

=LIFE OF PETER=

Lesson 5

Peter Sees the Majesty of Jesus

AIM: to teach my pupils that all authority rests in Jesus.

POINT OF CONTACT: Teacher, talk with the class about the definition of a secret. It could be something that is kept from the knowledge of others, but shared confidentially with only a few. Whenever secrets are gossip about others, then they are wrong. In the home, in government and in business, however, it is advisable that there be secrets until plans about something have been completely formed for announcement to others. Discuss times when secrets are necessary.

INTRODUCTION: Peter the fisherman was happy to have his brother, Andrew, lead him to Jesus. Peter had been hoping for the coming of the promised Messiah. The Messiah would establish God's kingdom upon the earth. People would be forced to recognize the existence and the laws of God. Old injustices would find quick judgment, the ways of war would be turned to peace, even wild animals and poisonous snakes would pose no more threat to people and animals.

There was much that Peter had to learn, however, about Jesus, and there was much that he had to learn about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Even though Peter had learned from our Heavenly Father the identity of Jesus—the Son of God—Peter's knowledge concerning the Son of God and the work which He must do was still incomplete. There were some things that Peter needed to know.

- I. PETER NEEDED TO KNOW JESUS' PURPOSE FOR COMING TO EARTH. See Matthew 16:21-28.
 1. John the Baptist had declared the purpose as he pointed to the Lamb of God.
 - 1) Recall that the tabernacle and the temple had included in their schedules the sacrifice of lambs. Each lamb was slain as a substitute for the person who confessed his sins over him. The lamb had to be pure, free from spot or blemish, and less than a year old.
 - 2) Andrew heard John the Baptist declare this. Andrew led Peter to Jesus. Peter, as a good Jew, knew from the Old Testament Scriptures the significance of the lamb.
 2. Jesus stated that He must die and rise again.
 - 1) He said that He had to go to Jerusalem. In that city the rulers of the Jews would cause Him to suffer and to die. He would, however, rise from the dead.
 - 2) Peter spoke out emphatically against these plans. Matthew 16:22, 23. Whether Peter was planning to protect Jesus against such events or whether he did not quite believe that this could happen, he drew a sharp rebuke from Jesus. Jesus called him "Satan." Anyone who would attempt to thwart Jesus' plan to die and to rise again would be acting according to the Devil's plans to keep people from being saved. Peter's denial of the possibility of Jesus' plan being fulfilled was according to sinful man's desire, not God's desire. It was as if Peter wanted life to go on with Jesus just as it had been; he was happy to observe Jesus' power and to watch His work among people. He was glad to have received power from Jesus to do work like Jesus and then report back to Him.
- II. PETER NEEDED TO KNOW GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS OWN LIFE.
 1. He was to deny himself. He was not to think of his own well-being ahead of God's plan for him. He must shoulder the responsibility that God was giving him to preach the Gospel.
 2. He could look forward to a future time of reward. Jesus promised that when He would come in His glory with His angels, He would reward everyone according to his works, but the work must be done first.
- III. PETER NEEDED TO KNOW THAT ALL AUTHORITY AND GLORY BELONG TO JESUS. Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36; John 1:14.
 1. Jesus chose the place and the time for Peter to learn this truth.

- 1) It was six days after Jesus had rebuked Peter for saying that Jesus would not die. It was probably at night because Jesus usually went to the mountain at night to pray. Matthew 14:23, 24; Luke 6:12; 21:37; 22:39. At night, also, all the circumstances connected with Jesus' glorification would thus be more prominently seen. Luke 9:32 mentions that Peter and James and John were "heavy with sleep." Jesus told Peter, along with James and John, to follow Him.
- 2) Jesus led them up into a high mountain. This mountain is not named in the Bible. It is thought that the mountain was Mount Tabor.

(Note: There is no difficulty with the fact that Matthew and Mark both say that Jesus led them up into the mountain six days after Peter was called "Satan" by Jesus and that Luke says "about eight days." Matthew and Mark's declaration of the time are exclusive of the day on which Jesus talked thus with Peter and the day when they actually went up into the mountain.)

2. Jesus' kingdom was made apparent by the phenomena which took place there.
 - 1) Jesus was praying; the disciples were watching. The scene which they saw was real; it was not a vision. What Peter, James, and John saw was not a vision which someone could see while he sleeps. They actually saw the incident take place.
 - 2) Jesus' countenance and appearance became greatly changed. It was as if there were a light from within and without Jesus, shining through and on His face. The clothing that He was wearing became as white as snow; great light was being shone on it. Jesus' glory was truly seen.
 - 3) Two men appeared and talked with Jesus. The three chosen disciples recognized the two men, Moses and Elijah. Peter, James, and John could understand their conversation; they were talking about Jesus' decease, the Scripture says. Luke 9:31. Peter saw that when Jesus had spoken of His coming death He had known what He was talking about. The fulfillment of God's plans, to which the law of Moses pointed and the prophecies concerning Elijah were spoken, was being accomplished. Jesus said of Himself that He had come to fulfill the law. Matthew 5:17. Elijah's prophecy is not yet completely finished. Malachi 4 will reach its fulfillment when Elijah comes again in the great and terrible day when the Lord brings judgment upon the earth. Peter, James, and John saw that God had spoken in times past by the prophets and the law, but now He is speaking by His Son. Peter became so beside himself during this spectacular scene that he started talking without knowing what he was saying. He made, what to us is, a stupid suggestion only because we know the Gospel. He suggested that three tabernacles be built there on the mountain—one to be named for Jesus, one for Elijah and one for Moses. Jesus understood that Peter did not know what he was jabbering about and seemingly chose to ignore this remark because it was not of the nature that would hinder any eternal plans.
 - 4) A Voice from a cloud spoke to the disciples. The cloud had come down and surrounded Moses and Elijah. Upon the appearance of the cloud and the sound of the Voice from the cloud, the disciples dropped face down to the ground in fright. The Voice said, "This is my beloved Son: hear him," Mark 9:7b. God made known the absolute authority which had been given to Jesus. There was to be no more mistake about the fact that what Jesus said was absolute truth and that whatever He commanded was to be obeyed.
 - 5) Jesus quieted the fear of the disciples. He had the right to do this. Since He knows everything, He could rightfully calm the fears of the disciples, assuring them that everything was according to predetermined plan.
 - 6) Jesus instructed Peter, James, and John not to tell anyone of the incident which they had witnessed on the top of the mountain; that is, they were not to tell it until the right time. The right time to tell about it would be after Jesus was crucified and then resurrected from the dead.

IV. PETER RECOGNIZED THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS.

1. He kept the command of Jesus not to tell anyone of seeing the transfiguration until the right time. Peter learned that in Jesus was invested all authority as well as all power. I Peter 3:22. It seems that he discussed the event upon occasion with James and John. Mark 9:10 tells us that they questioned “one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” They knew the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, but they evidently could not understand the special resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
2. Peter obeyed Jesus’ command to tell others of the transfiguration when the right time came. II Peter 1:16-18 records this witness of Peter. He revealed the secret according to God’s plan. Peter’s life did eventually fall into the purpose that God had for it.

CONCLUSION: Peter is an example of the Christian whose “old man” is warring against the “new man.” One minute he could be completely led by God to understand an aspect of His truth and His will and, seemingly, in the next minute he could understand only man’s desire and thus fall into Satan’s plans. The Christian has to beat down his flesh daily in order for God’s wisdom, purpose, and power to be channeled through him.