

Peter

Peter was a fisherman based in the northern Galilean town of Capernaum. He was an ordinary guy, earning a living from a pretty ordinary job. He was married (Jesus healed his mother-in-law and his wife, according to one of Paul's letters, went with him on his missionary trips [1 Corinthians 9:5]). His name was Simon but Jesus named him Peter meaning 'rock'. Jesus said to Peter, "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18). This ordinary fisherman was the guy that Jesus saw as the starting point of his church, the guy who became the first church leader. He is now known as St Peter, but as we discover more about him we will find that just as he got it right in many ways he also got it very wrong at times. Peter in his ordinariness can be a big encouragement to each one of us as we continue on our journeys of faith.

Day	Title	Bible Passage
April 15th	Peter the rock?	Matthew 16:18-19
April 22nd	Peter – called	Mark 1:14-20
April 29th	Trust, Faith, doubts	Matthew 14:22-33
May 6th	Peter gets it very right and very wrong	Mark 8:27-33
May 13th	Peter's shame and failure	John 18:15-18, 25-27
May 20th	Peter's excitement and restoration	John 21:1-19
May 27th	Peter Transformed	Acts 2: 1-40
June 3 rd	Peter's vision	Acts 10: 1-48
June 10th	Peter's letter & encouragement	1 Peter 1:3-5, 13-16; 4:7b-11, 1 Peter 5:7

April 15th
Peter the rock

- Matthew 16:18-19

On whom Jesus says he will build his church.

We are part of the church of God – wouldn't be here unless Peter

Peter a special man yet an ordinary man – married (Mk1:30), wife went with him on missionary trips (1 Cor 9:5)

Distinctive Galilean accent – northern!

Impulsive, tendency to rash decisions.

April 22nd
Calling of Peter to follow Christ

John 1: 35-42

John's account suggesting there was a period of Christ's activity before he called the disciples to follow him. The introduction from Andrew may well have been the first step before the actual call to follow in Mark.

Mark 1:14-20

Peter was a fisherman – ordinary man doing an ordinary job to earn a living.

He lived on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum.

He responded to Jesus, followed him, responded to God's call on his life and we are witnesses to that.

Peter chose to follow Jesus when the opportunity was given to him.

Who do we follow? What do we follow? Football team, fashion, ipod, the right mobile phone, the crowd.

Willing to follow Jesus?

Willing to let God take a lead?

What does that mean for us if we say yes to God?

Following Jesus where he takes us, listening, learning, seeing God.

For Peter it was life changing. What about for us?

April 29th
Peter walks on Water

Matthew 14:22-33 Trust, Faith, doubts

- Peter, along with the other disciples was frightened when he saw what they thought was a ghost walking across to them on the water.
- Jesus was near enough to them, despite the wind, to be able to shout across and reassure them.
- They all realised it was Jesus but Peter was the one who was willing to go further than the others.
- He was the one who in seeing Jesus doing what he was doing, decided he could trust Jesus – if Jesus called him, then he too could walk on the water – not because he could do it but because he could trust Jesus to do it through him.
- He steps out of the boat and all is fine until the reality of the situation hits him.
- The water is roughed up as we are told with the wind the waves are buffeting the boat (the wind does get up on Galilee and do this – for inland water it can get quite rough out there), the wind is blowing and he is... walking... on... water...!
- What is possible with God (Jesus) certainly isn't possible for humans and Peter now realises it and loses his absolute trust in Jesus... and sinks.
- Jesus reaches out and grabs him and brings him safely back to the boat.
- Peter's trust, faith wavers and it goes wrong.
- We all have doubts about faith.
- Hebrews 11:1 says "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."
- Notice in the midst of Peter's doubts how Jesus reaches out to save him, Jesus reaches out and takes Peter's hand in his.
- Peter represents the risk taking of faith.
- Christians learn to live with uncertainties.
- The knowledge of faith is not as certain as the knowledge of science, yet it speaks of realities that are of more ultimate importance than the things we can see and touch.
- What about our trust, our faith, our doubts?
- "Doubt: 1) more or less frequent visitor who should be allowed in when he knocks and sat down firmly in a corner. As long as he is neither fed nor entertained he will usually get bored after a while and go away 2) often a very useful stepping stone from one's old distorted image of God to something more like the real thing." Adrian Plass
- Can Jesus reach out to help us?
- Do we let him?
- We all from time to time experience rough patches in our lives (as the Sea of Galilee was roughed up) and do we see Jesus as reaching out to help us?

May 6th
Peter gets it very right and very wrong

Mark 8:27-33

- Jesus leads a discussion on who people think he is.
- After all he has been teaching, speaking and doing a good number of miracles.
- Enough to cause a stir.
- So some say John the Baptist (Herod had had John beheaded so this is either John returned from the dead or people mistaking Jesus for John).
- Some say Elijah – now Elijah is regarded as one of the great Jewish prophets – the bible in 2 Kings tells us that Elijah didn't die – he ascended to heaven, so there may well have been an expectation that he would return. Jesus though is neither John nor Elijah.
- Jesus then asks, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter blurts out you are the Christ or Messiah.
 - (Christ is the Greek version where Messiah is the Hebrew version of the same word).
 - Jews at the time of Jesus were waiting for the promised coming Messiah – the true king of Israel, the last true descendant of king David so here Peter is talking about the great new king of Israel.
 - He recognises who Jesus is, but doesn't really know deep down.
 - But Peter is very right about Jesus.

- However it all goes wrong as Jesus starts teaching about what is going to happen to him so we find Peter getting it very wrong – in next breath Jesus is telling him off for a mistake and not understanding what Jesus is really about.

- "Who do you say that I am?" A question Jesus asks us all...
- Understanding Jesus and who he really is –
 - more than just a human king,
 - more than just a good man,
 - more than a good teacher,
 - more than a wonder worker

- Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ.

- Who is Jesus for us?

May 13th
Peter's shame and failure

John 18:15-18, 25-27

- It was a tough situation. Peter had promised Jesus that he would go with him all the way and would never disown him (Mark 14:31) even to the point of death.
- Well when it came to it Peter didn't do that.
- He held back – he did go and follow the temple guards as they took Jesus away.
- He did get as far as the high priest's house but was waiting outside.
- In the end he had 3 chances to say yes he was with Jesus and 3 times he denied it.
- He kept his head down and denied that he had anything to do with Jesus.
- Jesus who had been his best friend for 3 years, Jesus, for whom he had left his fishing and followed where-ever he went, Jesus who he knew was a very special friend and person.
- When it came to it he wasn't willing to put his head above the parapet and stand up to be with his friend.

- Standing up for Jesus or not doing so...

- Standing out from the crowd and how difficult that is.

- ...being a Christian in secular society, at school...

- Have we ever been in a situation where someone has been unfairly treated (as Jesus was here) and just stood by and let it happen?

- Being willing to stand up for people, friends or things that matter.

- Being willing to stand up for the person who is being unfairly treated although it might be costly in front of our friends.

- Justice in the world? (inequality)

May 20th
Peter's excitement and restoration

John 21:1-19

- Peter is not sure what to do – is after Jesus has died and rose again.
- Peter has spent 3 years of his life following Jesus on the road. That has all changed now. Not sure of his direction.
- Goes back to what he knows best – fishing.
- Jesus makes a difference in his life again
- Excitement. So much so he jumps out of the boat into the water to rush ashore (Is Peter the one person ever to be recorded as putting his clothes on before jumping into the water?!)
- Jesus restores and commissions him.
- 3 times Jesus asks Peter the question and 3 times Peter answers.
- Peter is a bit put out by the third time, but not cross – saddened by having to answer a third time.
- 3 times Peter denied knowing Jesus, 3 times Jesus asks him here – enabling restoration, a new start in his life with Jesus
- Restoration - healing
- New start in life – do we ever wish we could start again? I bet Peter had done after that cock crowed once he had denied him.
- Jesus gives him the chance to start afresh – Jesus gives us the chance too.
- Not only a new start but a new commission.
- Sometimes God asks us too to do something new, something different, to change.
- To be willing to change and go for Him.

May 27th
Peter Transformed

Acts 2:1-40

- Events of Cross, Resurrection, Ascension had had huge effect on Peter, as had his 3 years of following Jesus.
- Now comes the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus
- Peter transformed in to powerful speaker and preacher
- All things learnt come together
- Quoting relevant Scripture
- Powerful in his speaking
- Knows what the next steps are for those listening to him
- Results over 3000 baptised that day - what a sight, experience
- Peter indeed the rock on which the Church, Christ's Church is being built.

June 3rd

Peter's vision

Acts 10: 1-48

- Peter is brought to a new understanding about life and the things of God's world
- Previously had a narrow view of who God related to
- Now has that view ripped apart and has to come to know God in a new way, a new understanding, learning that God sent Jesus for everyone, not just a special section of society.
- Peter had been going on with his old ways even if he had a new 'job' (leading the church).
- God here challenges Peter in the things in had been brought up with, the traditions got used to.
- We all have traditions in our families, schools, Kart Camp.
- Sometimes we can get wrapped up so much in them, we forget the reasons why they are there and lose the point.
- God shows and tells Peter in a vivid way that the tradition of kosher food is unnecessary now.
- To some extent Jesus had already said this – see Mark 7: 5-16.
- Peter discovers that the message of Jesus is for all people everywhere not just for Israel.
- A huge step for him – in fact one that he got into trouble for back in Jerusalem when he was summonsed to explain his actions.
- However in the midst of the shock Peter's view of God was enlarged and improved.
- David Watson (vicar and evangelist in 1970's-1980's said: "God will always be bigger than we can imagine, otherwise He would cease to be God.
- What's our vision of God? Is it big enough?
- How does Jesus enlarge our vision of God?
- We can get so tied up in the way we do things (e.g. Church) that we lose sight of what it is really about – worshipping God, spending time with God, spiritual nourishment.

June 10th
Peter's letter & encouragement

1 Peter 1:3-5, 13-16; 4:7b-11, 1 Peter 5:7

- Sending us out to live as Jesus wants us to
- Encouragement
- Hope

Peter

- Called to follow Jesus
- Has faith and has doubts
- Gets it very right and very wrong
- Let Jesus down
- Is restored by Jesus – new start
- Was given a new understanding

Peter and Us – We are

- Called to follow Jesus
- Has faith and has doubts
- Gets it very right and very wrong
- Let Jesus down
- Is restored by Jesus – new start
- Was given a new understanding

Peter's letter of encouragement

- You are coming to Christ, who is the living stone of God's temple.
- And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple.
- You are the people of God.
- Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7
- 'It is better to be a follower of Jesus who fails than one who fails to follow'