

=LIFE OF PETER=

Lesson 3

Peter Hears the Word of God

AIM: to teach my pupils some of the lesson which Peter learned from Jesus.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask your pupils to describe for the class the kinds of schools which they have attended. Of what construction were the buildings? What size classes met in the rooms? How far did they travel to school? Do the pupils think that their teachers knew enough about the subject which they were teaching to convince the class that they were authorities?

INTRODUCTION: Peter, as one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, found himself in “school” daily. There were many different locations for the “school” which Peter attended. Many different descriptions apply to the schoolrooms in which Peter was taught. Wherever Peter was with the Lord, he was a student. Many times he was an outspoken student, but he had to know the answers to his questions. It is most important that all of us know the lessons which Jesus taught Peter. It was a very practical school which Peter attended, with Jesus as his teacher. As a “newborn babe” in Christ, Peter desired the “sincere milk of the word.” He admonished the readers of his epistles to desire to know the Word also. I Peter 2:2, 3.

I. PETER LEARNED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE DAY. See Matthew 15:1-20; 16:1-12; Mark 7:1-23; 8:10-21.

1. Wherever Jesus went, the Sadducees, Pharisees and scribes could be found. As the crowds followed Jesus from city to city, from seaside to river bank, from synagogue to synagogue, the religious leaders of the day could be found among them. From the nature of their conversations with Him, we see that they were not in sympathy with Jesus’ teachings, for they did not want the loyalty of the people toward them to be transferred to Him.
 - 1) The Pharisees were a group of Jews who were very strict about adhering to the Mosaic law. The outward appearance of religion became all-important to them. They honored and practiced the traditions of men more than the Scriptures.
 - 2) The Sadducees composed a Jewish, religious party that was smaller than the Pharisees. They were educated men and mostly wealthy and of good position. They denied the truth of a resurrection and said that the soul dies with the body. They denied the existence of angels and spirits. They said that God is not concerned with whether people do well or whether they do evil. They claimed to have come through the high priestly line.
 - 3) Scribes were copiers of the law and other parts of the Scriptures. They also devoted themselves to the study and interpretation of the law. The decisions of the scribes became the oral law or tradition. Each noted scribe had a company of disciples about him which he taught.
2. Jesus spoke directly to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes.
 - 1) They would travel for miles to seek a debate with Him. In addition to the members of these groups who lived in the areas where Jesus was, there were those members who would travel from Jerusalem to Capernaum and Bethsaida and Magdala—as much as seventy miles.
 - 2) Jesus denounced the practices and teachings of the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes. Peter was present when Jesus said the doctrine of these groups was false, as applied to their practices. The outward appearances and actions of these men were contrary to what the men really were. They tried to appear to be righteous men.
3. Jesus instructed His disciples that whatever comes out of man determines whether he is clean before God; it is not what goes into him that decides this. Peter asked Jesus what He meant by this statement. Jesus said to Peter, “Don’t you understand yet? Don’t you know that whatever comes out of the mouth of a man has originated in his heart? It is the inner condition of the heart that determines whether a man is clean enough to be in God’s presence. Eating with dirty hands does not make a man dirty in his heart.”

II. PETER LEARNED THAT JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH EVERYBODY WHO TRUSTS HIM.

1. Jesus ate in the home of Matthew.

- 1) Matthew had been a publican until Jesus called him to be one of His disciples. Matthew was a hated man of society. In his dealings as tax collector, Matthew had taken more payment than was required, keeping the excess for himself. Matthew's "place of business" was in Capernaum, which was located on the highway between Damascus and Jerusalem. Matthew got saved.
- 2) Matthew had a meal prepared to which he invited Jesus and people who were obviously sinners just as he was. The other disciples were present also.
- 3) Jesus made the announcement that He had not come to people who were called righteous. In Mark 2:17b, He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." See Matthew 9:10-13; Mark 2:15-20; Luke 5:27-35.
- 4) Jesus also stated that going through the forms of religion was not accepted by Him. Jesus wants people to be seeking mercy from God rather than bringing sacrifices without recognizing their sinfulness. Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8.
2. Jesus called His disciples His brethren, sisters, and mother.
 - 1) This was after He had taught in the synagogue of Capernaum. Jesus was surrounded by a crowd of people. In the crowd were those who informed Jesus that His brothers and sisters and mother were outside and that they wanted to see Him.
 - 2) Jesus pointed to His disciples. In Mark 3:34b, He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" He said that everyone who does His will is part of His family—they are His brothers, sisters, and mother. Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:21.
3. Jesus regarded and considered little children.
 - 1) Jesus used the humble spirit of a little child as an object lesson for His disciples. They had been discussing among themselves who would or should be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. They came and asked Jesus who should have the principle places in His kingdom. Jesus placed the little child in their midst. They saw the lack of pride and the inability of the little child. In Matthew 18:4, Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Jesus showed that giving attention to teaching and leading little children to Him is just as important as teaching and leading adults to Him. Near the Jordan River one day, many learned adults were "bombarding" Jesus with questions. The discussion was important to the disciples. In the midst of the question-and-answer session, there came some parents who wanted Jesus to lay His hands upon their little children. They wanted their little children to get close to Him. The disciples were impatient with the interruption. They started to send the children away with: "Don't bother the Master; can't you see that He is busy?" The disciples were rebuked by Jesus, as we read in Mark 10:14, 15, "...Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God...Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

III. PETER LEARNED THAT THERE IS A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR JESUS' FOLLOWERS TO OBSERVE.

1. Peter heard the Sermon on the Mount with the other disciples. Matthew 5-7.
2. Peter learned that immediately after people are saved, they are to use that which has been given them by God. In Matthew 5:13a, Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." In Matthew 5:14a, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." Jesus told them to let the light of God shine through them and to observe His teachings so that they, the salt, would not lose their seasoning power or their ability to savor (to flavor, to give distinctive quality, to give delight and pleasure) the world. Matthew 5:13, 14.

IV. PETER LEARNED THAT JESUS WANTS SERVICE FROM PEOPLE WHO TRUST HIM.

1. Jesus was preaching in the cities of the twelve disciples. He pronounced woe upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The majority of the people in these cities would not accept Him as their

Saviour. Jesus had performed many, many miracles in demonstration of His power in these places. Matthew 11:20-27.

2. Jesus extended an invitation to all to come and place their burdens upon Him. He promised that He would bear all the burdens and that He would give rest to those who trust Him.
3. Jesus then asked all who trust Him to get yoked into His team. He promised that His burden of responsibility would be light and that His yoke would be easy. Matthew 11:28-30. He also said, "Pray for workers." Matthew 9:37, 38.

V. PETER LEARNED HIS POSITION IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND MAN. Matthew 23:1-12.

1. Jesus warned His disciples not to take undue honor and elevations from men to whom they are ministering.
2. No disciple should accept the term of Rabbi for himself. Christ is the Master of all. No man should be called "Father." There is only one Father of the truth; that is our Heavenly Father. Matthew 23:12, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
3. Peter asked Jesus what he would receive for having followed Him, for having given up business and normal home life to follow Him. Jesus answered, "And every one that hath forsaken houses...shall receive an hundredfold...But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Matthew 19:27-30.
4. Be a minister; don't expect people to minister to you. Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45.

VI. PETER LEARNED THAT NOT EVERYBODY WHO WOULD HEAR THE WORD OF GOD WOULD BE SAVED. Matthew 13:1-35.

1. Jesus sat by the Sea of Galilee. He talked to the multitudes who gathered to hear Him. He spoke to them in parables—stories that have hidden spiritual meanings.
2. The disciples later asked Jesus why He spoke so that not everybody would understand. He replied that those who had hardened their hearts against Him should not know the meaning of His words.

VII. PETER LEARNED THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

1. We discussed in our last lesson that the first reason Peter believed this truth was because he saw that the power which Jesus demonstrated could be from none other than the Son of God.
2. The second reason that he could make such a statement is because our Heavenly Father taught him that such is so. Jesus said that Peter's father, Jonas, could not have taught this truth to Peter because flesh and blood could not know this. Matthew 16:16, 17.

CONCLUSION: In Luke 9:23-27, we see a summary of Jesus' teachings which Peter had been learning: denying self, following Him daily, losing life in service for Jesus, not being ashamed of Him. Jesus predicted that some of the disciples that were there with Him that day would see the kingdom of God. We will discuss this in our lesson next week.