

## "Do Not Fear...From Now On"

### I. Introduction

- A. I want to introduce you to someone you already know!
  - 1. This is a very special man...
    - a. Not in the sense that he is great, smart, important, or powerful
    - b. Not in the sense that he is worthy, or wise, or wealthy
      - In fact he's really none of those things...
  - 2. This man is special because of many different reasons
    - a. He is impulsive & repulsive - consistent & inconsistent - faithful & unfaithful - knowledgeable & ignorant - a leader & a deserter - a denier & a fighter - most of all he can fail without becoming a failure
    - b. Do you ever feel like a failure? - Yea...me too! Do you ever feel like you could fit into that description? Me too!

### II. Body

- A. (Luke 5:1 - 11) What do you do when you realize you've failed?
  - 1. Peter's encounter with Jesus - VIVIDLY!
  - 2. There are 2 things I love about this encounter with Jesus
    - a. I love what Jesus DIDN'T say to Peter:
      - "Simon, are you kidding? You're not only a sinful man, you have the foulest mouth of any sailor at sea! You curse more, say less, and threaten louder than any man alive. From the very start you have been putting both feet into your mouth. You're the one with the sorriest disposition. Your reputation is a disgrace. Your life is a mess and you can't even catch one fish with out a miracle from God!"
    - b. I love what Jesus DID say to Peter - Luke 5:10 "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

- "Do not fear...from now on..."

3. Applications:

- a. How many times have we been where Peter was?
  - Full of shame and disgrace
  - Feelings of hopelessness and unworthiness
  - Miserable with the anxiety that we know we haven't measured up to God's/anyone else's expectations
  - Complete and utter failures
- b. What do you do when you know you've failed?
  - Don't be afraid - why?
  - Because we serve a "from now on" God!
- c. We serve a God who not only CAN take our broken and frail lives and do wonderful things to His glory but one who actually WANTS TO!

4. The one who said, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" much later, would also write:

- a. 1Peter 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope..." (from now on!)
- b. At this moment, Peter understood both the greatness of his Master and the greatness of his weaknesses
  - He knew himself like you know yourself and I knew myself
  - But he also came face to face with the reality that he could be accepted despite his many failures
- c. If Jesus could see greatness in Peter despite Peter - I wonder if He can do the same for you and me too.

B. (Matthew 14:22 - 33) What do you do if you start off great but then fail miserably?

1. Peter's story here - VIVIDLY!
2. There are 2 things I love about this strange encounter on the water

a. I love what Jesus DIDN'T do:

- "You idiot! What did you think? A little wind is going to make much difference to a guy STANDING ON WATER? Save you? You bet - let Me hold you under that windswept water a little bit longer so you'll never forget THIS lesson on faith! You can see wind but you can't see the evidence of My power? I'll teach you to doubt..."

b. I love even more what Jesus DID DO:

- Peter cried out, "Lord, save me..." - and you know what? He did!
  - Not after a few minutes of floundering
  - "Immediately"
- And then - as if for Simon's own benefit - He asks, "Why did you doubt?"

3. Applications:

a. How many times have we been where Peter was?

- We start out good - high visions - great aspirations - big dreams of success...
  - "This time will be different"
  - "This time I will overcome"
  - "This time I will conquer"
  - "This time I will be victorious"
- But then something happens:
  - Life begins to swell and threaten
  - And suddenly, you don't have enough time, strength, energy, or faith to be victorious today
- Begin to sink like a stone in the depths of despair and failure
  - Can you relate?

- Know anyone who starts out strong but ends up weak? - I do!
- b. What can we do when we start out strong but end up weak?
- Remember what Jesus has already said:
    - "Don't be afraid...from now on"
  - We don't need to be afraid to step out on our faith again because we know He is capable of catching us when we fall
  - And, from now on "fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith..." Hebrews 12:2
    - It seems it's when we see the threatening winds of life and take our focus off of Christ we lose our endurance and fail!
4. The one who doubted and cried out, "Lord save me!" also said much later...
- a. 1Peter 1:13 "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"
  - b. Peter started strong but ended weak - but Peter kept on starting out, he didn't quit - we need to keep on starting out too - no mater how many times we fail
- C. What do you do when you make great boasts but end up denying the Lord?
1. Mark 14:26-31 (READ) Peter's great boasts
    - a. Is he us – are we him?
    - b. We can talk a big talk of faith and sacrifice sometimes ...
    - c. Can we deliver on our great promises?
  2. Mark 14:32-37; 39-40; 41 (READ) Peter can't give Jesus one hour let alone lay down his life
    - a. Is he us – are we him?

- b. We make a great proclamation of faith but then the Lord requires something seemingly small and we can't deliver
  - c. "Lord I'll die for you!" Great! – sit with this Brother on his bed of affliction...
- 3. Mark 14:50 (READ)
  - a. Are they us – are we them?
  - b. We often claim Christ in a group of those with like-minded faith
  - c. But when Jesus' identity and character are questioned we flee into the darkness –
- 4. Mark 14:53-57; 65 (READ) While his Lord is maligned and scorned – Peter sits silently warming himself...
  - a. Is he us – are we him?
  - b. Are there times when we too "follow at a distance"?
  - c. Do we boast of a great dedication to our Lord yet we're really just another face in the crowd...?
  - d. Another silent partner with those who would seek to destroy Him?
- 5. Mark 14:66-72 (READ)
  - a. *Luke 22:59-62 After about an hour had passed, another man {began} to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*
  - b. Is he us – are we him?
    - (EARLIER) Luke 22:31-34 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded {permission} to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith

may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.

- “turn again – strengthen your brethren”
  - Is he us – are we him?
  - Have you denied Christ?
  - Have you wept bitterly?
  - Have you turned again?
  - Have you strengthened your brethren?

6. What do you do when you make a bold statement and end up with a bold faced denial of the Lord?

a. It's good to express sorrow for sin - there are two types - only one is good for the soul:

- Matthew 27:3 - 5 (READ)
- Matthew 26:75 "And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, 'Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly."

b. 2Corinthians 7:10 "The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death."

- Godly sorrow sees sin as it is and allows for a positive change for life - repentance!
- Worldly sorrow shows remorse only for the consequences of sin and leads to death
- James 4:9 "Be miserable and mourn and weep..."

c. Remember Jesus' words, "Do not fear...from now on!"

- We don't have to be afraid when we fail as long as we will press on towards God - from now on!
- We can be thankful that we serve a "from now on" God

7. The one who said, "I do not know the man..." also said (1Peter 3:13-18)

### III. Conclusions

#### A. Simon Peter was a special man - in that he was just like we are!

##### 1. How's that?

- a. He was both a great & shallow man; he was both humble and arrogant; he was both faithless and faithful...
- b. Most importantly - he had a way of failing without becoming a failure!

##### 2. From Peter we learn

- a. Not to be afraid when we fail
- b. But realize that we serve a "from now on" God
- c. To keep our focus on Jesus
- d. To weep for our failures - and repent - and grow
- e. To keep trying!

##### 3. If Jesus can use Peter with all his blunders, failures and weaknesses - he can take my life and make something great to His glory

#### B. Invitation!