

Call to Obedience #463
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

This Man Called Peter

Reimar A. C. Schultze

From my observation, Peter is probably the most popular man of the New Testament Scriptures. We readily identify with him simply because he is so much like us. Certainly because Peter experienced failure, many of us also glibly associate ourselves with him by saying: “Are not we also like Peter?” We are comfortable with this man, but unfortunately, we should not be comfortable with him at all. Our problem is that we really do not know him. Therefore, I come to you today with the authority of the Holy Spirit to declare to you the very opposite of man’s common perception of Peter: “No, we are not all like Peter—there is hardly anybody who is like Peter.” This means that if we seek comfort in Peter’s weaknesses and find kinship with him because of it, we are living in an enormous lie that the devil has perpetrated on millions of Christians throughout the ages. This lie has been used as an excuse to justify their sloppy, half-hearted, religious lifestyles. Because Peter was flawed and failed at times, many of us think that we, too, can fail and sin; not realizing that it is how we react after we have failed and sinned that makes all the difference.

But let us look at Peter more carefully. Today, I want to prove to you that Peter was one of the greatest saints who ever lived on the face of the earth. The reason why Jesus called him and entrusted him with the keys of the kingdom of heaven is **not because he was like one of us, but because he was like none of us!** Consider the following observations and decide whether the Peter you have used as an excuse for your sins should not be used for that purpose anymore. The fact is that most church people are much more like Judas than Peter. They seem to, or claim to follow Jesus year after year, but in reality, their hearts are far from Him; and they sell Jesus out over and over again in favor of their own self-interests just as Judas did. Here is the Peter you need to know:

1. Peter had a deep knowledge of the corrupt nature of sin. **He knew that sin and holiness cannot coexist in the same heart.** Early on, Peter said: *...Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord* (Luke 5:8). Do you know

that sin and holiness cannot coexist in the same heart? You have either the one or the other, but not both. Later on when Peter did sin, he wept bitterly in repentance. Is that the way you respond to your sins? If not, take note of the fact that you are not like Peter.

2. When Jesus called Peter, he immediately left his occupation. Immediately! There was no “Give me some time” request on his part. He did not request: “Let me first get my house in order.” Peter did not struggle or hesitate. Indeed, that was his life: there never was a struggle about him following Jesus. From the day he was called, there was never a day he did not live in the presence of Jesus. And the feeling was mutual. **As Peter did not want to spend a day without Jesus, Jesus did not want to spend a day without Peter.** It was always: “And Jesus took Peter...; And Jesus took Peter...; And Jesus took Peter...” My friend, do you have such a relationship with Jesus that you never want to spend a day without Him? If Jesus would return to earth, would you be the one out of all the people on this planet that He would want to have with Him all the time more than anyone else? Again, if that is not the case with you, you are not like Peter.

3. From the many disciples Jesus had, Peter immediately was drawn into the inner circle. Peter was always listed as the first: *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother* (Matt.10:2). **This clearly puts Peter on the level of all other inner circle people of the Bible such as Moses and Elijah, whom Peter got to meet on the Mount of Transfiguration.** Here we have the “innermost circle” of the Old Testament meeting the “innermost circle” of the Gospels. My friend, if you are not in that innermost circle, do not compare yourself to Peter. Please do not attribute your spiritual trash to Peter anymore. You are not like him. None of us are like him.

4. When Peter walked the streets, the sick, the blind and the lame were laid on the sidewalks to be healed by Peter’s shadow as he was passing by (Acts 5:15-16). What does your shadow do to the sick, the blind and the lame, my friend? What does your life mean to others? You are not like Peter.

Now, my dear fellow pilgrim journeying to the city of God, let me ask you a couple of piercing questions: **“How much time should be allowed for the journey from our unconverted state to the inner circle? Answer: for Peter it was less than a split second.”** I have heard it over and over again throughout my ministry: “Well, Pastor, I am getting there.” Then the next year, it is still: “Pastor, I am getting there.” Then another year or 10 years pass by

and I still hear the response: “I am still working on getting there.” Why are you not responding in the same way as Peter did? Why don’t you just get out of your boat, leave the fishing behind you and begin to follow Jesus instantly? By doing so, you, too, can have instant intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ as Peter did. I am not talking about maturity—that requires time. But I am talking about intimacy that can and will begin the moment you take up your cross and follow Jesus. For you to abide in Christ is not a matter of time but of the will. Whosoever will may come.

5. Again, **Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven.** God gave the keys to the covenant relationship to Abraham; He gave the keys to the age of the law to Moses; and He gave the keys to His sovereign kingdom in the hearts of men to Peter. So here you have Abraham, Moses and Peter. What mighty men they were: Abraham was the father of God’s covenant people; Moses was the recipient of divine law; and Peter was given the keys to the kingship of God in our hearts, to a new kingdom which would last forever. And then God helped Peter to proclaim the keynote address at the opening of the church age. Yes, Peter opened the kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost.

6. Here is another point to consider: **when Peter was rebuked, he did not run off.** Once, Jesus said to him: ...*Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men* (Matt. 16:23). What a verbal beating! This was the faithful Peter, to whom Jesus had just promised to give the keys to God’s kingdom, who now made a loving, well-intentioned, misguided effort to save Jesus from death. We may think that Peter should have been rewarded for his kindness and zeal, but instead, Jesus gave him a flogging. Hebrews 12:6 says: *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth* (the word, scourgeth, is left out of practically all other English translations besides the KJV). God does not coddle and spoil His children: He drove Adam out of paradise for one bite of the forbidden fruit; He forbade Moses from entering the promised land after he struck the rock; and He replaced Elijah for allowing himself to be discouraged for too long, 40 days. But after their beatings, none of these men ran away. Because they took the beatings and the humiliation, Peter, Moses and Elijah were all invited to be with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration! When you are being scourged, it does not mean that God is done with you. No, rather it is the opposite; He is just taking you deeper and higher. Take your beating, stick with Jesus, and you will be able to claim what

Matthew wrote: *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father...* (Matt. 13:43).

7. Peter had so much faith in Jesus that he believed that he and Jesus, just the two of them, could take on the whole Roman Empire. Jesus' power would make people fall backwards and Peter would wield his sword to cut off their ears (see John 18:3-11). Further, **Peter believed that everything Jesus had done, he could do also.** He was so convinced of that fact, that he walked on water. There is no record that anyone else ever did so—only Peter. Yes, if you have not walked on water yet, you are not like Peter.

To sum it all up: do not use Peter as a scapegoat for your haphazard spiritual life. No one, that is absolutely no one, has ever lived like Peter. That is one reason why Jesus gave him the keys to the kingdom of God. It was not because he was mature or well-seasoned. Put simply: Peter had a loving heart and a passionate zeal for his Lord. As a result, he was destined to be the one to open the church age, from which God began to dwell in man and man in God. Let all of us get close to Jesus as Peter did and then we will be getting closer to God. Then we will be receiving keys which allow us to open something that only God can open through us. It might be the door to someone's healing, salvation or restoration. It will allow you to experience joy unspeakable and full of glory. Also on the practical side, if we are "all like Peter," we will seldom miss prayer meetings or church services; we will all give generously to our church; and we will witness for Jesus to almost everyone we meet. We will always be about the Father's business.

As for me, I am not a Peter, but I am striving to be more like him. I suggest that you can do likewise.

Call to Obedience # 463
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org