

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 7- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Luke 6:12-16** 80- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 4 Peter- Part 1

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### **Luke 6:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> **It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.**

<sup>13</sup> **And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:**

<sup>14</sup> **Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;**

<sup>15</sup> **and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;**

<sup>16</sup> **Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

Now this is the passage where we are introduced to the men whom Jesus chose- above all the people on the face of the earth to be the Apostles of Jesus Christ. These are the men who were handpicked to carry on the Work of Jesus and the Ministry of Jesus with the Power and the Authority of Jesus to speak the Words of Jesus after Jesus Himself finished His Work and went back up into Heaven.

And as I said before- this choosing of these particular men is so very vital and so very important- that I am going to "camp" here for a while- on this passage- so that we can digest all that Luke is trying to tell us here.

We need to be reminded in our day of such amazing individualism and such unparalleled equal rights and so much freedom that after Jesus Christ Himself- these men did more and accomplished more than any group of men in the history of the world-

And according to what Luke tells us here in verse 12- Jesus spent all night long in very intense and agonizing prayer to pick the very men

whom God had chosen from before the foundation of the world to be the Apostles of Jesus Christ. So this is a real big deal.

Now, we all understand the word "qualified." That's a word that's used an awful lot in our day- particularly in our society which has set standards and qualifications for almost every enterprise. Today there are qualifications for jobs, qualifications for schools, for certain professions, for drivers' licenses, for credit cards, for loans, and on and on and on it goes.

So we understand that people have to "qualify" or they have to "be qualified" or they have to "manifest certain qualifications" if they hope to get certain things in our society.

The highest paying jobs- at least on the surface- *demand* and *expect* some level qualifications in the area of personality or character along with a proficiency of skill and education and experience along with self-motivation, social interaction, intelligence, stress management and many more qualifications.

Nobody wants a novice to operate on their brain. Nobody wants a trainee to prepare their taxes. Nobody wants somebody who hasn't had the time or the inclination to study and prepare to defend them in court. We want people who hold themselves out to be something to actually *be* what they say they are, to be qualified to operate, to understand the tax law, to comprehend the legal angles, or to counsel you about your immortal soul.

So we have learned in society that in order to do certain things- to do almost *anything* that is valuable or important- you need somebody who is qualified, somebody who has the aptitude and the skill and the ability and the experience.

And the Bible is very clear that God's Standard for those who are responsible to carry on God's Work in the earth- those who lead in the House of God- the Pastors and the Teachers and the Evangelists and the Elders and the Deacons are extremely high. In fact- they are the highest and the most stringent and the most involved of all the professions on earth because what those who carry on the Work of the Lord do- is the most important thing of anything else- because it is eternal. So let's look at what some of those responsibilities and qualifications are by turning to **1 Timothy 3**:

<sup>1</sup> It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

<sup>2</sup> An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

<sup>3</sup> not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

<sup>4</sup> *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

<sup>5</sup> (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

<sup>6</sup> *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

<sup>7</sup> And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

<sup>8</sup> Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

<sup>9</sup> *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

<sup>10</sup> These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

<sup>11</sup> Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

<sup>12</sup> Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.

<sup>13</sup> For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

<sup>15</sup> but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

<sup>16</sup> By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

So from this inspired Chapter- we learn that someone who wants to lead in the Church must stand head and shoulders above those that he leads in terms of personal integrity and Biblical morality and Doctrine and capabilities. The Bible says here that he must be above reproach, a one-woman man, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able and qualified to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, he must be gentle, peaceable, completely unimpressed with

his own worth and spirituality, he must be completely free from the love of money, he must manage his own household well and keep his children and those who live underneath his roof under control.

The man who leads must not be a new convert so that he won't get puffed up and become conceited with his new found Bible knowledge and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And the man who leads *inside* the Church must have a good reputation with those *outside* the Church- the sinner and unbeliever- so that he doesn't fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Now please turn to Titus 1:

### **Titus 1:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> **Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,**

<sup>2</sup> **in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,**

<sup>3</sup> **but at the proper time manifested, *even* His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,**

<sup>4</sup> **To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

<sup>5</sup> **For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,**

<sup>6</sup> ***namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.**

<sup>7</sup> **For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,**

<sup>8</sup> **but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,**

<sup>9</sup> **holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.**

Now here we have a very similar list. And the fact that the qualifications of Church leaders is repeated here shows us how important this issue is with God. Here the Apostle Paul is moved along by the Holy Ghost to write to a young pastor named Titus to tell him that a true chosen leader in the House of God must be above reproach, a one-woman man, have believing children, not accused of dissipation or rebellion- a man who is not self-willed- he is not driven by his own lust

for power or fame or money or authority- but is led by God's Spirit, a true genuine godly leader must be a man who is not quick tempered, not easily angered- but a man of great patience, he cannot be addicted to wine, he must not be fond of money, but he must be hospitable and loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled and able to hold fast the Word of life so as to teach people sound doctrine and refute those who contradict God's Truth.

**Hebrews 13:7** says that all leaders in the Church have to live exemplary lives. Their faith has to be the kind of faith that the congregation can follow after. And they have to give an account to God for how they conduct themselves.

So these are very, very high standards. And that's the standards for those who lead in the Church only because they're to be the model of God's Standard for everybody else. God doesn't lower the standard with the rest of those who are not in ministry. But He simply says that this is the standard for the leaders because they have to manifest the standard for everybody else.

And, of course, the ultimate qualification is **Matthew 5:48** when Jesus said:

**Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

So frankly, nobody truly qualifies. Humanly speaking, nobody qualifies. Nobody qualifies to be in God's Kingdom and nobody qualifies to be in God's service. Scripture is very clear that nobody on his own can meet the least of God's standards. All have sinned and come short of God's glory. There's none righteous, no not one, **Romans 3** says.

And even after Paul had become an Apostle and been an Apostle and was in the middle of his ministry, it was Paul who confessed in **Romans 7:18**:

**For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh...**

... and he said again in **1Timothy 1:15**,

**That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.**

Amazing.

So in reality- God has a huge problem. There are no qualified people- none. And so an amazing aspect of God's Grace is that He must Sovereignly save sinners, He must Sovereignly sanctify sinners, and then God must work His ministry through the unworthy and the unqualified.

So this is very encouraging to meet these Twelve because like all the rest of us- they are selected from the unworthy and the unqualified. They're like Elijah- that great OT Prophet. If you were to go to the Old Testament and look across the peaks of godly men and leaders and prophets and preachers, you might say that the peak of all peaks was Elijah...great man of God, mightily used of God.

But the Apostle James reminds us in **James 5:17**,

**Elijah was a man with a nature like ours...**

So James says here that Elijah had the very same kind of nature that we have- that he's just like us. So based on that- we know that Elijah didn't rise to the highest place of usefulness to God because he was any different than we are- but that God simply had Mercy on an unworthy sinner and used him to God's Glory. And the same thing is true about the Apostle Paul. Paul recognized himself as the chief of sinners- and yet God used him greatly. And so God doesn't really have a choice here. He either uses the unworthy and the unqualified, or He does it all by Himself.

But God has chosen to bring to unworthy sinners first *saving* grace, and then bring to them *sanctifying* grace, and then bring to them *serving* grace- transforming the unworthy and the unqualified into useful servants. And we're going to learn this as we take the time to look at these Apostles.

I think we are tempted generally as Christians, and it's an understandable thing, to become discouraged and to become disheartened when our spiritual life and witness suffer because of our sins and our failures, and we think that we're nobodies and we're nothing. You know, we crawl up a few steps and it's kind of three steps forward, two steps back, and we battle temptation and we go through all of this and we wonder how it is that God could ever use us. And I am just here to remind you, and will do so for the next few weeks, that

that's just standard fare- we're all the same and those are the kind of people that God uses because that's all He has to work with.

Now satan may even attempt to convince us that our shortcomings render us useless to God and His Church, but His use of the Apostles testifies to the fact that God can use the unworthy and the unqualified. He can use the nobodies. And they turned the world upside-down- these Twelve. But they did not turn the world upside-down because they were extraordinarily talented, or because they were naturally gifted, or because they were supremely educated or uniquely influential, or because they had achieved heights of social status. They did not turn the world upside-down because they were massive intellects.

No, these men literally changed the world in spite of all their human limitations, and it was in spite of everything that they were not- that God used them because it was when they recognized they were nothing- at that point- they surrendered themselves to God Whose Power is always perfected in weakness.

Now there are many people who are too confident to be any use to God; too proud to be of any use to God. So God picks the humble, the lowly, the meek and the weak so that there's never any question about the Source of Power when their lives change the world. So it is never the man, it is never his intellect, never his abilities, never his relationship, never his visions, never his dreams, never his revelations or his angelic visitations. It's not the man- it's God, and the Truth of God and the Power of God all for the Glory of God.

And we sure need to remind preachers about this in our day. It's not their cleverness, or their sound bites or their catchy slogans and it's not their personality. The Power is in the Word of God; the Power is in the Truth of God- not in us. And we who lead in the Church are called and chosen to read and study and know and understand and preach and teach and live and obey and love that Word because apart from one single person- one human- God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ- the history of God's Work on earth is the story of Him using the unqualified and the unworthy and the Twelve were no exception to that.

Jesus took the unworthy and the unqualified and He transformed them into mighty servants of great and profound spiritual power, and through them He turned the world upside-down and laid the foundation of the Church upon which all these centuries have been built. These men started out as wicked and violent sinners, but by God's Grace and

Mercy- they became great preachers and great healers and great expellers of demons and profound writers of the New Testament. And as **Ephesians 2:20** says - these men were the real foundation of the Church, and according to **Ephesians 3:25** these men were the agents of Divine Revelation, and according to **The Acts 2:42** these men were the teachers of true Doctrine, and according to **Ephesians 4:11** these men were the builders of the Christian Church.

And they are called holy Apostles in **Ephesians 3:5** and **The Revelation 18:20**. And they were examples of godliness. And they were granted the ability to do mighty signs and wonders, according to **2Corinthians 12:11&12**. These Twelve, very plain, common men were elevated to a very uncommon calling.

They were Galileans. They were not the elite. Galileans were the low class, rural, uneducated people- as far away as you can get from the literate and the educated in Jerusalem. These men were the commoners- the nobodies. And they had gathered around Jesus as "disciples"- the Greek word is *mathetes*, and it means: *learners* or *disciplined ones*. They followed Jesus to learn.

But here Jesus picks twelve men out from all the many learners and says, *"I'm going to train you 12 to be Apostles, and although you have come to learn- you will go to preach."*

And so right here these men begin their formal training. They begin their internship. And this is very necessary. Only two years from this moment- Jesus will be crucified, and three days later He will rise, and forty days after that- Jesus will physically and literally ascend up into Heaven, and the Gospel will be in their hands and the Kingdom of God will depend on their preaching, and the Power and conviction and truthfulness of their preaching.

So only two years is left to prepare these men, and so right here we begin the training of the Twelve.

Now keep in mind that even though Jesus calls them now- they aren't given their supernatural gifts and power until we get to Chapter 9 where it says the Lord gives them the power to heal and to cast out demons. So they don't really begin their primary responsibility which is preaching, proclaiming the Kingdom until Chapter 9.

So first- they have to have some training and then will come the time to receive the Power, and the time to go out and do the proclamation, and they'll go out on some short-term preaching tours,



and they'll have an opportunity to use that great Power. And finally when the Lord goes back to Heaven- it will all be in their hands.

So here we meet the twelve handpicked men, the first disciples of Jesus to become Apostles, the true Apostles. Let me give you some general observations. As I said, they were all common men. All of them were from Galilee with the exception of Judas who was from a town called Kerioth, in the south. They were really rural people from the part of the nation of Israel that didn't really have much prestige or nobility.

And as I said before- the Lord had completely ignored and bypassed all the Pharisees because none of the Apostles was a Pharisee, none of them was a Sadducee, none of them was a priest, and none of them was a scribe. None of these men were any prominent person, but they were all very common men.

Four of them were rough and violent fishermen, one was a despised tax collector who had betrayed his own people to cater to the gentile Romans, one was a terrorist, and one was a traitor. What a group! How would you like to lay the foundation of the Christian Church and complete the Canon of Scripture with a crew like this?

Now I want to make some general observations about the list of the Apostles. There are four lists of the Apostles found in the New Testament, **Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke**, and **The Acts**... **Matthew 10**, **Mark 3**, here in **Luke 6**, and in **The Book of the Acts 1**. Now in these lists the names are always the same- so we know exactly who these twelve men were. But the names are not always in the same order in all the lists.

But the first name in all four lists is always Peter. And then you have three groups of four men- group one, group two, group three. The first group is Simon called Peter, Andrew, James, and John. In every list these four men are the first four always listed, and there is a reason for that. James and John's names get mixed around in the list- but Peter's name is always listed first in that first group- and there is a reason for that, too.

Now Group 2 is also always the same in all four lists. Group 2 always consists of Philip, Bartholomew, or Nathanael- sometimes Bartholomew is called Nathanael- so you have Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas- and that's always Group #2 in all four lists. And the names of Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas get rotate between then various lists- but Philip is always the first name listed in Group 2.

And the last group of Apostles- Group 3- always consists of James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot- the son of perdition who betrayed Jesus. And this Group is also always the same. And while the various names also rotate between the lists- the two middle names- Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James get rotated- but in Group 3- James the son of Alphaeus is always the first name, and Judas is always the last name of the Twelve.

Now what do we make of this? Well, we learn that the Twelve were divided into fours...group one, group two, group three. Group 1 is - Peter, James, John and Andrew. The second group is Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas. The last group is James, Simon, Judas and Judas. And we also know from this that each of these three groups of Apostles had leaders.

The leader of group one was Peter. The leader of group two was Philip, and the leader of group three was James the son of Alphaeus. So we know because of both Hebrew and Greek culture of the 1st Century that the man listed at the top of each of these three groups was the leader of that particular group.

And we also know that the name at the very top of the list of all the lists is always Peter- which means that Peter was the leader of all the Apostles. Now, any time I get into this listing and the indisputable fact that Peter was the unquestioned leader of all the Apostles - my Protestant friends begin to wonder whether or not I am going to teach that because Peter was the leader of the Apostles does that makes Peter to be the first pope?

And I am going to get into that- just not today- but to give you a sneak preview- no, Peter was not the first pope. Peter was not even the first bishop in the Christian Church, nor was Peter or any other man ever the Head of the Church, nor was Peter ever even a bishop in the Church at Rome, and, in fact, there is not one shred of information anywhere in the Bible to even suggest that Peter served as part of the ministry in the Church at Rome in *any* capacity.

All of that mythology and lore about Peter was fabricated after the death of Peter by people who created a false religion that has some similarities to Christianity, but which preaches and teaches "another gospel". And I'll get into that in greater detail later- Lord willing.

Now we also know that these three groups of four men are also in decreasing intimacy with Christ. Group one was always closely around Christ physically. Peter, James, John and Andrew were the most intimate group to Jesus. They were the first disciples that Jesus called back in John 1:35-42, and here they are also the first group that Jesus called to be Apostles. So these four men have been with Jesus the longest and they are the most intimate with Christ. And throughout the rest of the story of the Ministry and Life of Christ- we will see Peter, James, and John, in particular, in very close and intimate contact with Christ.

Group 2 is a little bit more distant- but we do know quite a bit about Philip and Bartholomew and Thomas and Matthew. But Group 3 seems to always be at quite a distance. And it was because of that distance that we really don't know that much about them. The only thing that we really know about Group 3 is Judas because he betrayed Jesus.

Now some people have tried to make a lot out of the fact that some of these men were close to Jesus while others were not, all down through the centuries and they may be right- I don't know. But what I do know is that **Mark 3:14** says that all 12 men were appointed and chosen by Jesus after He prayed all night long and they would be with Him and he would teach them all, and all 12 would be used to some capacity. So what I do know with certainty is that all twelve men were chosen and that for some reason- there seems to be different degrees of closeness with Jesus between the three groups.

Now what this also tells us is that even a group of twelve men is too many for one person to handle at an equal level of intimacy. So Jesus held three of these 12 men very close to Him and next came Andrew and then the next and the next. So we learn that there have to be some decisions made about who one spends intimate time with because you can't be everything to everybody.

And we also learn from this that there are leaders within the groups. There's a leader in group one- Peter, a leader of group two- Philip, and a leader of group three- James the son of Alphaeus. And we also know that there are leaders among the leaders, and there is a leader over all of them- namely Peter.

So these are the Lord's men and all of this will become very apparent to us because, Lord willing- we're going to get to meet each

one of them. And as God helps me- we're going to learn all there is to know about each one of them to help us to see and understand who they were.

But we're also going to see that the Lord does use the weak and He uses the common for very uncommon duty. He does that in order that He might disdain the wise and receive all the Glory for what is done. So these were very diverse men and they were all very common men. But they were shaped and molded and taught and chastised and fashioned by the Lord Himself into being men who would change the world.

Now, in addition to these men all having various backgrounds and occupations- they also had various temperaments. Peter is known as the Apostle with the foot-shaped mouth because he was always putting his foot in his mouth. Peter was eager and bold and aggressive and impulsive and very verbal. John on the other hand spoke very little. For example- in the first twelve chapters of The Acts John and Peter are constant companions, but John never says a thing- Peter does all the talking.

Then there is Nathanael or Bartholomew- a true believer- who openly confesses his faith in Jesus Christ. And he's sort of paired up with Thomas- who is quite a skeptic and a doubter and has to have proof for everything.

In addition to their occupations and their temperaments being different- their politics was also quite different. There was Matthew, also called Levi. And Matthew was the most despicable person in all of Israel. He was a tax collector who had taken a job with Rome to extort taxes from his own people to pay the pagan Roman Empire- who didn't believe in the one true living God. These men were hated of all men, and yet right here was Matthew, or Levi, being chosen by Jesus Himself to be one of the Apostles, even though Simon especially would have looked at Matthew as a betrayer of his own people for money.

Now the King James Version lists Simon as Simon Zelotes, as though Zelotes was his last name. But you have to understand that the way the Greek language works shows us that Zelotes was not Simon's last name any more than Christ is Jesus' last Name. When you have a name like this in Greek- you have to add the word "the" in the middle. So Simon Zelotes becomes Simon "the" Zealot, or Simon who was a part

of the terrorist group of Jews called the Zealots, and Jesus Christ becomes Jesus "the" Christ or Jesus the Anointed One.

Now the Zealots were those Jews who despised Rome. That was the name of a group of people in Israel who wanted to violently throw off the Roman yoke. And many of these men were sure nuff terrorists who kidnapped and maimed and stabbed and murdered Roman Authorities all the time.

The Zealots didn't have a standing army to use to fight Rome- so they conducted terrorist acts. Some of them were called Zacharii because they carried around sword called a zacharia and they went around in huge crowds and stabbed Romans in the back. Terrorist acts.

And so here was the most hated Jew- Matthew- one who had betrayed his nation and become a tax collector for Rome in the same little group of four men with Simon who was a terrorist.

And apart from the Presence of Christ- Simon would have just as soon stuck his sword into Matthew's back. But, because of Christ, Simon served alongside of Matthew as an Apostle.

So in the remainder of my time- let's at least meet the men of group 1 and begin to look at the leader of that Group- Peter.

Now the first man in the first group and the one who is the leader over all the Apostles is Simon Peter. And Simon, by the way, is a very common name in Israel. You have another Simon down at the end of verse 15 who was the Zealot. So Simon was a very common Jewish name at that time. And this Simon was also named by Jesus as Peter.

And as I said before- this is always the first name at the head of every list, and I'll tell you why. Peter is always listed as the first Apostle in every list- not only because we assume that he was the leader because of Hebrew culture- but because Jesus actually said that Peter was the leader. Please turn with me to **Matthew 10:2**. That verse says:

**Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;**

Now do you see the word "first" in that verse? That is the Greek word *protos*. And this is a very important word because this word does not simply mean the first in a particular list. No, this word means: *the*

*chief or the leader.* So the Jesus Himself says in **Matthew 10:2** that Peter was the *protos*, or the chief or the leader of the Apostles. So as much as people today want to try to paint the picture of the Apostles as being 12 men with equal standing and equal relationship- that is simply not true. Jesus said that Peter was the leader- he was the chief. And there is really no question about this. Peter was a fisherman by trade. And he lived with his brother Andrew- who was also a fisherman. And they had a fairly large family fishing business. They caught fish on the Sea of Galilee- a certain kind of fish that exists only in the Sea of Galilee- which you might know today is called "St. Peter's fish". And if you ever go to the Sea of Galilee, you can have it for lunch. And I understand that if it's cooked right- it's very good- as long as they get all the bones out.

So that's what Simon and Andrew did. They were fishermen and they were originally from a small village called Bethsaida, but later moved to Capernaum. And Capernaum was the major town on the north tip of the Sea of Galilee. And it's only ruins today. The Lord said that Capernaum would be destroyed and never rebuilt, and that's exactly the case. They have found ruins of a synagogue there. And they have found the ruins of a Church. And the tradition is that they built the first church in Capernaum on the foundation of the home of Peter.

So when you see the ruins of that early church- which you can see if you visit there- that may well be the very place where Peter lived. And it's a short walk from there to the edge of the lake. So Peter and Andrew grew up in that area and they moved to Capernaum to run their fishing business on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Now we also know that Simon had a wife. He was married. We know that because in **Luke 4:38** Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law of a terrible fever. And we also know it because the Apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:5** that Peter took his wife with him on his apostolic missions- which is a nice thing to do.

Now this *could* indicate that Peter and his wife didn't have any children, but we don't know that for sure. We have absolutely no idea whether Peter had any children or not. But Paul does say in **1 Corinthians 9:5** that Peter took his wife on an apostolic mission. So he was married. And that's really all we know about his domestic life.

Now we also know that Peter's full name was Simon Bar-jona. That is indicated to us in **Matthew 16** by Jesus Himself. Jesus calls Peter

"Simon Bar-Jona" and in **John 21** Jesus calls him Simon- son of Jonah. Now Jonah could also be pronounced Jonas or even John. It can be any of those when transliterated. So Peter's father's name then was John, or Jonas, or Jonah, any one of those would transliterate the original language. So Peter's original name was Simon, who was the son of - the word "bar" means "son of", so Bar- jonah means that Simon Peter was the son of Jonah or the son of Jonas or the son of John.

Now today when a Jewish boy gets a Barmitzvah they become a "son of the law". So the word "Bar" means "son of". So Peter's father's name was John or Jonas or Jonah. And that's really all we know.

Now Peter's father probably started the fishing business when he was young and that's the life that Peter lived until he met the Lord. And you remember in **Luke 5** the Lord said, *"You been fishing for fish, but now I'm going to make you...what?...fishers of men."* Peter- you're going to come after Me, and you're going to follow Me, and you're going to catch men for My Kingdom.

Now here in **Luke 6:14**- Dr. Luke says that Jesus Himself gave Simon another name. And I think this is important to note the language, "Whom He also named Peter." Now listen to this. He didn't say you have a new name to replace the old one. No. He also *called* him Peter. He was Simon, and he was also Peter. And you find that in the Scripture.

Now I was curious some years back about why sometimes Peter is called Simon and sometimes he's called Peter. Why sometimes it refers to Simon in terms of his boat or his house or his fishing enterprise, and other times it just refers to Peter by himself. And so when you do a careful study of that, you find that there are some very, very specific things going on with regard to that. And I'll try to give you an understanding of that.

When Jesus first met Peter over in **John 1:42**, He said, "You used to be called Simon- that's the Hebrew name- you used to be called Simon- but from now on you'll be called Cephas- and that's the Aramaic word for Peter.

The Greek word for Peter is petros, and both words- the Greek petros and the Aramaic Cephas, mean "rock". So, Peter's new name was rock. He was Rock Bar-Jona. That was his name. That's exactly what both Petros and Cephas means.

Now why does Jesus do this to him? Well, the Lord has a purpose in mind. I mean, by nature Peter was brash, he was vacillating, he made great promises of what he would do but didn't follow through. He was one of those kinds of guys that goes whole-hearted into something and then bails back out of it. He was the first one in and then he was also the first one out. Peter was very vacillating. And the Lord changed his name because He wanted to work on Peter and He wanted to work on him in an immediate way.

And it was very easy to do once He gave him the name Rock because by what Jesus called him He sent him a message. So if Jesus said to him "Simon," then he was acting like his old self. And if He said to him "Rock," then he was acting the way the Lord wanted him to act.

So when Simon was Simon- he was vacillating and impulsive and eager- but he needed to be a rock. And by the way the Lord addressed him- the Lord was teaching him lessons. If he called him Simon, he got one message...Simon, Simon, thou art rock, and on this I will build my church. Big difference, big difference. And just by the name He called him, immediately had access into his spiritual thinking.

Now even after his name was changed you can see a consistency in how these names are used. Whenever he is called Simon, it is always in one of two contexts- a secular or a sinful context. So over in **Mark 1:29**, **Luke 4:38**, and **The Acts 10:17** it refers to his house as "Simon's house". And that's just a secular context- Simon's house has nothing to do with spirituality or Kingdom ministry. Simon's wife's mother, Simon's mother-in-law, **Mark 1:30**, **Luke 4:38**...Simon's boat, Simon's fishing partners, **Luke 5:10**. So when referring to Simon in purely the secular element- he is Simon.

But the second category in which he's called Simon is sinful. Whenever there was sin there- Peter was dubbed Simon. You find that even back in **Luke 5**, "Simon answered"...in verse 5... "we worked all night, caught nothing, at Your bidding I'll let down the nets." This is the old sinful Simon- the fisherman. But, finally he starts to make some spiritual responses and in verse 8 he becomes Simon Peter. So we see him there in transition. It says here *"Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' feet, Depart from me, I'm a sinful man, O Lord."* It was Simon who was saying..."Oh Lord, I've been fishing all night, what kind of a ridiculous thing is this? You tell me to throw the nets on that side of the boat, do You think the fish know the difference. I mean, we know what we're



doing out here." That was Simon. "But, Lord, I'm a sinful man," that's Peter...that's the man who sees himself the way God wants him to see himself.

And I think that is consistent with how the Lord speaks to us today. Please turn with me to **The Revelation 2:12-17:**

<sup>12</sup> **“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:**

<sup>13</sup> **‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.**

<sup>14</sup> **But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.**

<sup>15</sup> **So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.**

<sup>16</sup> **Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.**

<sup>17</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’**

So when you see "Peter," it's a good environment, it's a good experience. In **John 21**, Jesus says, "Okay, you go to Galilee," He's risen from the dead now, He says, "You go to Galilee and I'll appear to you there," post-resurrection, "stay there, wait for Me." They go there. Peter says, "I'm not going to wait any longer, this is getting ridiculous. I don't know if I can do this. I'm going to go back and take up my fishing business." He goes down, gets in his boat, gets his nets, all his ropes, the whole paraphernalia, and they all said like a bunch of rubber ducks, "We're going with you." And they all waddled down to the shore, got on the boats and went back to fishing. And Jesus showed up and rerouted all the fish so they couldn't catch any. And they came into shore and Jesus made breakfast...you know how Jesus makes breakfast ... "Breakfast." So He made breakfast, the disciples come to the shore, Jesus looks at Peter and He says this, "Simon, Simon, do you love Me?" "Yes, I love You."

Second time, "Simon, Simon, do you love Me?"

"Yes, I love You."

"Simon, Simon, do you love Me? Then do what I told you." That's Simon.

### **Luke 22:31**

**"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;**

So when you see "Simon" you're seeing elements of the sin, or elements of the secular. So when you go through, look for Peter, those are the good times.

In Mark, I think it's chapter 14 verse 37, Jesus in the garden, you remember, and He asked His disciples to pray with Him, remember that. And He comes back and He found them...what? Sleeping, and He says to him, "Simon, are you asleep?" It must have gotten to the point where whenever the Lord said "Simon," Peter just cringed. "Please call me rock." To which the Lord could have replied, "I'll call you rock when you act like a rock."

John knew him well, really well. So seventeen times in the gospel of John, John calls him Simon Peter. I love that. John couldn't make up his mind because he saw both sides all the time. So he just decided "Simon Peter." Sometimes Simon, Sometimes Rock.

Peter was like all of us, wasn't he? Carnal and spiritual; functioning in the flesh sometimes, functioning in the Spirit sometimes. Sinful sometimes, righteous sometimes. So manifestly so that the Lord even gave him a name to try to reinforce what He wanted him to be, He wanted him to be a rock.

Now this guy, this vacillating sometime Simon, sometime Peter guy, this is the leader of the Twelve. Boy, how the Lord disdained self-righteous people. Nothing about Peter is self-righteous. This is the greatest and most prominent preacher of the Twelve. This is the man really who more than any other Apostle laid the foundation of the church, followed up by that late coming Apostle Paul. Peter is the hero in the first twelve chapters of the book of Acts. And this man, this man was as much Simon as he was Peter. And I say again to you what I'm going to say through the whole series, if God couldn't use the unworthy and the unqualified, He wouldn't use anybody.

One of my favorite poets through the years has been Studdert Kennedy. He wrote some lines that I think fit Peter and me, and probably you. This is what he wrote. "There's nothing in a man that's perfect, there's nothing that's all complete. He's not but a big beginning from his head to the soles of his feet." Peter was a big beginning, but, oh, was he ever a big ending by the power of Christ.

Now, for this morning I want to take you through to know Peter, but it's going to take me next week to finish. But this morning I want you to grab something that I think is really fascinating.

Peter was the leader, no question. The Lord chose him to be the leader. The Lord equipped him to be the leader. The Lord shaped him to be the leader, trained him to be the leader. And so, when you look at Peter you can see how God builds a leader. This is a classic, biblical illustration of how God builds a leader. If you want to know how the Lord shapes a leader, study Peter. He's the key to understanding that issue. The gospels are literally filled with his name. His name is mentioned in the gospels more than any name but Jesus. Nobody speaks as often as Peter, and nobody is spoken to by the Lord as often as Peter. No disciple is so reproved by the Lord as Peter, and no disciple reproved the Lord but Peter. No disciple ever so boldly confessed and outspokenly acknowledged the Lordship of Christ as Peter, and no one denied it as boldly as Peter. No one is so praised and blessed as Peter, and no one else is called Satan but Peter. The Lord had harder things to say to Peter than He ever said to anybody else, and that was part of making him the man He wanted him to be, the leader Christ desired. God took a common man with an ambivalent, vacillating, impulsive, unsubmissive personality and shaped him into the leader of the Twelve, the greatest preacher out of the Apostles, and in every sense the real power of the first twelve chapters of Acts, the birth of the church.

Now there has to be three elements for the Lord to make a leader. I'm going to give you the first one this morning. Three elements...the first one is the right raw material. There's always this age-old question, are leaders born or made? I want to fall on the side of the fact that they are born...and then shaped.

Peter had that God-given fabric woven into his personality to make him a leader. He was the right raw material. And the Lord wove that in his mother's womb, to borrow the words of the psalmist. The Lord put together the right stuff to make him the man that could be

shaped into a leader. There are just sort of personal features of his personality that are critical to leaders. They cannot be developed, they are inborn.

The first one is inquisitiveness...inquisitiveness. When you're looking for a leader, find somebody who asks a lot of questions...it's really important. People who don't ask questions don't wind up as leaders.

You say, "I'm not sure I understand that." Very simple, curiosity is critical to leadership. People who are content with what they don't know and content with what they don't understand and content with what they haven't analyzed and content with problems they haven't solved can't lead. Leaders have to have an almost insatiable curiosity to know what they don't know, to understand what they don't understand. They understand that knowledge is power. Whoever has the information has the lead. If you want to find a leader, look for somebody who asks a lot of questions.

Some of you have kids like that. You have maybe one kid out of your little batch and this little kid just asks question after question after question after question. And you get weary answering these questions. That's the fabric of leadership. This tremendous internal drive to know what they don't know, and understand what they don't understand is all about solving problems. And you've probably got another kid who sits in the corner quietly and never asks anything. He'll probably grow up and be a computer guy who will work for your other son. Leaders have tremendous curiosity.

In the gospels, Peter asks more questions than all the other Apostles combined. I mean,...and we only probably have a part of it, it was probably all day every day for Jesus. "Yeah, Peter, just a minute, I'll answer you just as soon as I'm done with this person." I love people who ask questions. We're always trying to understand what's going on, sort it out. We say there are three kinds of people...there are people who make things happen, there are people who watch things happen, there are people who say, "Hey, what's happening." I don't need those kinds of people.

That takes me to the second point, initiative. If a man is to be wired for leadership, he has to have initiative. He has to be the kind of person that makes things happen. Peter not only asked all the questions, he was always the first one to answer any question posed by

Christ. And he would just dive in where angels fear to tread. Jesus said, "Who do people say that I am?" "Oh, they say You're Jeremiah, one of the prophets..." No, no, no. "Who do you say?" "You're Christ the Son of the living God." The other guys are still processing the information. Peter was very fast. That's a part of leadership, fast on the trigger. And sometimes he had to reel back, undo, unsay, be rebuked, but it's part of leadership to grab initiative by the throat.

During the Garden of Gethsemane, **John 18**, here comes the Roman soldiers from Port Antonia, 500 of them, let's say, including the high priest and all the retinue from the temple, they've come to take Jesus. Peter's there. Peter immediately, the crowd comes...swish...pulls out his sword, takes a swing at the head of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, the high priest is out in front because he was the dignitary of dignitaries, so he's in the front, beside him is his servant. Peter tried to cut his head off, he ducked, lost his ear. The Lord says, "Put your sword away, Peter. You live by the sword, you die by the sword." He was essentially saying if you take a life, you're going to give a life, thus affirming capital punishment as a divine law. But, I mean, just think about it. There's a whole Roman army there, what does he think he's going to do? Go through the whole group? One at a time...shick, shick, shick. I mean...sometimes this initiative doesn't take the long view, or the broad view. It's just...boom. But that's the stuff of leadership.

I'd rather reel back somebody like that. I'd rather recover somebody like that than try to motivate somebody to take initiative. There are some people you just have to drag kicking and screaming in any forward direction. Not Peter. He always wanted to know what he didn't know. He always wanted to understand what he didn't understand. He was the first one to ask a question and he was the first one to answer the question, take the initiative, charge ahead and that's the stuff of leadership. But it's got to be shaped. What I'm talking about here is raw material. It's going to be very critical for Peter, he's going to have to have some kind of moxie, some kind ofchutzpah, as the Jews would say, some kind of courage to stand up in Jerusalem on Pentecost and preach the gospel in the face of the population that had just executed their Messiah. That's going to take tremendous courage, but that's the kind of guy He is. By the time the Lord has shaped that initiative, it's been transformed into boldness.

There's a third element of raw material that leaders have and that's involvement. A true leader, a true leader is in the middle of the action. A true leader is not sitting in the background telling everybody what to do while he lives a life of comfort away from the fray. A true leader goes through life with a cloud of dust around him. And that's why people follow him. People don't follow somebody somewhere else, they follow somebody in the fray. Jesus comes one night, He's walking on the water. And who out of all the disciples jumps out of the boat? Peter. There's the Lord, I'm here, I've got to get where the action is...bang, out of the boat. And he's walking on the water. And the rest of the disciples are just looking over, just kind of adjusting, trying to make sure they don't fall overboard in the storm. And he's out on the water. This is involvement, serious involvement. Jesus was there, he was here, he had to close the gap.

You say, "Yeah, people look at this incident, they criticize Peter's lack of faith, he got out there, he looked around...oh, what am I doing...he started to sink. Yeah, he had weak faith." Let me tell you something about his faith. Where were the other eleven? They never got out of the boat. Talk about weak faith. Before you criticize Peter, remember where he was when he began to sink. People look at Peter's life and they say...Well, he's around the fire, you know, and he denies Jesus and he denies Jesus and the cock crows," you remember the story. But before you condemn Peter too quickly, he was alone in a position where such a temptation could hit him because he was doing his best to stay as close to Christ as he could. That's a leader. Everybody else may bail out, he stays as close to the action as he can get. I'm not interested in leaders who want to send down messages from afar, I want to see people who have a passion for the involvement.

That was the raw material that was in Peter, that kind of inquisitiveness, that kind of initiative, that kind of involvement. He asked all the questions. He was the first guy who tried to charge ahead for whatever responsibility needed to be done and he wanted to be in the middle of everything. That's the stuff that leaders are made of. And so the Lord knew that, and He wove it all in the fabric of who he was in his mother's womb. And now when he reaches adulthood, it's time for the Lord to shape it. Frankly, if it's not shaped by the Lord, it could be disastrous. So, two other things have to happen...the right raw material, point two, the Lord has to drag him through the right

experiences to shape that raw material...three, the Lord has to give him the right virtues so that that great leadership potential is controlled by virtue. And next time we're going to see those experiences, how the Lord took him through the experiences that shaped him and developed the virtues that made him the man he became.

Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.