

Poor Peter — Blessed Peter

"...kept by the power of God..."

1 Peter 1:5

One of the most beloved followers of Jesus must surely be the apostle Peter. He has an appeal to the ordinary person that even the apostle Paul lacks.

Peter is rough, tough, always ready to speak even when his tongue gets him into trouble (Matthew 16:22-23), and though he does deny his beloved Master (Matthew 26:58, 69-75), we all know Peter loved Jesus dearly (John 21:15-17).

What is our fascination with Peter? Why do we feel more easily drawn to him than to a Paul or John? Surely we can often see ourselves in Peter with his spiritual ups and downs.

Peter could do so well and then crash so sadly in the next scene. As we read of Peter's adventures we see a frail man who seeks to be great for his Master and yet, like us, he often misses the mark.

The night in which Jesus was betrayed, Peter heard Jesus in the Upper Room say that He was going away and they could not come. Peter immediately blurted out the words,

"Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." (John 13:37 NIV) Within hours Peter would deny Jesus 3 times. But Peter was right at some level because many years later—when he had matured in the faith—he did lay down his life for his beloved Master (John 21:18-19)

We see Peter at the fore in the record of the infant church, Acts 1-11. But Luke leaves off telling the story of Peter for the sake of recording Paul's work. Some of us can feel that we have made a great start in our Christian life but others surpass us and we are left out of the running. There is no record of Peter complaining at Paul's ultimate leadership in the early church.

We witness the amazing sermon of Peter in Acts 2 where about 3,000 people from all over the world of the east were converted. We wonder who might be able to top that! Then we read with sorrow about the meeting between Paul and Peter recorded in Galatians 2:11 where Paul rebuked Peter publically for his hypocrisy with the Gentiles. Peter rose so high and falls so low.

Perhaps one of my readers today feels a little like Peter. You have had successes in working for Jesus but then you have tumbled down to a low level. You have had "Peter experiences" and you wonder if it is worth trying again. You think you should just give up and forget the whole Christianity bit.

Never think of giving up. Yes, Peter failed at times very miserably but his story is told to us in order that we might rise again as he did and go on for the Lord who died for us. Peter really knows the truth of our verse today. It was God keeping him, not Peter keeping himself. Go back to the Saviour you love today and ask Him to lift you up once more. Peter has some great failures but he was kept by the power of God so that he finished well and honoured his Master at the last. Keep the faith and trust the Lord. He will carry you through to a great and glorious conclusion.

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