

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

107- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 4  
Simon Peter- Part 3

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Church July 28, 2024

## **Matthew 10:1-4**

**1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.**

**2 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;**

**3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;**

**4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now over the last several weeks- we have been involved in a “mini-series” of Sermons about the twelve men that Jesus personally chose to be His Apostles. This is the *fourth* Sermon in that Series. And we have already covered a lot of Ground. But suffice it to say there are several Attributes and Qualifications that ALL the Apostles had to meet up with or measure up to- which NO ONE today can meet up with- such as:

- The Apostles were personally chosen by Jesus
- The Apostles spent time with Jesus- personally
- The Apostles were taught by Jesus
- The Apostles *established* the Christian Church
- The Apostles were *part* of the Foundation of the Church
- The Apostles *received* the final, full, and completed Revelation of God- *directly* from God the Holy Spirit

- God the Holy Spirit “*moved*” upon the Apostles as they wrote (or had written) the 27 Books of the New Testament
- The Apostles *correctly* and *fully* interpreted the Old Testament
- God used the Apostle in Signs, Wonders, Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit to give “*Divine Credibility*” to the 27 Books of the New Covenant

... so, BOTH the Office of Apostle as well as the individual Apostles themselves constitute an Office that is no longer active in the earth today. And that is NOT true because I believe that God has lost His Power; or because I want to hinder the “Move” of God’s Spirit; or because I don’t believe the Bible. There are no more Apostles on earth today precisely because they accomplished ALL that God called them to do!

Now I have already taught you that there were three Groups of Apostles that had four men in each Group. And that “grouping” looked something like this:

<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
Peter	Philip	James, the son of Alphaeus
Andrew	Thomas	Simon the Zealot
James	Matthew	Judas (son/brother) of James
John	Nathaniel (Bartholomew)	Judas Iscariot

... and Peter was the Leader of them all.

So, now I want to allow us the Opportunity to meet each one of these men, who literally changed the world. And as I have told you before- if anyone *should have* failed in their Assignment- these men *should have* failed. And yet, they did NOT fail- and probably better than *anyone* before them or since- they accomplished EVERYTHING Jesus gave them to do after His Ascension! And that is truly remarkable!

Let me say this another Way: There is absolutely NO Reason that any of us should fail in the Assignment or the Calling that God has placed upon us. Because no matter what God has called us to do- we have it- *infinitely* better and easier- than the Apostles did! And that is why a short Study or Examination of these twelve men is worth the Time.

Now over the last two weeks- we have been looking at Peter- the “*protos*” or the Leader or Chief of all of the Apostles- and I want to continue that today. But this is NOT going to be a comprehensive Study about everything concerning Peter. So, whatever I teach you in this mini-series- please keep in mind that there is much MORE I am not teaching you.

Now the Apostle John knew Peter very well. And so, as a result of John knowing Peter so well- *seventeen times* in the **Gospel of John**- John calls him "*Simon Peter*". And that shows us that John really couldn't make up his mind about Peter- because he saw both sides of this man all the time. So, he just decided to split the Difference and call him "*Simon Peter*" which indicates that this man was sometimes very weak; and boisterous; and even sinful and operated as "*Simon*"; and on other Occasions- he acted like a rock and was strong and spiritual- and operated as "*Peter*".

So, in Reality, Peter was really no different from any of us. He was both carnal and spiritual- functioning in the Flesh some of the time while functioning in the Spirit at other times. He was sinful sometimes and then he was very righteous at other times. And so, I would suggest that Peter was just like us- and very common Sinner- who had been saved by Grace!

And this was so Obvious to everyone- that the Lord even gave him a name to try to *reinforce* what He wanted him to be. Because Jesus wanted this man to be a "rock"- not only for the other Apostles- but for all of us today- who read about him!

Now think about this guy- this vacillating, sometimes "*Simon*" and sometimes "*Peter*" guy. He is the unquestioned Leader of the Twelve Apostles- which tells us that the Lord hates Self-righteousness! Because there was absolutely nothing about Peter that was Self-righteous. That wasn't his Problem. His Problem was the very *opposite* of being Self-righteous.

But this guy was the *greatest* and the most *prominent* Preacher of the original Twelve. And this is the man- who, more than any other Apostle besides Paul, laid the Foundation of the Church; and is the main Hero in the first twelve chapters of **The Book of the Acts!** And yet, this man was as much "*Simon*" as he was "*Peter*"- and that should give us all great Hope.

Because what we have to remember is that just four verses after one the greatest Interchanges between Jesus and any human being on earth- just four verses after Jesus calls this man, "Peter" a small little pebble; just four verses after Jesus praised Peter for receiving and confessing the Divine Revelation that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God- just four verses later- after Jesus began to tell His Apostles how He must suffer and die in order to accomplish God 's Will for Him to pay for the Sins of the whole world- Peter actually rebukes Jesus Christ! And in verse **23**- Jesus says this to the man he just called a "rock"-

**Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."**

Now notice that Jesus didn't say, "*Hey hold on a minute Peter- I love you and I know you mean well- but you must remember that God sent Me here to die! That is the only reason why I came- to die! You have to remember that this is God's Will for Me! And you have to love God's Will as much as I do!*" But Jesus didn't say that- He simply rebuked Peter- FOR TRYING TO TALK JESUS OUT OF DYING and called him, "*satan!*"

But before you condemn him- try to put yourself in Peter's shoes for a moment. The Jews had been waiting on the Messiah to come for many, many Centuries. And now He is here! Praise God- after waiting all that Time- the Messiah is now here! But now that He has arrived- He tells His followers that He is going to die and leave? Their thoughts had to be something like, "*Why would God bring the Messiah to us- if He was going to take Him away? How could the Messiah dying and leaving us be a Good thing? And why would the Messiah allow Himself to be killed? And isn't it our job to defend Him- out of our Love for Him? Wouldn't we fail God- if we didn't protect Him?*"

Now I'm going to defend Peter here for a moment- because I absolutely understand him. I get Peter. To me- Peter is very easy to understand. And I don't know if that's because I have ADHD or because I love Jesus- but I would have NEVER in a million years stayed quiet while Jesus says He is going to die and then leave.

So, if I had been alive back then- I promise you I would have said the *exact* same thing to Jesus. And then Jesus would have had to rebuke me too, and call me, "*satan*", too. And I can only pray that I would have taken it as well as Peter did- because I think I am a whole lot MORE Arrogant; and a whole lot MORE Proudful; and whole lot MORE Self-righteous- than Peter was.

But really and truly my friends, what *should* Peter have said? Just stand there with his hands in his pockets while Jesus tells them He is going to die and leave? What else should Peter have said to Jesus based on what He had taught him so far and what he knew to be true?

What I DON'T get- is why the other eleven men stayed quiet! Now, of course, after reading and understanding the New Testament Books- it is crystal clear why Jesus had to die and then leave this earth. But the ONLY reason it is crystal clear to me now- is because of what the New Testament Books say. But the Apostles had not read any of the New Testament Books- precisely because they hadn't written them yet!

But I could read the Old Testament Books all day long and still NEVER understand that the Messiah had to come; and die; and rise again; and then leave. Because the ONLY reason I can read the Old Testament Books today and understand what they mean by what they say about the Messiah- is because the Apostles told me what the Old Testament meant when it referenced the Messiah- in

the New Testament Books! But other than that- I would still be ignorant about all this.

And this is one reason why the Jews of today do NOT understand correctly about the Messiah. They don't read the New Testament Books at all! They think there are terrible Books that deceive people. So, if we really care about the Jews- what needs to be done- is to get them to read the New Testament Books! Because other than that- they will NEVER come to understand the Messiah correctly.

Beloved, who among us would have understood what Jesus was doing and saying at this Point- if we had not already read the New Testament Books? I really don't believe there is more than five or six people on this Gulf Coast of Mississippi would *continue* to follow Someone, Who called us "satan". And that is true- primarily- because we think we are so much *more* holy; and so much *more* righteous than those guys were.

But part of Peter's Testimony as to how great an Apostle he really was- was that Peter *continued* to follow Jesus after being rebuked like that- precisely because Peter knew that Jesus was right!

And so, I say again to you what I'm going to say throughout this whole Sermon Series- if God could use those unworthy and unqualified men- then surely God can use us. Because if God will not use unworthy and unqualified men to do His Will in the earth- then He can't use *anybody*- because the humbling Truth of the matter is- that *everybody* is just like this!

Now this morning I want you to grab something about Peter that I think is really fascinating. All of the Apostles were dynamic and strong and powerful men- to a certain extent. So, in that sense- ALL of them were Leaders. But Peter was the Leader of all those other Leaders- no question. The Lord chose him to be the Leader of all the other Leaders.

And beginning here- the Lord *equipped* Peter to be the Leader. And the Lord *continued* to shape Peter- even *after* He had risen from the Dead and ascended into Heaven. So, Peter was in the "*Fire of Purification*"- which is a "*Fire*" that ALL Leaders will experience. And it is a very hot Fire. But it is a *necessary* Fire. And this Fire will "*cull- out*" those who are *genuinely* called to the Ministry and those who simply want people to listen to them. And ALL genuinely called Christian Leaders will experience that FIRE over many years- so they can be that kind of Leader and that kind of godly man.

So, God trained Peter to be the Leader of all the other Leaders. And God held Peter *accountable* as that kind of Leader. And so, Jesus *rebuked* Peter here in the Way a "Leader of Leaders" is *supposed* to be rebuked!

And so, when you look at Peter- you can see how God builds a genuine Christian Leader. And this is a classic, biblical Illustration of how God builds a true godly Leader. So, 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 Peter's name. Peter's name is mentioned in the Gospels more than any other name besides Jesus. Nobody speaks as often as Peter; nobody does as good as Peter does; and nobody sins as much as Peter sinned; and nobody is spoken to by the Lord as often as was Peter. No Disciple was rebuked by the Lord as was Peter. And no Disciple ever rebuked Jesus- except Peter.

No Disciple ever so boldly confessed and outspokenly acknowledged the Lordship of Christ- as Peter, and no one denied Jesus as boldly as Peter. No one is so praised and blessed as Peter; and Jesus never called any other Apostle, "*satan*" except 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 that Jesus wanted him to be- the Leader that Jesus desired. God took a very *common* man with an ambivalent, vacillating, impulsive, un-submissive and even violent Personality- and Jesus 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 **the Acts**- which is all about the Birth of the Church. I am absolutely amazed at Peter. And one of the tragedies of the Roman religious System elevating Peter up into a Place that he doesn't belong is that many well- meaning Protestants now *devalue* Peter down into a place where he doesn't belong- in order to try to *undo* what Rome has done.

Peter was not like the other 11 men- and we need to say that. He was unique and special- and we need to say that, too.

Now there has to be three Elements for the Lord to make a true godly Leader. And there's an age-old Question that people have pondered for Centuries about Leaders and that is:

### **Are Leaders born or are they made?**

... and I want to fall on the Side that says that all true Leaders are *born* to be Leaders.

All true Leaders are born with certain God- given Abilities and Talents that God gave them when He formed them in their Mother's womb. But then we must also recognize that those Talents and Abilities are very raw; and they **MUST** be developed; and shaped; and molded; throughout his entire Life by God's Providence- usually through the Hands of other godly men.

So, it is my Judgment that Leaders are born to be Leaders with raw Talents and Abilities. But then **ALL** godly Leaders **MUST** be honed; and tried; and proven; and molded; and shaped; by the "*Fire of Purification*"- usually through

their own personal FAILURES; as well as through the skilled Hands of other men- both *godly* and *ungodly* men.

Peter had that God-given Fabric woven into his Personality to make him a Leader by Birth. He had all the right raw material. And the Lord wove that into him in his mother's womb. The Lord put together all the right stuff to make Peter the man that could later be shaped into a great Leader.

And so there are some personal Features of ALL Leaders that are Critical- that the Leader MUST be born with- precisely because these Features CANNOT be developed. And this morning, through the Life of Peter- I want to look quickly at three Elements that make a true godly Leader:

1. He Must be Inquisitive
2. He Must have Initiative
3. He Must be personally Involved

So, let's take these one at a time.

## **1. A True Leader Must be Inquisitive**

A genuine Leader MUST have an *insatiable* Appetite for Information. So, when you're looking for a Leader- find somebody who asks a lot of Questions because this is really important. People who don't ask *any* Questions or who are easily satisfied with the Information they already have; or they are already content; and who are not curious; and who don't ask very many Questions- don't make good Leaders.

So, what I am saying is that 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 effectively.

Leaders have to have an almost *insatiable* Curiosity to know what they don't know and an *unstoppable* Drive to understand what they don't already understand. Those people understand that Knowledge is Power. And therefore- whoever has the Information has the Lead. So, if you want to find a good and an effective Leader- look for somebody who almost drives people crazy by asking Questions all the time.

Now some of you Parents have children like that. You have maybe one child out of your little batch that asks Question after Question after Question after Question. And sometimes, you get frustrated at them as you try to answer all those Questions. But we have to realize that God put that Curiosity in them- probably

because God has called them to be a Leader. Because Curiosity is the very Foundation of Leadership. This tremendous internal Drive to know what they don't already know; and to understand what they don't already understand and to NEVER be satisfied with the already existing Standard- is all about solving Problems. And that is what Leaders do- they solve Problems.

Now you've probably got another child who sits in the corner quietly and never asks anything. And that child might be the *smartest* child you have; and will probably grow up and be a computer Programmer or even a Genius. But I'll tell you this- he will one day work for the Leader. So, this is NOT about one child being better or more- godly than the other- I'm not saying that. This is simply about God's Sovereignty in granting one child superior Brains; while giving the other one the *insatiable* Desire to know and understand.

Leaders are usually very smart- but they are *not* usually the smartest guy in the room. Albert Einstein was probably the most intelligent man ever born- but he wasn't a Leader. He failed math in school twice and couldn't count the change in your hand. He also couldn't make up his mind what to wear- so he had a closet full of the very same color shirts; the very same color pants; with the very same color coat- so he wouldn't have to waste any time figuring out what matched every day.

Quiet people are some of the *smartest* people on earth- and we *need* them- God made them that way and we should celebrate that. But true Leaders have tremendous Curiosity.

Also, true Leaders never mind people asking them Questions. In fact - the *more* Questions that people ask- the *more* a true Leader thrives. The only man who gets angry at Questions is the man who has nothing to say.

Now in the Gospel Records- Peter asks *more* Questions than all the other Apostles combined. And as you read through the four Gospels and **the Book of the Acts** and Peter's two Epistles- you come away with the thought that Peter was always trying to understand what was going on. He was constantly trying to put the pieces together.

And it is a common saying that there are three kinds of people on earth:

1. People who "*make* things happen"
2. People who "*watch* things happen"
3. People who say, "*What happened?*"

... and Peter asked the Questions- so he could make things happen.

## 2. A True Leader Must Have Initiative

If a man is to be wired for Leadership- he *has* to have Initiative. He has to be a “Self- starter”; he must have a Drive and a Determination that cannot be stopped. I call it having a little “ginger”. So, when things get difficult and most people stop- a true Leader will forge through the Problem because he CAN’T stop- his Personality won’t allow him to stop- so, there is just no Stop in him. And Peter had this Initiative in him- because God gave it to him. Peter not only asked all the Questions- but if you notice as you read through the Scriptures- Peter was also the first one to answer any Question Jesus asked. And he would just fearlessly dive right in- where angels feared to tread.

Jesus asked, *"Who do people say that I am?"* and Peter just blurted out- *"Oh, they say You're Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."* And then Jesus asked, *"But who do you say that I am?"* and once again- without any hesitation at all- Peter just blurted out- *"Oh, You're the Christ- the Son of the living God!"* And the rest of those guys were still processing the *first* Question.

So, Peter was very *"quick on the Draw"*. And that's also a part of great Leadership- being *"fast on the Trigger"*. Now that's always a doubled edged Sword because sometimes Peter had to *"reel it back in"* and try to “undo” things he shouldn’t have done; and “unsay” things he shouldn’t have said. And that’s why “having the Initiative” is often confused with a person being “Impulsive”.

And so, instead of taking time to analyze and go the Safe Way- a Leader will, many times- “blaze a Trail” for the rest of the people- not even considering the Danger. And that’s because to this kind of Leader- the most important thing is getting the Job done- NOT what it may cost him to get that job done.

And two things happened as a Result of Peter being like this:

1. He was rebuked more than all the other Apostles combined
2. He got more done than all the other Apostles combined

... but that's all part of Leadership too- to grab the “Initiative by the throat”.

Now it is true that Leaders like that will make huge Mistakes. But it is also true that Leaders like that will also learn from those many Mistakes.

People who are paralyzed by the Fear of making a Mistake don't make good Leaders. People who always second guess themselves; and are always uncertain of the Course they chose- don’t make good Leaders. Now they DO make good Mothers; and they make real good Scientists; and they even make good Writers- but they DON’T make good Leaders.

Leaders see a Need and they act. And this Dynamic is very simple even though it is very profound. And so, people ask, *"Why did you do that?"* And Leaders respond, *"Because I saw that it needed to be done."* So, Leaders see a

Need- and they act. They don't wait for a Committee or call a Meeting to assess the Danger. And that is the ONLY Reason why this Church is here. God showed me that there was a Need- and so, I acted. And God honored that Act by bringing all of you here.

During the Episode in the Garden of Gethsemane as recorded in **John 18**- there came the Roman soldiers from Port Antonia- something like 500 of them- including the High Priest and all the others from the Temple to arrest Jesus; and take Him back to Jerusalem. And this literal “sea of soldiers” is there- all armed and all well- trained to fight in Combat and what happens? Peter immediately draws out his sword and takes a swing at the head of Malchus- the slave of the High Priest to cut his head off. Now the High Priest was out in front of this crowd because he was the Dignitary. And so, he's out in the front and right next to him is his slave, Malchus.

And here is Peter trying to kill the guy. And the servant ducked just in time and didn't lose anything but his ear. Now keep in mind that Peter was NOT trying to cut that man's ear off. He was trying to kill that man- even though Peter was surrounded by at least 500 well-trained combat Veterans. So, Peter saw a Need- to protect Jesus- and he acted- not considering the Danger.

Now what is interesting is that the Bible says that Jesus rebuked Peter and said, *"Put your sword away, Peter. If you live by the sword- you'll die by the sword."* And Jesus was *essentially* saying that if you take a Life- then you're going to forfeit your own. Now in saying this- Jesus was affirming God's approval of Capital Punishment for pre-meditated Murder as a Divine Law as outlined back in **Genesis**.

But just think about this for a minute. There is a whole Roman army there to take Jesus. So, just exactly what does Peter think he's going to do- go through the whole group one at a time? So, by this we see Peter's Impulsiveness - how he acts before he thinks- and how he doesn't take the long view or the broad view. He simply sees the Need and he acted without any Hesitation. And we rightly criticize this- but we need to understand that this is the stuff of great Leaders. Because NOT hesitating- even though what he does is filled with Danger- will inspire others to follow him. And that's Leadership.

Now keep in mind that this “*natural Impulsiveness*”- this raw Attribute to say, “*Ready, Fire, Aim*” needs to be developed; and it needs to be refined; but it has to be there in the *first* place- or there is nothing to develop or refine.

I'd much rather have to reel somebody back in like this than try to get them to get up off their “Double-wide” and do something. I'd much rather recover somebody who acted impulsively like this rather than try to motivate somebody to take the Initiative in the first place.

There are just some people you have to drag with you as you move forward- while they are kicking and screaming the whole time. But that's NOT Peter. He always wanted to know what he didn't already know. And he always wanted to understand what he didn't already understand. And he was the *first* one to *ask* a Question; and he was the *first* one to *answer* a Question. And Peter was the *first* one to take the Initiative and charge ahead; and he was the *first* one to have to be corrected and refined and even rebuked. But that's the stuff of Leadership.

But even though Peter is born with this Inquisitiveness and this natural Initiative- this Gift is very raw; and so, it must be shaped; and molded; and developed; or it will become very Destructive over the long haul. So, it's going to be very critical to Peter for Jesus to develop these natural raw Traits that God has given to him.

But he's got to have some kind of “ginger”- some kind of “chutzpah”- 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 Drive- but that's the kind of guy Peter is. He's not trying to be a Hero- he is just acting normally by his Standards. And by the time the Lord has finished shaping that raw- God given Initiative- it has been transformed into a holy Boldness that God can use.

### **3. A True Leader Must Have Personal Involvement**

A true Leader is *always* right in the middle of the Action. A true Leader is NOT standing in the background telling everybody else what they need to do- while he lives a Life of Comfort and safety- away from the Dirt and away from the Fight. A true Leader is *personally* at Risk. And it is possible that he could lose *everything*- including his own Life. But people *will not* follow someone who doesn't *personally* risk it all- himself.

Peter was *always* right in the middle of the Fight. He was *always* the first one to speak or to act. Peter never hesitated; never looked around to see how many were going to agree with him or go with him. Peter saw a Need- and he acted! And he suffered many things because of this Attribute. But toward the End of his Life- after many years of living in the “*Fire of Purification*”; after being trained and honed by the Master, this great Leader wrote this in **1Peter 1:3-9**,

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

**5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,**

**7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

**8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,**

**9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.**

... this is Leadership in action!

All of the Founding Fathers of this Nation, who signed the Declaration of Independence- were Leaders like this. All 56 of them. And as they signed that Document- they knew that by declaring their Independence from England- they were breaking the Law; and would be considered to be Traitors. And if caught- they would suffer the Confiscation of all their earthly Possessions and be killed. And that much is widely known.

But what is NOT widely known is that five Signers were captured by the British; were tried as Traitors; and were brutally tortured before they were executed. Twelve of them had their homes burned to the ground. Two of them lost sons in Battle. Nine of them died from wounds sustained in Battle.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy Planter and Trader, saw his ships destroyed by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his Debts and he died in rags. Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay as his Family was kept in hiding. His Possessions were taken from him by the British and Poverty was his Reward as he died a Pauper.

Soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton and they never recovered from that theft. At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General, Cornwallis had taken over his home- using it for his Headquarters. So, he quietly urged General George Washington to open fire on his home. His home was destroyed; and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months from how they treated her. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying- as the British army was coming to capture him. Their 13 children ran through the fields as they fled for their Lives.

His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste by the British. For more than a year, he lived in forests and caves- finally returning home after the War to find his wife dead- and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion and a broken heart- never knowing what had become of his children. Norris and Livingston suffered similar Fates.

This is Leadership in action, dear friends. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing Ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of both Means and Education. They already had financial Security- but they valued Liberty more. And standing tall; talking straight; and without any hesitation at all- they wrote:

**"For the support of this Declaration, with firm Reliance on the Protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."**

... and most of them literally paid for Signing that Declaration with their Fortunes; their sacred Honor; as well as their Lives!

Many Centuries *earlier*, when all around them had given up and had bowed their knees to the pagan, Gentile King- three Hebrew men, who had been forcefully dragged to Babylon as slaves, stood tall and spoke without any hesitation:

**"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18)**

... and this too, is Leadership in action.

So, Leadership is not always the glamorous and easy Occupation that the modern "Pied- Pipers" and "Prima Donnas" who sell their spiritual "snake oil" on the "Hay, Wood, and Stubble" television Network portray. Many times, the *most-godly* Leaders- are the ones who suffer the MOST!

Now the Bible says that Peter walked on the water and began to sink. And many people concentrate on Peter's lack of Faith; and they preach great Sermons about how if only Peter would have kept his eyes on Jesus- then he wouldn't have sunk into the water. But it seems to me that they're missing the most important Point here. Peter walked on water! And whether he walked on water for five seconds or ten minutes or forty years - nobody else in the history of the world has ever done that!

So, the real Question here is NOT about Peter's *lack* of Faith- but how much Faith did the other elven men have? I mean they never even got out of the boat! Talk about weak Faith. So, before you criticize Peter's obvious "lack of Faith" here- remember where he was when he began to sink; and remember where the other eleven were. They never sunk- and Peter did sink- that is true. But the *reason* the other eleven men never sunk- is because they never got out of the boat- while Peter did!

Many times- people look at Peter's Life and they say, "*Well, he's around the fire; and he denies Jesus; and the cock crows!*" But before you condemn Peter too quickly- remember that once again- Peter was the ONLY ONE of the Apostles who was there! Peter was the ONLY man called to be an Apostle who was out there by that fire! And so, the real Question is, "*Where were the other eleven men*"? I'll tell you where they were- they were running for their Lives- scared to death that they might get caught!

So, Peter was in a position where such a Temptation to betray Jesus could hit him- because he was the ONLY ONE doing his best to stay as close to Christ as he could! And that's a Leader! He certainly isn't perfect- but he IS trying! So, what we learn from this is that everybody else may bail out- and run for the hills- but a true Leader stays as close to the Action as he can get- even when it endangers him personally.

I'm not interested in following a man, who wants to send down lofty Messages from afar. I want the people that I follow to be right there in the middle of the Fight- engaged and personally involved and not sitting on some mountain top away from the Action.

So, this is the three Elements of raw material that God put in Peter. There was that *insatiable* Curiosity; and the *unquenchable* Initiative; and then the *personal* Involvement. Peter asked all the Questions; he was the *first* guy who tried to charge ahead for whatever Responsibility needed to be done; and he also wanted to be right in the middle of everything.

That's the stuff that great Leaders are made of. And so, the Lord knew that; and He wove all of that in the fabric of who Peter was in his mother's womb. And now when Peter reaches adulthood- it's time for the Lord to shape, and refine, all that raw material so that God can use him; and so that God will be honored by him.

According to History, as Peter was led to his Death, he realized that the Roman soldiers were going to crucify him. And he told them that he was not worthy to die like his Lord. And so, Peter begged them to crucify him upside down.

It was said that it took four days for Peter to die. But all the while- as his Life escaped him- inch by inch- Peter was constantly preaching the Gospel to those around him- until he could no longer speak. And this old Fisherman; this old man,

who had walked on water with Jesus; This old, illiterate man, who had been rebuked so many times by Lord; this man, who had denied that he even knew Jesus; this boisterous, impulsive, great and godly Leader was now facing the Moment Jesus had prophesied about when He said this in **John 21:18**:

**Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.**

... and Peter died! And instantly- Peter received the Crown that ALL who are found Faithful will receive on that Day!

Amen. 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.

