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A Faithful Disciple

1. What is a faithful disciple? Is it one who is always completely faithful, never failing the Lord in any way; one who is always completely bold, every time they should be? Certainly not. For if it were, no person could ever be a faithful disciple. We all fail the Lord, at one time or another. We all get a little fearful at times, even though we really have no reason to. We are going to review the life of one of Jesus' disciples, who failed Him many times. But in spite of his failures, he turned out to be a faithful disciple. In spite of his anxiety, which he allowed to get out of hand once in a while; and in spite of the fact that he denied the Lord three times, he repented of his sin, and turned out to be a most faithful disciple. His name was Peter.

2. We read first, of the time when Peter was called by Jesus. In Luke 5:1-11 we read: "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He 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. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, **Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.** And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 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 was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, **Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.** And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him." Peter realized from the very beginning, that he was unworthy

to be a disciple of Jesus. Yet in spite of his unworthiness, and because of the words of Jesus, Peter gave up all that he had, and followed Jesus. How many of us, would be willing to just leave behind every thing we own, if we were asked to do so, in order to follow Jesus?

3. Peter followed Jesus every where that He went. He was also chosen by Jesus, to go with Him to the top of the mountain, at the time of his transfiguration. We read in Luke 9:28-36: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear Him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

4. We can also see that Peter was the only disciple who had enough courage, to attempt to walk out on the water to meet Jesus. Matt. 14:24-32 tells us: "But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, ***Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*** And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bit me come unto thee on the water. And He said, ***Come.*** And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, ***O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*** And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."

A. The wind was contrary. Greek-enantios (en-an-tee-os): to perform or to act in a way which shows resistance or causes conflict; a disasterous level of action.

B. In the fourth watch of the night. Greek-phulake (foo-lak-ay): a division of the night or day; probably a three hour period. Most likely, since the days usually began at around 6 P.M., this was probably between the hours of 3 A.M. and 6 A.M.

C. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were troubled. Greek-tarasso (tar-as-so): stirred up, or deeply upset; to become full of fear.

D. They said, it is a spirit. Greek-phantasma (fan-tas-mah): a ghost, speaking of a lightened being, appearing as someone who is evil, or of the devil, desiring to do harm.

E. Peter said, "If it be thou, bid me to come unto thee on the water." Greek-keleuo (kel-yoo-o): to give an order or command, or to give permission for something to take place.

F. When Peter saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid. Greek-ischusos (is-khoo-ros): mighty, powerful, strong, forceful, or destructive; to have ability to do destruction.

G. Jesus said to Peter, "***O thou of little faith, Wherefore didst thou doubt?***" Peter only acted like most any of us would act. He at first, cast his eyes upon Jesus. But when he heard the awful wind, he took his eyes off of Jesus, and started thinking of what might happen, and he began to sink. He evidently started having thoughts which were given him by the devil; such as, "You're going to sink."; or "It's all over for you buster. For you know perfectly well that you can't walk on water."; or "Oh no, I'm going to drown.". He started allowing the devil to fill his mind with all kinds of lies, and with fear and unbelief. Just as Peter should of done, every one of us must always keep our eyes upon Jesus. We read in Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so a great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Greek-perikeimai (per-ik-i-mahee): to lie all around, or to be in the presence of. A Christian is always among others who are witnesses to the life which they live, whether they realize it or not. Peter also was among others who were witnessing this great event. What a witness it would of been, if Peter had only kept his eyes upon Jesus. Jesus will always give us strength, through the Holy Spirit, if we only keep our eyes upon Him. Phil. 4:13 tells us: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We are also informed, that without Him, we can do nothing. John 15:5 tells

us: *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

5. Peter was always listening to the teachings of Jesus, desiring to learn more. He had a real hunger in his heart for the Word of God, and to develop a clearer understanding of it. We read in Matt. 15:15: “Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Declare unto us this parable.” Greek-phrazo (frad-zo): referring to defining, or to give understanding (unto the disciples).

6. Peter’s continual desire to learn more, helped him to gain the ability to receive divine revelation. We read in Matt. 16:13-20: “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, saying, ***Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*** And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, ***But whom say ye that I am?*** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, ***Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*** Then charged He his disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.”

What did Peter confess? He confessed that Jesus was the Christ; the Son of the living God. Jesus told Peter, that his flesh and blood had not given him this great revelation. Or in other words, Peter had not figured this out, with his own human mind. But it had been revealed unto him, by the heavenly Father, through the Holy Spirit; just as He reveals many things unto his people today. For the human mind does not have the capability of understanding many of the things of the Spirit. Jesus told Peter, that He would build his church upon this rock. What rock was He referring to? He was talking about the true confession which Peter had made; that Jesus was the Christ; the Son of the living God. What more solid of a rock, could the church have been built upon; than the positive fact, that Jesus is the Christ? Jesus also said that the “*gates of Hell*” shall not prevail against the church. This is simply a figure of speech which Jesus used, to make his point very clear; that nothing which Satan or any of his evil forces shall ever attempt to use against the church; or nothing which they shall ever attempt to do, to try to

harm the church, shall ever prevail. Greek-katischuo (kat-is-khoo-o): to be able to overpower, to have power which is lasting, or which will succeed (at any task which one may attempt). Jesus also told Peter, that He would give unto him the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. What did Jesus mean by this statement? What were the keys which Jesus was referring to? He was speaking of the preaching and the proclamation of the gospel of salvation, which He had come to provide; by the shedding of his blood, and by the giving of his own life; as the eternal sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Jesus gave Peter the total authority to proclaim the gospel; just as He has given unto every one of his children. We will see, that in spite of Peter's many failures; and even though he got fearful many times, he turned out to be a faithful disciple.

7. It was truly Peter's desire, to be a faithful disciple in every way. We read in Matt. 26:57-58: "And they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end."

A. The high priest. This is speaking of the head priest; the priest in charge of all the religious matters.

B. Scribes-Greek-grammateus (gram-mat-yooce): a writer of the church letters, or the church doctrines; a secretary or town-clerk. The scribes studied the scriptures, and served as teachers.

C. Elders-Greek-presbuteros (pres-boo-ter-on): the older or senior ones of the church; members of the Sanhedrin or the Presbyter (the high court).

D. High priest's palace. Greek-aule (ow-lay): speaking of an outside yard, or a mansion or hall. Truly, down in his heart, Peter wanted to be a faithful disciple. But he was afraid of what might happen, if he admitted to his acquaintance with Jesus. Was he afraid that just possibly they may take him too? Would they crucify him with Jesus? It sounds like Peter may of thought so. For just as many of us do, when he came to the point of really putting his faith to the test, he allowed the spirit of fear to have control.

He was afraid to admit, that he had been with Jesus. We read in Matt. 26:69-75: "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth

thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, ***Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*** And he went out, and wept bitterly.” They said that the speech of Peter *bewrayeth* thee. Hebrew-nagad (naw-gad): to manifest, or give evidence of (his knowledge of Jesus); to proclaim, speak, declare, confess, or to announce. Peter had been all over the country with Jesus; and he and the other disciples had been sent from town to town by Jesus, to preach the gospel. So how could he hardly confess, that he did not know Jesus? Peter really desired to be faithful. This fact we can be certain of, because of all the many great things which took place in his ministry, after he repented of his sin, and was empowered by the Holy Spirit. Peter was no different from any of us. We many times get fearful, when we come to a point of having to truly see how faithful we really are. Many times, we have to ask for God’s forgiveness, and get up and start again. But when God’s Holy Spirit empowers us, we will have the boldness we need, every time we need it; just as we will see happened to Peter, after he was filled with God’s Holy Spirit. We have evidence of this in Acts 1:14-21, which tells us: “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty), Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.” We also read in Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” And in Acts 3:1-10, we read: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.” And Acts 4:1-13 tells us: “And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came unto them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole? Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

8. Many people could see the power of God revealed in Peter. We have evidence of this in Acts 5:12-15: “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to

the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” We also read in Acts 9:38-41: “And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.” This reminds us of what Jesus told us in Matt. 7:20: “*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*” Truly, we will be recognized by the spiritual fruit which we bear; or by what people see in our lives.

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9. Being a truly faithful disciple, may sometimes bring persecution upon us; just as it did Peter. We read in Acts 12:1-10: “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was

come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.” We can also see, that as long as we try to be a faithful disciple, and keep our trust in our heavenly Father, that He will never forsake us. He will bring deliverance from every trap of Satan, just as He did for Peter. He told us in Hebrews 13:5: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Even though Paul is referring in this verse, to the blessed provisions of our heavenly Father, it also applies to our protection, our health, and every area of our lives.

Conclusion:

Are you being a faithful disciple? In spite of how many times we fail the Lord, his forgiveness is always available to us. Just as Peter had to repent of sin many times, he still became a faithful disciple; a powerful instrument in the army of God. If you have failed the Lord in your faithfulness, it could be no worse than the failures of Peter. Let us all become faithful disciples; living a life filled with prayer, spending time in solitude before God, studying and meditating upon the Word of God, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. *Calvin Smith*

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