

Peter

Series: Heroes: Amazing Stories of Faith

Luke 5:1-11

October 29, 2017

Well folks, welcome to worship again. It's so good to be together.

Today, we conclude our series "Heroes: Amazing Stories of Faith." We have looked at 7 heroes of the faith.

- We looked at David and learned he depended on God and his past.
- We looked at Hannah and learned she depended on God and the power of prayer.
- We looked at Paul and learned he depended on God and the power of the Gospel.
- We looked at Moses and learned he depended on God and God's presence.
- We looked at Joseph and learned he depended on God and his witness.
- We looked at Esther and learned she depended on God and God's perfect will.
- We looked at John and learned he depended on God and the promise of victory.

Today, I invite you to turn in your bulletin to page 5 as we will look at our final hero: Peter. And we can't start a sermon about Peter without a joke about getting into heaven.

One day, a woman died and went to heaven. When she arrived at the Pearly Gates, she of course was greeted by Peter. "Before you can come in," he said, "you have to spell a word." "What word?" she asked. "Any word?" he said. She thought about it and replied, "Love. L-O-V-E. Love."

Peter waves his arm and said, "Come on in."

As she begins to enter heaven, Peter stops her. "I was wondering if you'd do me a quick favor. Stand here for a few moments. I'll be right back. If anyone comes, just follow the same procedure."

So Peter left, and within moments, her first customer comes before her – her ex-husband. "What are you doing here?" she asks.

"I just had a heart attack," he replied. "Did I really make it to heaven?"

"Not yet," she said. "You have to spell a word."

"What word?"

She replied, "Czechoslovakia."

Well, let's take a look at Peter. I forgot to put the key point in the bulletin, so if you would, write this down: **Peter depended on God and Christ's calling.**

We are going to look at Luke 5:1-11. Let me give you some background according to Luke. This is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Chapter 4 tells of His 40 days in the wilderness and His temptation by the devil. Then Jesus began teaching, and word spread about what He was saying. He eventually arrived in Capernaum, and while He was teaching in the synagogue, a demon possessed man confronted Him. Jesus cast out the demon and freed the man. Wow, what a church service that was.

Well, this happened to be the home synagogue for two brothers, Simon and his brother Andrew. They were local fisherman who had two other brothers as partners: James and his brother John. Well, Simon was in the congregation that day, and invited Jesus to his home. When they got there, they found Peter's mother-in-law sick with fever. The people in the house begged Jesus to heal her. Luke 4:39-41 records what happened:

READ LUKE 4:39-41

That must have been quite a scene for Peter, made quite an impression. This traveling rabbi was not only a great preacher, but had amazing healing powers.

Soon after this, we read from Luke 5:1-11.

READ LUKE 5:1-11.

Now folks, I could have picked other very heroic passages regarding Peter. I mean, how many of us have walked on water or faced down the same religious leaders that killed Jesus or would choose to be crucified upside down because we would not be crucified the same way our Lord was? But I think this passage gives us everything we need to know about the characteristics of a Hero of the Faith. If we want to be heroes of the faith to our children, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors, then we must follow these 3 characteristics in this passage.

First, Peter welcomed Jesus into his boat.

By the time of Luke 5, the news of Jesus had spread so far that the crowds were approaching the unmanageable stage. On this particular day, Jesus was by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There was a tremendous crowd that pressed to get as close as possible to Him. He was stuck between the crowd and the shore line, so to establish some distance so that people could see Him, He got into Simon Peter's boat and asked him to push out into the water a little bit. Then Jesus sat down and began to teach, with Peter right there in the prime spot.

Can you image what that would have been like, sitting in a boat with Jesus, watching Him teach this huge crowd of people, listening to every word He said? Wow. I don't think it gets any better than that.

But Peter doesn't get that prime spot unless he welcomes Jesus into his boat.

COMMENT.

Let Jesus into your boat, your life.

The second characteristic of a hero of the faith is this: **Peter obeyed Jesus in his daily life.**

READ LUKE 5:4-7

I read one pastor say, "Peter was the worse fisherman ever. The only time he caught fish was through a divine intervention." I don't think that's necessarily true, but it is amazing to see what happens here. Peter and his partners were professional fisherman. They knew the lake and how to fish it.

Fishermen on the Sea of Galilee used nets, often bell-shaped ones with lead weights around the edges. A net would be thrown flat onto the water, and the lead weights would cause it to sink around the fish. Then the fishermen would pull on a cord, drawing the net around the fish.¹

So before the sermon, Peter and his partners had been out all night, and hadn't caught a thing. Now, they were out at night not because their wives were nagging them. They were out because that was the time they usually caught fish. They went at the time of the best fishing.

Now it's day time, and Jesus says, "Let's go fishing." "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again."²

¹ Life Application Study Bible, Luke 5:2

² Luke 5:5 (NLT)

And this is the key to heroic faith: giving Christ your daily life. Doing what He tells you to do each and every day.

Peter knew that Jesus had healed the sick and driven out demons, but he was amazed that Jesus cared about his day-to-day routine and understood his needs. God is interested not only in saving us but also in helping us in our daily activities.

COMMENT.

My devotional life helps me stay aligned with Christ each and every day. I must every day say, “Lord, this is Your day, not mine. What do you want me to do?” If you take this attitude in life, you know what you will find? Your nets – your days – overflowing to the point you’re not sure what to do with it all.

The final characteristic of a hero of the faith is this: **Peter followed Jesus for his life.**

READ LUKE 5:8-11.

Jesus’ first words to Simon Peter in Mark 1:17 were “Come, follow me.” His last words to him after the crucifixion were “Follow me.”³ Every step of the way between those two challenges and afterward, Peter never failed to follow – even though he often stumbled. When Jesus entered Peter’s life, this plain fisherman became a new person with new goals and new priorities. He did not become a perfect person, however, and he never stopped being Simon Peter. We may wonder what Jesus saw in Simon that made him greet this potential disciple with a new name: Peter—the “rock.” Impulsive Peter certainly didn’t act like a rock much of the time. But when Jesus chose His followers, He wasn’t looking for models; He was looking for real people. He chose people who could be changed by His love, and then He sent them out to communicate that His acceptance was available to anyone—even to those who often fail.

We may wonder what Jesus sees in us when He calls us to follow Him. But we know Jesus accepted Peter, and, in spite of his failures, Peter went on to do great things for God. Are you willing to keep following Jesus, even when you fail? Are you will to do great things for God?

Bill Hybels, Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, was talking with one of his members about some of the “tough topics” he had taught on over the years: hell, money, sex, relational confrontation, self-discipline. The man asked, “Of all the topics you’ve preached on, which has been the hardest to get across?”

Bill states, “I didn’t even have to think about it. Becoming totally devoted to Christ.” Bill considered getting across the aspect of a completely self-sacrificial lifestyle was his greatest teaching challenge. He states that for many people, total devotion to Christ means squandering the only life they have.

What about us? Do we consider total devotion to Jesus a goal worth striving for? Or do we see complete commitment as something that would infringe on our comfortable lifestyle?⁴

Do you want to be a hero of the faith?

³ See John 21:22

⁴ From a sermon by Derrick Tuper, “Totally!” 1/26/2009