

COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION
ON
PETER AND THE FIRST EPISTLE THAT BEARS HIS NAME

CONVERSATION PLAN for Thursday – October 16, 2014

Session #1 – *“An Introduction to the Life of the Apostle Peter”*

GENERAL INTRODUCTIONS: *Who are we gathered together today in fellowship and study?*

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 16:13-19 – (GOOD NEWS BIBLE – TEV)

“Jesus went to the territory near the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’

‘Some say John the Baptist,’ they answered. ‘Others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet.’

‘What about you?’ he asked them, ‘Who do you say I am?’

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

‘Good for you, Simon son of John!’ answered Jesus. ‘For this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.’”

UNISON PRAYER: ALMIGHTY GOD, YOU INSPIRED SIMON PETER TO CONFESS JESUS AS THE MESSIAH AND SON OF THE LIVING GOD. KEEP YOUR CHURCH FIRM ON THE ROCK OF THIS FAITH, THAT IN UNITY AND PEACE IT MAY PROCLAIM ONE TRUTH AND FOLLOW ONE LORD, YOUR SON, OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN. *(The Prayer of the Day for the Festival of The Confession of St. Peter – January 18th)*

SHARING OF PEACE BY GOD’S PEOPLE

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION:

- to share with others our prior knowledge, ideas, and attitudes about the Apostle Peter; and, in our interaction, to strengthen our SAKLC fellowship;
- to further enhance our basic knowledge of Peter by viewing an ELCA produced video;
- to mutually explore parts of Peter’s life that offer inspiration and/or raise questions for us, as contemporary Christians.

A) WHAT DO WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT PETER?

1. Given your present knowledge and using the blank space immediately below, write as many adjectives that you can think of to describe the Apostle Peter..... (share!)

2. In your estimation, why do you think Jesus chose Peter as a disciple? (briefly record your answer[s]below ... share)

B) YOUR FACILITATOR’S REASONS and VISION FOR THIS EXTENDED CONVERSATION ON PETER:

1. Why focus on Peter?

- a) his humanness; a man filled with successes and failures

- b) his role ?

- c) sharing a memorable quotation – ***“After the name of our Lord Himself, no name comes up so often in the Four Gospels as Peter’s name. No disciple speaks so often and so much as Peter. Our Lord speaks oftener to Peter than to any other of His disciples; sometimes in blame and sometimes in praise. No disciple is so pointedly reprovved by our Lord as Peter, and no disciple ever ventures to reprove his Master but Peter. No other disciple ever so boldly confessed and outspokenly acknowledged and encouraged our Lord as Peter repeatedly did; and no one ever intruded, and interfered, and tempted Him as Peter repeatedly did also. His Master spoke words of approval, and praise, and even blessing to Peter, the like of which He never spoke to any other man, And at the same time, and almost in the same breath, He said harder things to Peter than He ever said to any other of His twelve disciples, unless it was to Judas.”*** (Alexander Whyte: Bible Characters from the New Testament – vol. 1 pg. 46, Keats Publishing, 1981)

2. What to anticipate in these weekly sessions about Peter?

- a) Why we begin our study with the Gospels, Acts, and the use of videos, and not in **1st Peter**?

- b) Why 2nd Peter is not also included in the overall study?

- c) clarification about authorship ... the role of Silvanus {POSSIBLY EVEN LUKE} (see I Peter 5:12-14) as an Amanuenses {A PERSON TO WHOM PETER MADE KNOWN HIS IDEAS AND WHOSE FINISHED WORK PETER APPROVED}

- d) Information about video presentations in Sessions 1, 2 & 3; *they are freely available on the internet for your subsequent private viewing:*
“The Life of Apostle Peter” with Rick Steves – www.elca.org/mosaic
“Peter and Paul” www.PBS.org/EMPIRES/PETERANDPAUL

C) **A TIME FOR VIEWING: “The Life of Apostle Peter” with Rick Steves** (29 minutes)

1. **Trinity Lutheran Seminary**, Columbus OH (ELCA) Professors interviewed are – **N. Clayton Croy; Joy A. Schroeder; Walter F. Taylor, Jr.**
2. **Rick Steves – PBS Travel host**; is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lynnwood, Washington (ELCA)

D) **YOUR PERSONAL EVALUATION and GROUP DISCUSSION of this video:**

1. Compare the adjectives you used to describe Peter with those heard on the video. *Any differences, additions, surprises?* (NOTE IN SPACE BELOW)

2. What parts of the life of Peter were new to you? (NOTE IN SPACE BELOW)

3. What parts of Peter’s life offer inspiration and/or raise questions for you? (NOTE IN SPACE BELOW)

E) **DIRECTED DISCUSSION ABOUT CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION(s):**

I - **Dr. Joy Schroeder** in the video said, ***“What we can draw from Peter is that even someone who is fallible, someone who can be a failure, is still chosen and accepted by Christ.”*** In fact, Simon ends up being renamed *Petros*, or “Rock” by Jesus.

- a) In your life, when have you seen failure (*BY INDIVIDUALS OR BY THE CHURCH*) used by God for good?

- b) How significant is Jesus’ renaming of Peter in the transformation of his character?

II – **Rick Steves** in the video points out that the Bible depicts Peter in ***“shockingly human terms; at times he’s a great orator, compromiser and bold professor of faith. At other times, he’s a timid, impetuous and lacking in faith.”***

- a) Where do you see and/or experience evidences of *“Peter-like-leadership”* in today’s church and society?

III – **Dr. N. Clayton Croy** said of Peter: ***“He is a guy who has fish scales on his hands, who wound up being handed the scales of ecclesial [church] justice by Jesus.”*** Yet, **Prof. Dr. Walter Taylor** points out that Peter probably, at great personal economic cost, abandoned a successful business to follow Jesus.

- a) Was Peter’s risk worth the reward in the end? What did he gain by changing his life’s course and pursuing a different path midway through that life?

- b) What ways are you personally stretched by your faith to abandon your own comfort zone and *“step out of the boat”* as Peter did with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee?

c) What are you willing to give up to be a follower of Jesus?

d) What are you willing to add to daily life to become a true follower of Jesus?

F) CHALLENGES FOR YOUR FURTHER CONTEMPLATION: (a further challenge when you are at home)

1. **Read Acts 10.** (*Peter's visit to Cornelius*) Take special notice of Peter's reliance on prayer as a discernment tool; appreciate and understand how he was transformed and received a new vision for mission from the Holy Spirit while he was praying.

a) How have you embraced God's call to be transformed through the power of prayer in your life?

b) How has the contemporary church included this "Call" to be transformed for mission by its practice of prayer in worship? ... in settings outside of regularly scheduled worship?

2. **Read Acts 2.** (*the account of Pentecost*). Fully appreciate Peter, as the *charismatic* speaker, who convinced 3,000 people to follow Jesus!

a) How is Peter's faithful example applied in today's community? ... by our church?

DISMISSAL:

GO IN PEACE TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD:

THANKS, BE TO GOD!

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S SESSION – OCTOBER 23, 2014 – Read Acts 2-4 (in multiple versions!)

Make Notes – on paper or mentally – of everything you read there about Peter – his role – his actions – his proclamation, etc.