

26-0830a Transcript

26-0830a - *Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth, Part 1*, Jim Lokenbauer

Bible Readers: John Nousek and Roger Raines

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Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth, Part 1

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 1:14): John Nousek

2 Peter 1:1-4: (0:04) Good morning. So we have God's Word this morning, comes to us from 2nd Peter (0:11) chapter 1 verses 1 through 4. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus (0:19) Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior (0:25) Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours. Grace and peace be (0:33) yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine (0:40) power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge (0:49) of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given (0:55) us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate (1:03) in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil (1:12) desires. Amen (1:14)

2nd Reading (1:19 - 2:54): Roger Raines

2 Peter 1:5-11: (1:19) Good morning. I will be continuing in the second letter of Peter chapter 1 (1:27) verses 5 through 11, and I'll be reading from the New American Standard Bible. Now, for this (1:34) very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith supply, moral excellence, and in your (1:42) moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your (1:49) self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your (1:56) godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these (2:04) qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor (2:11) unfruitful in the tree of knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks (2:18) qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from (2:25) his former sins. Therefore, brother, be all the more diligent to make certain (2:32) about his calling, and choose you for as long as you practice these things, you (2:38) will never stumble. For in this way, the entrance of the eternal kingdom of our (2:45) Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be well abundantly supplied to you. This concludes this reading. (2:54)

Transcript (0:04 - 39:06), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(2:59) Thank you, Roger, for reading that. That was a good, lengthy reading. I appreciate it. (3:05) Thank you, John. I was up late last night working on this.

I was up early this (3:13) morning working on this lesson, and in my haste, I forgot my bowl of heart (3:21) medications. If you see me freaking out here, all those medicines regulate a very (3:29) dangerous heartbeat. So, like I was kidding with Kevin earlier, if you see me suddenly (3:36) freak out, that's my defibrillator going off, so don't touch me.

Well, this morning I'm (3:46) presenting a lesson called Peter's Recipe for Christian Growth, and I'm going to be (3:53) talking about my favorite character in the Bible, Peter. And why is he my favorite (3:59) character? Well, I think there's a little bit of Peter in all of us. He was a man (4:05) who was greatly flawed.

I'm a man who's greatly flawed. And God was able to use (4:12) Peter to do great things, and so that gives all of us hope that God, too, can (4:20) use us in his ministry. But more importantly than that is, Peter was a (4:30) perseverer.

He overcame. He's a guy who tried and tried again, had failures, but (4:40) kept trying. He persevered over personality flaws, over bad decisions, and (4:50) finally became that wonderful leader in the fledgling church that Jesus wanted (4:58) him to be.

So we're going to look at Peter's life a little bit, and the (5:08) important lessons, some of the lessons he has for us in his short letter. And the (5:16) Apostle Peter loved the Lord's Church, and he could tell that the times that he (5:21) was living in were dangerous and becoming increasingly more evil. Being (5:29) both an apostle and an elder, he felt an urgency to feed the Church the Word of (5:36) God and instill in them the basic knowledge of Christ, and to warn them of (5:42) the dangers that the Church was soon to be facing from outside the Church.

And he (5:48) warns the Church about the dangers inside the Church from false brethren. (5:56) It's only a three-chapter letter, and it's worthy of reading, very eye-opening. (6:07) In Rome, the Emperor Claudius persecuted heavily the Jews, and he kicked the Jews (6:16) out of Rome in 50 AD.

And his successor after that, his son Nero, started his (6:27) fiddle lessons and was persecuting Christians after the fire of 64 AD. So as (6:38) the year 67 AD was getting closer, the year that they thought that was the year (6:44) that Peter had been martyred in, Peter might have had a sense that his time was (6:52) nearly up. He may have reflected on the words that Jesus said to him on the (6:58) shores of the Sea of Galilee, where he was told to feed my sheep.

That praise (7:07) the Lord spoke to him may have inspired this last letter to the Church, a letter (7:14) we know as 2 Peter. So first let's look at what happened that led to those (7:20) words that Jesus told them, feed my sheep. As it was prophesied by Zechariah in (7:28) Zechariah 13 7, he predicted, O sword, awake against my shepherd and against the (7:37) man who is my associate, says Yahweh of hosts.

Strike the shepherd and the sheep (7:43) will be scattered. As predicted, Jesus was indeed struck. He went to the cross (7:52) and died, and all the disciples scattered after Jesus was arrested and (7:58) led away.

Jesus made predictions about Peter and his behavior, and we're going (8:13) to see that in a minute. But John and Peter, after they had scattered, they met (8:21) up and they followed Jesus into the high priest's court, courtyard at the high (8:30) priest's home. And John, having known the staff at the high priest's house, probably (8:37) sold them fish.

Anyhow, he went in with Jesus, and Peter had to wait out in the (8:44) courtyard. And so Peter found a fire and hung out by that, and this is where (8:53) Peter's love and devotion to Jesus was tested. After Jesus' death, burial, and (9:00) resurrection, he showed himself to many of the believers as proof of his (9:06) resurrection.

And Jesus, being the good shepherd, sought out his scattered sheep. (9:15) And on his third appearance to his disciples, he found seven of them (9:19) together with Peter at Peter's home base of Capernaum, and they were fishing in a (9:27) boat, and they had no luck as they sat there on the Sea of Galilee. Peter (9:34) and his disciples, the disciples, spent most of the day casting their nets and (9:40) all night fishing, and they had nothing to show for their efforts.

Such is the (9:48) story of many a fisherman, right Wally? They got skunked. So early in the morning, (9:57) a voice came that reached their ears from the shore, a stranger saying in the (10:03) negative, children, haven't you any fish? And of course they had to answer no. And (10:12) the visitor on the shore, of course, knew they didn't have any fish, and he said to (10:18) them, cast your nets on the right side of the boat and you'll find some.

Now we're not (10:24) told if there was a conversation or a debate or even just muttering amongst the (10:32) crew about how they had spent a day and a night fishing in that exact spot and (10:38) didn't catch anything, but it says when they did, cha-ching, they scored big. They (10:51) caught 153 large fish in their net. It was the Apostle John who had a moment of (11:02) déjà vu and recognized this fish miracle 2.0. When he saw the fish, he said to the (11:11) others, it's the Lord.

And as a side note here, point of interest, there are three (11:19) main fish species in the Sea of Galilee. And being naturally inquisitive, I sought (11:28) that out and found that the Sea of Galilee has carp, it has barbel, which they call (11:36) thyme, and it has tilapia, which they call mushk. And the carp and the barbel, the (11:45) average size of those fish is 15 pounds in the Sea of Galilee.

So even, I can see (11:55) John the accountant already figuring this out. Anyhow, if you calculate 153 large fish (12:05) times 15, that's quite the haul. And guess what? When Peter heard that it was the Lord, (12:13) he jumped in the water, grabbed the net, and dragged it across the sand onto shore.

Peter (12:22) was dragging over a ton of fish, over 2,000 pounds of fish across the sand. Wally and I had a hard time (12:34) just dragging a 50 pound salmon out of the Johnson Creek. Peter was a strong dude.

This is a point of interest. So on the (12:48) shore, Jesus already had a fire going and had fresh baked bread waiting for them. And so they put some of the fish on the fire and they ate breakfast together.

(13:00) Nobody had to ask if it was the Lord who was there with them. They knew at that point. So Jesus had some unfinished business with Peter to attend to.

(13:14) So after breakfast, he asked Peter three questions. Jesus asked Peter, Simon, son of John, do you agapeo love me? More than these, probably pointing to the other disciples. (13:33) Yes, Lord, he answered.

You know that I, I, Leo, love you. Jesus replied, feed my lands. Jesus asked a second time, Simon, son of John, do you agapeo love me? (13:58) I'm inserting agapeo in there just to make a distinction between the words used for love here.

Yes, Lord, he answered. You know that I, I, Leo, love you. Jesus told him, feed my sheep.

(14:16) Jesus asked a third time, Simon, son of John, do you, I, Leo, love me? Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus asked him a third time, do you love me? Lord, you know all things, he replied. You know that I, I, Leo, love you. Jesus said to him, feed my sheep.

(14:40) So another sidebar here, point of interest, agapeo love, or the agape love, as Steve mentioned this morning in his class, is that godly, godlike love. It's not an affectionate feeling like thy, Leo, love. (15:01) Agape love can be commanded by the Lord, which Jesus did in the upper room on the night he was betrayed, where he commanded them to love each other.

(15:16) And Paul, the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 13, gives the textbook answer, or definition, rather, of what agapeo love is. He said, love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (15:45) Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (16:00) And so, with that idea, Peter only answered Jesus with thy, Leo, love.

And thy, Leo, not the degrade thy, Leo, love, but it's affection towards another, or being fond of somebody. That's how the Greeks described thy, Leo, love. (16:23) But what it does show us here is that Jesus wanted to gauge if Peter was now humble after what transpired just days before.

(16:45) So if you recall, back in the upper room on the night Jesus was betrayed, Jesus announced that one of them would betray him. And then Jesus revealed to them that they would all be offended at him, and fall away and abandon him. (17:05) And then Jesus quoted the quote from Zechariah 13, strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.

And of course, Peter, in his usual boastful manner, made great claims of loyalty, even to the point of imprisonment and death to Jesus. (17:29) And worse yet, he dishonored his fellow disciples by saying, even if all should fail you, I will never fail you, Lord. Pride precedes the fall, doesn't it? (17:52) So, after throwing his fellow disciples under the bus, that arrogant, prideful attitude of putting himself above others, the other disciples' devotion, is what I believe Jesus was gauging there.

(18:15) And that's why he asked Peter those three times if he loved him. And I believe that Jesus wasn't restoring him at this point, but making him basically publicly apologize to the other disciples. (18:39) The restoring came before that.

I believe that was done right after the resurrection. We know that Jesus appeared to many of the believers, but he did appear to Peter alone, and that was inferred by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.5. (19:02) And the purpose of that visit, I believe, was most likely to restore Jesus back into his fold. So, like a good shepherd, he had to first heal Peter of the emotional damage he suffered when he did deny Jesus and realized what he did.

(19:20) And so, just as a good shepherd would tend to the injuries of a wounded sheep and carry him back into the fold for healing, that's what he did for Peter mentally after he denied him three times. (19:34) Peter was despondent, and he ran away to the point where it could be said that he fell away, just as Jesus had told them and Zechariah prophesied about. (19:49) So Peter's denial of Christ was just as intense as his affirming his loyalty to him in the upper room.

Listen to Peter's third denial in the high priest's courtyard. Sorry, I had to cool my pipes there. (20:16) It says, then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, certainly you too are one of them, for your accent gives you away, for you're a Galilean.

(20:30) Then Peter began to curse and swear, I do not know the man, I do not know what you are saying. Immediately, the rooster crowed, and as it was crowing, Christ turned and looked at Peter. (20:48) And then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

So Peter went out and wept bitterly. Have any of you men wept bitterly? (21:09) It takes a lot to

make a guy go out and weep bitterly, and Peter was broken here. Our Lord knew how Peter would react to failing him by denying him.

Jesus intimated this fall about Peter in the upper room, and he told Peter that he would deny him three times, and said, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith should not fail. (21:41) And when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren. Jesus knew he was going to fall away.

He had to return. Peter fell away and was in a fragile state, but Peter had an advocate in the Lord, because the Lord prayed for him that his faith would not fail under such emotional turmoil. (22:10) Peter was going to be an integral part in getting the Lord's will underway, and have much work to do strengthening the brothers, and who also looked up to him.

Peter was a role model, and he was integral in getting the Lord's church going. (22:33) On the day of Pentecost, he was going to give the very first sermon publicly. So by asking those three questions to Peter in front of the other disciples was a gauge of Peter's humility to see if he was finally in a state of mind in which Jesus, as the potter, actually molded him into the leader that he wanted him to be.

(23:06) And have the right attitude. So right after the Lord asked Peter three times if he loved him, he prophesied about Peter's future. And in John 21, 18 through 19, Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted.

(23:32) But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you to where you do not want to go. Now this, he said, signifying what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to Peter, follow me.

(23:54) Jesus foretold to Peter how he was going to die, and that was by crucifixion. That's what he was depicting there with those words. When he was young, he could come and go as he pleased, but when he was old, he was going to be taken and stretched out and bound to the yoke of the lumber to be part of a crucifixion.

(24:25) He was going to die a slow, excruciating death. So he would be a martyr for Christ. But love and commitment for a cause will see a person through martyrdom.

Nobody wants to die, not even for a cause. (24:51) Look at Jesus himself. Jesus asked God in prayer if there was another way.

He said, it says in the gospel, going a little further, he fell face down and prayed, my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will. (25:12) So Jesus didn't want to die.

No human wants to experience a terrible death. But for the cause, they are willing to die, and that's what we see Christ do for the benefit of all mankind, for the cause of removing our sin and our guilt of breaking God's law. (25:37) Likewise, Peter had to face martyrdom after a life well spent serving God in the church.

So Peter saw the day of his death approaching, which most likely prompted his second letter to the church. (25:56) He was sober-minded and focused on what was important. Though his letter was short in comparison to some of the other letters in the New Testament, his letter is full of wonderful information for the church.

(26:11) He was not just an apostle who was responsible for the church as a whole, but he was also an elder in the church where he considered his home base, somewhere in Asia Minor. (26:28) So Peter, the shepherd, had a small flock that he was responsible for as well. And Jesus told Peter, feed my lambs and to feed my sheep.

The Greek word for feed is bosko. No, not that chocolatey syrup we add to our milk. (26:51) But this bosko means fodder.

So what is fodder? Fodder is the dry hay or grass that you would feed an animal in your care, and that's an important aspect to this word. (27:10) And so the point is that the responsibility of the shepherd, or as the metaphor, the elder, is to provide the lambs and the sheep something to eat. In this case, of an elder, it would be the Word of God, whether it's the milk for the lambs or meat for the sheep.

(27:38) It's important for the elder to know what it is his flock needs. They need the Word of God. But to the young, you don't talk about righteousness or types and anti-types.

It'll go right over their head. They can't make application. (27:57) They need the elementary teachings of Christ, as mentioned in Hebrews this morning.

That's where we find the elementary teachings. (28:09) And just as a point of interest again, that third application where Jesus said to Peter, feed my sheep, the final one, the word feed there is different. It's not bosko.

(28:29) It's a different Greek word called poimeno. And for those of you who, out of curiosity, when studying about elders, the word for elder is poimen. (28:44) And so poimeno, that feed means tend to my sheep as an elder who, and poimeno means to rule over and look out for.

That's the job of an elder, to feed and to guide and to look out for. (29:04) And so that's Peter. That's the role of any elder.

Thank you for letting me do that side note. (29:20) So Peter not only was an apostle, he was an elder. And so he understood that it's important to balance (29:29) the message that he writes to people in his first letter and his second letter.

And Peter has both (29:37) milk and meat in his letters. So in his letters, that's probably how he spoke to the people in his (29:46) church as well, was he would present milk for the new Christians, you know, the basic teachings of (29:55) Christ, and he would also give them meat, you know, so that, you know, those who have been in (30:01) the Lord's church for a while can be fed as well. And this style of writing and preaching (30:09) should be considered by ministers, elders, and teachers alike.

Peter worked the elementary (30:17) teachings of Christ into his letters. And what are those elementary teachings? Of course, they're (30:23) repentance from accidentally to death, and faith in God, instruction about baptism, (30:30) the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. There's six (30:38) basic teachings that Paul tells us in Hebrews 6 verses 1 and 2 that we all need to know.

Do you (30:46) know those basic teachings? And Paul had to admonish the recipients of that Hebrew letter (30:57) because they stagnated in their learning. They stalled out. They just became

bench warmers.

(31:06) They didn't progress in their learning. Paul had to say to them, I'd like to go on teaching you (31:13) about these things, because he was telling them about Melchizedek. And so that was about not just (31:19) righteousness, but also about types and antitypes.

And they weren't able to handle the meat. He goes, (31:26) you need someone to teach you the elementary teachings all over again. You need milk, (31:32) not meat.

And so what's the point here? The point is, in our study in God's Word, (31:41) don't stall out. You know, don't think you know it all. Continue.

Progress. (31:50) I've been in the Lord's Church for 40 years, and I still keep finding new nuggets of gold. (32:00) It's there.

You just got to look at it. And it's like Peter's words in his second letter, (32:06) till the day dawns and the light clicks in your head. You know, you can be reading something a (32:14) hundred times, and that hundred and first time, suddenly something's going to click, make sense (32:20) to you.

Your brain will make connections. The spirit will say, hey, look at this over here, (32:25) and then compare that, and it'll make great application for you. You'll be able to be a (32:33) more knowledgeable Christian and apply that in your life.

And we're going to see in Peter's letter (32:40) how important knowledge is all throughout that first chapter. Everything is tied into our (32:50) knowledge. The grace and peace we receive from God is tied in to the knowledge that we gain (33:01) by studying God's word.

Excuse me, my pipes are getting real dry. (33:14) So there's value for a new Christian to learn those elementary teachings of Christ, (33:19) which I'll probably do a study on down the road. And by Peter's own words, the mature in Christ (33:28) need to hear those elementary teachings on a regular basis as well.

(33:36) Listen to Peter's words further down in chapter 1 of 2 Peter. In chapter 1 verses 12 through 15, (33:48) Peter says, so I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly (33:57) established in the truth you now have. He could only be talking to mature Christians there (34:07) who can eat meat.

And what's he talking about here? We're going to see about that later this (34:14) evening on part 2 of this lesson. But the point being, Peter says even the sheep, not the lambs, (34:27) need to hear the basics over and over again to prevent us from stagnating. So a lot of times, (34:39) you know, those of us who, you know, heard basic teachings about faith and baptism, (34:47) and we'll sit there, oh man, come on, we know this like, you know, the inside of our palm, you know.

(34:55) Suffer through it. Humble yourself. What you might hear, that light bulb might go off, (35:02) and you just might learn something new that you've been overlooking.

So don't ever think (35:09) you know it all. There's great value and depth to the Word of God, and Peter brings that out. (35:23) When Peter goes on, he says, I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the (35:29) tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ made (35:36) clear to me.

I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in this tent of the body, (35:44) so that after my departure, you will always be able to remember these things. (35:52) Peter wants us to know the basics. Even if we think we know it all, and we can just (36:00) put our spiritual life on cruise control or autopilot and sit back and just putter along, (36:09) no, there's no such thing as cruise control or autopilot in Christianity, especially when it (36:17) comes to gaining knowledge.

God always wants us to know about Him, to seek Him out, to dig (36:25) as if digging for treasure, finding that pearl in the field, and going out and buying that field (36:33) and saying, this is mine. I want this, and making it yours. That's how you make your faith your own.

(36:41) You gotta dig. You gotta explore God's Word. You gotta make your faith.

You know, when we are (36:50) learning and growing in knowledge, we have to be putting all of that into practice. (36:57) And as we're going to see, there's a methodology to gaining knowledge, (37:08) putting it into practice. God blesses you with more grace and with more peace.

And why does He (37:16) give people who are trying to learn the Word of God more grace? Well, as you're putting it into (37:24) practice, guess what? You and me are going to be tested. God will permit certain things to happen (37:34) in our life that will challenge our faith. And instead of throwing a hissy fit, oh, life is so (37:43) cruel and unkind.

Why is this happening to me? Buck up and become mature. (37:52) Understand at that moment you're being tested. And then you have to say to yourself, (37:59) using an old cliché, I don't like it, but what would Jesus do? (38:09) And then do it.

Aren't we little Christ? Isn't that what Christian is? (38:17) Wasn't that a mockery to those who believed in Jesus? Oh, look at the little Christians, (38:23) the little Christ. And they turned around and took that as a badge of honor. And we started (38:30) calling each other Christians back in the first century.

That's right. At least my (38:35) light is showing and Christ is seen in my face now to these mockers. (38:44) Okay, I'm way off track and I'm way over time.

We will pick up this evening and finish part two. (38:52) So I'll offer the invitation now. If you need the prayers of the saints or need any request filled, (38:59) we'll be glad to do that for you.

You can come forward as we stand and sing the invitation song together. (39:06)