

Shaping a Rough Diamond

Introduction

- I've got a friend; someone I admire, look to for encouragement, help, inspiration!
 - only trouble is, he lived a couple of thousand years ago!
- **Peter!** one of my heroes! **Open; Honest; Direct; Down-to-earth; Loved his Lord; Said the stupidest things! Failed miserably!** Yet was rock on which Christ built church!
- Do you ever get down when you consider how poor your own service of Christ is?
 - daunted by spiritual super-heros?
 - *I just can't do this!! Why bother any more?*
- Happens to all of us at one time or another.
 - how can God have patience with us?
 - do we just have to try harder?
 - or do we **settle for miserable lives of mediocrity** in our service of Christ?
- Peter provides a reality check on how God really deals with us!
- Two studies: Shaping a rough diamond... using that shaped diamond as a hardened tool...
 - (probably look at another of the disciples, Andrew, the week after that)

(A) Called

- *(Mark 1:16-18) As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.*
- First thing to say about Peter was that **Jesus called him:** (1) repentance (leaving behind old life), (2) personal (by name), (3) focus on following Jesus (not on a system of religious belief), (4) had a task (fishers of men)
- Same calling is extended to us:-
 - repentance; personal; focus on Jesus; task of witness
- Peter got off to a good start - he responded to that call... it was later he started to get himself into trouble!

(B) Confidence & Confusion

- General intro on **confident** then **confused**
 - series of 4 incidents where he tried to follow, but his confusion shows up as much as his confidence!

1. Confess Jesus as Christ, Opposes Jesus' Death

- *(Mark 8:27-33) On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*
- Do you remember time Peter figured out who Jesus was?
 - "who do you say I am?" "the Christ!"
 - critical point in Jesus' ministry

- from here Jesus turns towards Jerusalem, towards the Cross.
- That's why Peter's opposition to him dying is so dangerous - ultimate temptation!
- Peter is saying "You are Lord... but lets tackle the problem in a human way!"
- Amazing, God given insight into who Jesus was... A confident affirmation of Lordship; yet confusion over how to serve.
- This is sometimes how we act: "Jesus is Lord... but we'll solve this problem by throwing money at it!", or "J is L... but we'll take this opportunity by merely organising everything!"
- **God's way - God's methods.**

2. Transfiguration

- *Mark 9:2-10*
- Peter, James & John with Jesus up the mountain.
- Privilege of seeing vision of Jesus in his full glory!
- Tried to capture the moment, didn't know what to say, blurts out some nonsense about putting up some tents!
- Confidence, excitement - and real confusion
- This time Peter has tried to capture the moment, he's tried to hold onto that mountain-top experience and not return to real life service.
- "So heavenly minded he's no earthly use!"
Almost opposite of his previous confusion - "Jesus is Lord... but lets not bother telling anyone in the real world about it!"

3. Faith to Step out of boat, Eyes off Jesus & sinks

- *Matthew 14:22-33*
- Do you remember this story?
- After feeding of the 5000... Disciples into boat and head over lake... Jesus up mountainside to pray... Walks on water to join them... Peter hops out to say hello!... Sinks... pulled out... storm calmed.
- Confidence that he of all the disciples could walk on water with Jesus too!
- Confusion - took his eyes off his Lord
- (Note how Jesus never took his eyes off Peter...!)
- Good start: focus on Jesus; shifts his gaze, starts to sink!

4. "I'll never desert you", 3-fold denial

- *Mark 14:27-31, 50, 66-72*
- "Even if ALL fall away, I will not!"
- Garden... praying... sleeping... arrest... follow guards... courtyard... mingle... people ask him... DENIES!
- broken hearted - had seemed so real, that promise to serve Jesus.
- what happened? - overly self-confident.
- Pride entered even at point of greatest faith, of greatest confidence.
- Confusion - self-reliance rather than Christ-reliance.
- "I can do this!"... Preaching?!... Visiting round parish... SS teacher in 2nd year... starting to get the hang of this parenting lark!... knocking on doors style evangelism... holiday club... whatever it is.
- *Observation: often its the second time we do something, that we lose that dependence on Christ.*

(C) Commissioned

- *John 21:15-22*
- Is poor old Peter ever going to get anything right???
- Well... yes!
- After resurrection; still feeling pain of letting Lord down; Jesus comes to him to

bring forgiveness and a fresh start:

- (re-)commissioned for huge task of building the church;
- called again to "Follow me"

- Things have changed - how?

The Cross.

- Peter's perspective has shifted utterly:
 - from "what can I do to serve Jesus?"
 - to "What has Jesus done for me?"
- His attitude, outlook on life, has been turned upside down.
- Ultimately, what made the difference was that Jesus died for him.
- Peter can say "Yes Lord, you know that I love" because he knows that Jesus loves him.
 - he can see the nail prints, he stood at the foot of the cross, he knows Jesus died for him
- "Worshippers in Fintry ... will you love me?"