



**A Simplified Look at a
Complicated Belief**

Part III

The New Testament

Session 17

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Module 3:

The New Testament

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UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Part 17 – Simon Peter’s Journey of Faith

Simon the Fisherman meets Jesus (John 1:40-42)

This was the first occasion on which Simon met Jesus. In verse 42 we read that Jesus “gazed intently” at Simon. What did Jesus see in Peter? We have no physical description of Peter in the Bible, but we do learn the following:

- He was a fisherman (in partnership with his brother Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, James and John, the Sons of Thunder)

- His name was Simon bar-Jonah, so his father’s name was Jonah (we do not know his mother’s name)

-He had no formal education, but as a Jewish boy he would have studied the Old Testament from age five

13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

-Acts 4:13 NLT

-He was married

14 When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. -Matthew 8:14 NLT

Jesus gave Simon a new name

- Jesus uses the future tense – “you will be called Peter” – in other words Jesus is saying this is who Simon will become (not who he is now)
- Jesus was going to change an ordinary fisherman...Simon into a rock on which He could build ...Peter..*Greek word, (Petros)* meaning "stone".
- Simon Peter is always named first in the lists of the 12 in the Gospels (Judas, the betrayer, was always last), as he became their leader
- Other people in Bible were given new names (e.g. Abram became Abraham, and Jacob became Israel)
- Each of these people received new role in God's plan with their new name.

Simon Peter walks to Jesus on the water

-Christ had just miraculously fed over 5000 people using two fish and five loaves of bread. He then commanded the disciples to go out in their boat, and they obeyed.

28 Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.” 29 “Yes, come,” Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

32 When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

-Matthew 14:28-33 NLT

-Faith is taking Christ at His word

Jesus calls Simon Peter to be a Fisher of Men (Luke 5:1-11)

-These events happened around one year after Simon first met Jesus. Over the past year Simon had combined his fishing business with following Jesus

-He had seen Jesus performing many miracles, including healing his own mother-in-law

- ³⁸ After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged.³⁹ Standing at her bedside, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at once and prepared a meal for them. -Luke 4:38-39 NLT

-Jesus performed the first of two miracles of catching many fish

LESSONS TO LEARN: Jesus changes people.

-He always sees the potential of what a person can become when God works in their lives. He is able to transform us so that we become something special in God's plan if we will follow Him

-We do not need to be afraid of God if we are humble and admit our need for Him

-Despite our sinfulness, Christ tells us not to be afraid, and invites us to know and follow Him

-With Jesus what seems impossible becomes possible. We can always trust in Jesus

LESSONS TO LEARN:

-Jesus does not promise a problem-free life for people who follow Him

-It is not the amount of faith we have that saves us, but who our faith is in.

-Many people have faith in different people or ideas, but their faith will not save them if they are trusting in something that doesn't have power to save them.

-Believing in something does not make it true. In reality the things we often depend on are little more trustworthy than water – our own health, financial security, career etc. Only Jesus is completely trustworthy.

-Jesus will not allow His followers to sink, even if their faith is weak – He will keep them safe

Key Questions:

- What does faith in Jesus look like?
- Is there hope for people who fail?
- Is there anyone who cannot be saved?

Simon Peter recognizes who Jesus is (Matthew 16:13-26)

-This discussion occurred near Caesarea Philippi, the Roman capital of Judea

-Jesus' ministry had reached a turning point – He had been rejected in his home town (Capernaum)

-John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod

-His family thought He was mad; and opposition from the Jewish religious leaders was growing as they began to plot His death

-Against this background Jesus asked his disciples who people thought He was

-¹⁵ Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

-Matthew 16:15,16 NLT

Then Jesus made an amazing promise to Simon –

Together with the other apostles Peter would become the foundation of Christ's church

²⁰ Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

-Ephesians 2:20 NLT

Then Jesus presented an amazing challenge to anyone who wanted to be His disciple.

The **ONLY** way to follow Him is by the way that He Himself would take – the way of the cross.

Anyone who wants to follow Him must deny themselves and take up their cross, dying to their right to rule their own life.

LESSONS TO LEARN:

-The central question of the Bible is the one Jesus asked –

-who do you say Jesus is?

-If He is really the Son of God, then He cannot be ignored

-Everyone who will follow Simon Peter in putting their faith in Christ will become a “living stone”

-Christ will build them into His plan, and into the new community of His people (the Church)

-To follow Jesus means to deny ourselves and take up our cross.

-This means we must die to your own rights and submit to God’s will for our life. This is what the Bible means by repentance and faith

Simon Peter witnesses Jesus' majesty (Matthew 17:1-8)

17 Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. ² As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. ³ Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵ But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him." ⁶ The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

⁷ Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸ And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus

-Matthew 17: 1-8 NLT

LESSONS TO LEARN:

This occasion (which is often called the “Transfiguration”) confirmed several things about Jesus:

-Jesus is the Son of God – the Father said this, and the glory He shone with proves it

-The Old Testament points to Him and His death

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. ⁹ He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

-Isaiah 53:7 NLT

-He was perfect and sinless – the Father could say that He was fully pleased with Jesus

Simon Peter denies Jesus

-⁵⁴ So they arrested him and led him to the high priest's home. And Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ The guards lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter joined them there. ⁵⁶ A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she said, "This man was one of Jesus' followers!"

⁵⁷ But Peter denied it. "Woman," he said, "I don't even know him!"

⁵⁸ After a while someone else looked at him and said, "You must be one of them!" "No, man, I'm not!" Peter retorted.

⁵⁹ About an hour later someone else insisted, "This must be one of them, because he is a Galilean, too."

⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

-Luke 22:54-60 NLT

After the Resurrection Jesus restores Simon Peter (John 21:1-23)

1 Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened...

15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.”

“Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

16 Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

17 A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep... -John 21: 1,15-17 NLT

LESSONS TO LEARN:

-Jesus gives people a second chance after failure.

-He is ready to forgive if we repent and ask for forgiveness, and He will restore us into a good relationship with God and use us to accomplish God's purpose

Key Lesson:

-Jesus patiently leads people to trust in Him

-Peter's experience teaches us that Jesus is patient with people

-Despite our sin and weakness He sees the potential of who we can become in God's plan

-When we realize who He is and repent of our sin and commit our lives to Him, He will change us to become the person God wants us to be, and He will never give up on us even if we stumble and fail Him.

