

“A Fisher of Men”

By: Corey McMullen

NTS 101

“And He said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of Men.” -Matt 4:19

Anyone who knows me, knows I love to fish. I immediately connected with the man named Peter in the New Testament. Through out Peter’s life he displayed moments of weakness, and yet, God chose to allow Him to witness the transfiguration and be the leader of the Apostles.

Peter was enthusiastic, strong-willed, impulsive, and, at times, brash. But for all his strengths, Peter had several failings in his life. Still, the Lord who chose him continued to mold him into exactly who He intended Peter to be. Peter, also known as Simon, son of John, might be perhaps the most famous fisherman in the world. He was from a town called Bethsaida but also lived in Capernaum. In the synoptic gospels, it tells us that Jesus healed Peter’s mother in law there. By this story alone we know that Peter was married or at least was married at one time. He fished with the “sons of Zebedee” John, James, and his brother Andrew. According to the first chapter in John, Andrew and another unmentioned disciple were disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptist declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God, he found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. For the next three years, Peter lived as a disciple of Jesus.

Jesus gave Simon the name Cephas which translated to Peter, Petros, meaning stone or rock in the Greek. Peter is the “rock” that Jesus chose to build the church upon, and this inspires me. Jesus is always intentional. He gave Peter a name which signified the rock of which His church would be built.

In Mark 6, Jesus appears in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee. He instructs Peter to step out on the waves. Peter’s obedience in this matter shows up his trust in Jesus. However, when he gets onto the waves, he loses focus of Jesus and begins to sink. Like Peter, I find myself guilty of this. As we move on, we see that Jesus only ask for Peter to give him his hand. All we have to do is reach for God in the storm.

Further into Jesus’ teaching, Peter is told he will deny Jesus three times. (Luke 22) Once again, Peter is sure of his faith. It isn’t until the rooster crows three times, does Peter realize he has done just as Jesus has prophesied. Peter cried bitterly in repentance.

It is believed that Peter wrote 1 Peter and 2nd Peter in the New Testament. 1 Peter is written as a general epistle to Christians to encourage suffering Christians and call them to Holiness. Second Peter is written to believers in general as a warning against false teachers.

I feel Peter was included in the New Testament to show us that Jesus is concerned with our hearts, he is always there for us to reach out to, and even knowing we will deny Him, He has

a plan for us to see His great transformation when He returns. Peter is included to show us that God will use us, faults and all. He is the rock of the church and the Leader of the disciples.

From Peter's story I have learned; Jesus overcomes fear. Jesus forgives unfaithfulness. Jesus teaches patiently. Jesus sees us as He intends for us to be.

The New Testament reports that Peter was unlearned in the sense that he was untrained in the Mosaic Law, and it is doubtful that he knew Greek. He apparently learned slowly and messed up time and time again, but later, when entrusted with responsibility, he demonstrated that he was mature and capable. Peter was not only among the first disciples called by Jesus, he was frequently their spokesman, for good and bad. One thing that Peter is credited with is the special insight that he had concerning Jesus' identity. Peter was the first to call Jesus the Son of the Living God – the Messiah, referenced in Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20 and Matthew 16:16-17. Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answers, "The Messiah." When Jesus called him, Peter knew that He was of God and felt unworthy to be in Jesus' presence (Luke 5:6-8). Even so, Jesus didn't hesitate and told Peter and Andrew that He would make them fishers of men (Mark 1:17).