. I have been around long enough, and around preachers in particular long enough, to witness people who often speak when they have absolutely nothing to say or offer. I have known some people who are like clockwork. When given the opportunity, whether an open microphone or just the cordial "Does anyone want to add anything to the discussion," you can always count on them to say something. That is Peter. It is hard to believe Peter would interrupt a conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah like he had something to contribute.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Blomberg, C. (1992). *Matthew* (Vol. 22, p. 263). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Consider being aware when there is a movement of God or a God moment that is to be experienced and not explained or expressed. Not only was it a mistake for Peter to speak, but it was a mistake in what he said. Our intentions are to discuss the great confession of Peter in the next lesson. Along with the great confession comes the great rebuke. Peter got the confession right, but honestly, he got a lot wrong. This is another one of those times.

Unlike with my friends and associates who keep speaking when they have little or nothing to contribute, Peter is interrupted "while he is still speaking" to leave no doubt he had even more to say. A bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice spoke out of the cloud distinguishing Jesus unique from all. "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well-pleased. Listen to Him." This is the same statement from heaven given at Jesus' baptism. Then the clear instruction and command, "Listen to Him." Do not listen to Moses. Do not listen to Elijah. Certainly, do not listen to Peter. Listen to Jesus.

This instruction was enough to cause the disciples to fall face down on the ground. Peter is not mentioned specifically again in this section. He fades into the group.

Fortunately for them, Jesus is gracious and comes to them and tells them to get up and not be afraid. That is a common word from Jesus to His disciples through the ages and in this age. He is telling Valiant Warriors everywhere to get up and do not be afraid. The Holy Spirit is saying, "Listen to Him."

Discuss a special time when you experienced the presence of the Lord in an unusual way.

Discuss a time when you think you missed a great opportunity when the Lord was doing something incredible.

What are some reasons we do not see or experience special times of worship and awakening related to the Lord?

#### What did Peter do wrong in this opportunity with the Lord?

Another unique experience Simon Peter shared with the Sons of Thunder and Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

Matthew's account of the Garden only mentions Peter by name and does so first, as always, in Scripture. Jesus was grieved and distressed. He asked these three to stay with Him and keep watch with Him. While He was in the depths of grieving prayer, He discovered these three had fallen asleep. My thoughts are let someone else have a chance. These guys have blown a great opportunity. When he found them sleeping, he spoke to Peter as the leader. He questioned them with a rhetorical question, "You cannot stay awake and keep watch for Me for one hour?" He warned them about the weakness of their flesh and the possibility of falling into temptation. He found them a second and third time sleeping instead of watching or praying. After the third time, the time to pray was done. His betrayal was at hand.

Obviously, the three times of falling asleep accompanied by the warning of falling into temptation brings to mind the three denials of Peter. While our study is about Peter and we are focusing on the repeated flaws of his followship of Jesus, James and John also were falling asleep. It appears from this text Jesus is expecting more of Peter. The three times falling asleep precede three denials, which follow three questions "Do you love Me?" followed by "Feed My sheep." The number three is a significant number in Scripture and certainly plays an important role in the life and ministry of Peter.

Discuss the significance of the number three in Peter's life.

Discuss the struggle of extended prayer.

Discuss the connection between struggling in prayer and falling into temptation.

How would you explain the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak?