

# *Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant*

## #31 Disciples Before Pentecost

### Jesus's Disciples While He Lived Among Them

1. They possessed the consciousness of their discipleship and their authority from Christ.
2. They were converted, forgiven, had fellowship with Christ, had the gift of teaching and worked miracles BEFORE Pentecost.

### Characteristics Of Disciples While Jesus Was On Earth Among Them

1. Disputes: Who should be the greatest in the kingdom? They agreed to ask Jesus.

Matt. 18:4 "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom."

Mark 9:35 If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Luke 9:48 "He who is least among you all - he is the greatest."

Truth: The chief distinctive trait in His heavenly kingdom will be Humility.

2. Matt. 20:20-28 Sons of Zebedee and their mother - Let us have the first and highest places - seats on the right hand and the left of Jesus in glory. Jesus replied that it was not His to give but the Father's, who would give it to those for whom it was prepared.

Matt. 20:27-28 Whoever desires to become great, let him be your servant.

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.

Ponder: Our desire must be for the Holy Spirit to immerse us with the humility of Jesus.

3. Last Supper -STILL: Contention about who should be counted the greatest

Luke 22:26-27 "I am among you as one who serves."

Truth: The path Jesus walked, which He opened up for us, the power through which He wrought our salvation and by which He saves us, is the HUMILITY that makes us the servant of all.

Phil. 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

<sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

### Early Signs And Moments Of Humility Before The Lord:

1. Luke 5:2-3 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> And Jesus entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

- Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> command to Simon Peter: Thrust out a little from the land.

Luke 5:4-11 -When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

- Fishermen knew the best way to catch fish in the Sea of Galilee: Catch fish at night in the shallow water, not in the daytime in the deep water.

- What Jesus told Peter to do was contrary was contrary to all of his training and experience as a fisherman.

<sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; Nevertheless, At Your Word I will let down the net." <sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." <sup>11</sup> So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

2. The disciples fell down and worshiped Him when He stilled the storm.

Mark 4:35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

- Jesus had spent the day teaching them His Word and the parables of the Kingdom.
- Practical test: how much had they learned? Hearing of God's Word is intended to produce faith. [Rom. 10:17] Faith must always be tested.

Mark 4:37-41 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? They feared exceedingly and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

- ❖ The storm came during a time of obedience, not disobedience.
- ❖ Disciples were frightened and thought Jesus was uncaring.

3 reasons they should not be afraid even though it seemed threatening:

1. Jesus had promised they were going to the other side. [Mark 4:35]
  - His commandments are always His enablements.  
Nothing can hinder the working out of God's plans.
2. The Lord Himself was with them.
3. They could see that Jesus was perfectly at peace even in the midst of the storm.
  - He slept because He rested confidently in His Father's will.

Ps. 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety  
Consider: How often in our trials are we prone to cry out, "Lord, don't You care?"

Note: Jesus did not stop with the calming of the elements.

The greatest danger was not the wind or waves: it was the UNBELIEF in their hearts.

Consider: Our greatest problems are within us, not around us.

- Jesus called them, "men of little faith."  
They had heard Him teach His Word and perform miracles.
- Unbelief caused the fear: Fear made them question His care.

- Hebrews 3:12 Beware of "an evil heart of unbelief."
- ❖ Lesson: Jesus can be trusted in the storms of life.

### Lessons from the Disciples' Actions Revealing the Place & Power of Self

There may be the enthusiastic and active practice of Christianity while humility is still lacking.

- They had a fervent attachment to Jesus.
- They had forsaken all to follow Him.
- The Father had revealed to them that He was the Christ of God.
- They believed in Him; they loved Him; they obeyed His commandments.
- When others fell away, they remained faithful to Him.
- They were ready to die with Him.

Truth: Deeper than ALL this devotion was the existence of an inner power of sin and selfishness. This power MUST be dealt with BEFORE they could be witnesses of the power of Jesus to save. It must be dealt with in me.

Example: Ministers, professors, evangelists, Christian workers, missionaries, teachers  
They may have many gifts of the Spirit that are manifested in their lives.

They may be a channel of blessing to many people.

BUT, if their true person could be tested and their true character revealed, it can be evident that the "grace of humility" as an abiding characteristic in their life, is rarely seen.

Oswald Chambers: Many today are spending and being spent in work for Jesus Christ, but they do not walk with Him.

Eliot: Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve. Nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of oneself.

It is a virtue that ONLY COMES in power when the fullness of the Holy Spirit makes me a partaker of the fullness of Jesus Christ who lives in me.

F.B. Meyer: The only hope of a decreasing self is an increasing Christ.

Reality: There is an inner power of sin and selfishness that must be dealt with in me.

External teaching and personal effort are POWERLESS to conquer pride or create the meek and lowly heart in me.

- ❖ The disciples had been in the training school of Jesus for 3 years.
- ❖ The main lesson from Jesus: Matt. 11:28-29 - Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- ❖ Countless times, Jesus had conveyed to the disciples, the Pharisees and the multitudes: Humility is the only path to the glory of God.
- ❖ He came as the Lamb of God in His divine humility.
- ❖ He unfolded to them the inmost secret of His life:  
Matt. 20:28 - "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."  
Luke 22:27 - "I am among you as one who serves."

- ❖ He had washed their feet and told them to follow His example.
- ❖ All was to little avail. What are they doing at the Last Supper?  
Still - contention as to who should be the greatest!

### Truths Regarding External Teaching & Personal Effort

- ❖ These men who had Jesus with them but not yet in them lacked stability, discernment and power.
- ❖ They had TRIED to learn His lessons; they firmly resolved NOT TO GRIEVE Him again. All in vain!

No outward instruction, not even from Christ himself. No argument, however convincing.

No sense of the beauty of humility, however deep...

No personal resolve or effort, however sincere and earnest *CAN CAST OUT PRIDE!*

Truth: Nothing works but: My new nature in its divine humility be revealed in power to take the place of the old nature. The Holy Spirit must have consent from an empty, clean and yielded vessel in absolute surrender so the very nature of Christ is appropriated in me.

His nature becomes my true nature.

John 3:27 A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Promise of God to know, reckon, yield and give thanks:

Point to Ponder: All Christ's teaching to His disciples, and all their vain efforts, were the necessary preparation for Him to enter them in divine power.

Now He would be able to give and be in them what He had taught them to desire.

### Peter: A Disciple Of Great Contrasts.

- He was enthusiastic, outgoing, gregarious, transparent, strong-willed, impulsive, and, at times, brash.
- Peter desperately wanted to do well and to do right in Jesus' eyes, yet he failed continually in his own strength and ability.
- Still, the Lord who chose him continued to mold him into exactly who He intended Peter to be.

### Dethroning Of Self: Peter

1. Peter was not in a fit state to follow Christ because he had not yet come to the end of himself.

John 13:36-38 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

<sup>38</sup> Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Luke 22:61-62 And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

<sup>62</sup> And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

1. This was a huge turning point in Peter's life.
2. Before Christ could fill Peter with the Holy Spirit, Peter had to weep bitterly and be humbled.

### Peter: A Picture Of A Devoted Disciple Of Christ

#### 1. Absolute Surrender

Matt. 19:27a Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee;

#### 2. Ready Obedience

Luke 5:4-5 - He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." Peter the fishermen knew after all night there were no fish there. <sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; Nevertheless, At Your Word I will let down the net."

He submitted to the word of Jesus.

#### 3. Man of Great Faith

When he saw Christ walking on the water, he said: Matt. 14:28 Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee." At the voice of Christ, he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water.

#### 4. Man of Spiritual Insight

Christ asked the disciples: "Whom say ye that I am?"

Matt. 16:15-17 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

### Yet Peter Lived The Life Of Self

1. Peter sought his own honor. In Matt. 18:1-5 and Mark 9:33-37, the disciples are questioning who is the greatest among them. Includes Peter
  - Peter left his boats and nets, but not his old self, nature.

Matt. 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Matt. 16:22-23 When Jesus spoke of His sufferings, Peter dared to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee." Christ said: "Get thee behind me Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that are of men."

- Peter in his self-will; trusting his own wisdom and forbidding Christ to go and die.

Matt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

- Prerequisite for following Jesus Christ. Self must be utterly denied.
- Denying self is the root of true discipleship.

Mark 14:30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Note: Matt. 16:24 Jesus said to Peter: Deny himself. Matt. 26:34 - Thou shalt Deny Me.

1. There is no other choice. We must deny self or deny Christ.
2. Self in the power of sin OR Christ in the power of God. One will rule you.
  - Peter's self-confident response: Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33

*And he said unto him, Lord, I Am Ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

- I am sure Peter meant it, but he had not come to the end of himself.
- When Peter denied Christ, he denied 3 times that he had any connection with Him.
- Although Peter had a firm intention to stand with Jesus in the hour of trial, he found himself totally without power to do it.

Truth: God desires to drive out the spiritual pride in our hearts.

- What are we to do with this FLESH that is under the Power of Sin?

Rom. 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Rom. 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom. 7:25-8:1 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### Peter's Repentance

Peter denied his Lord 3 times and then the Lord looked at him

- That look of Jesus broke Peter's heart
- The terrible sin he had committed
- The terrible failure that had come
- The depth into which he had fallen suddenly opened up before him
- "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

As a result of this tremendous shaking, all of Peter's self-confidence would be gone.

Consider: Can you imagine what his repentance must have been? During the following hours of that night and the next day, Peter saw Christ crucified and buried. "My Lord is gone; my hope is gone; and I denied my Lord."

This was the turning point and a change in Peter.

- On Resurrection Sunday, Firstfruits, the risen Christ was seen by Peter.
- During the 40 days before His Ascension, Christ was seen by Peter several times.
- At the Sea of Galilee, Jesus asked Peter, 3 times, "Do you love me?"
- Peter replied: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Recall: Before Christ could fill Peter with the Holy Spirit, Peter had to weep bitterly and be humbled. He is now ready for Pentecost.

Are you willing to be broken and humbled before Him?

The Christ who led Peter to Pentecost is waiting today to take charge of all who are willing for absolute surrender to Him.