



Small Group Study Guide

PETER

*A FLAWED, YET FAITHFUL
FOLLOWER OF JESUS*

August 16, 2020
"Bedrock or
Stumbling Block"

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending Jesus to show us the way to you. We thank you for Simon Peter who answered your call to be the rock upon which you built your church. Open our eyes to the work you call us to do and give us the courage to say yes. We know that as you were able to use Simon Peter, flaws and all, you are able to work through us to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Matthew 16:13-18, 21-24 (NIV)

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus asks the disciples a question that begs an answer from all of us – “who do you say that I am?” In this moment, Peter declares that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus declares that Peter is correct and that he will build his ‘church’ upon the rock (Peter) and nothing will destroy it. Jesus was giving Peter and through him, the church, the authority to do his work in the world.

Jesus makes it clear that if we want to be his disciple it will require self-denial, sacrifice (take up your cross), and following him. We all want a convenient faith, but following Jesus requires an inconvenient faith.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Have you been able to see your faith story in Peter’s story? Explain.
- 2) In your own words, who do you say that Jesus is?
- 3) Today, virtually no one anywhere dies on a cross. So, what do you believe it means for you to “take up your cross” and follow Jesus?
- 4) During the message, Pastor Eric said “the primary way God works in the world today is through the Church?” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- 5) Peter, like almost all first-century Jews, expected a conquering Messiah, a figure of intimidating power. That made it hard for him to grasp Jesus’ understanding of his self-sacrificing mission. What assumptions about life, success and greatness do you have that make it harder for you to accept Jesus’ teaching about a truly great human life? What has helped you move beyond those inherited cultural assumptions?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week ask yourself the following two questions: Who do you personally say that Jesus is in your life? Are you denying yourself, taking up your cross and following him?