

Sermon Mark S. Aites
WAS PETER A GOOD CHOICE TO BE AN APOSTLE?
(Based on article by Jerry Moffitt, *Firm Foundation*, 5/27/96)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Job hunting can be a challenge, both for the one seeking a job, and the one doing the hiring.
2. There are such a wide variety of factors that have to be taken into consideration.
 - 1) The applicant must consider salary, benefits, retirement, and where others are involved, the ability to support a family.
 - 2) The employer must also consider these things, but in terms of the ability to make more than he or she pays out.
3. While we know that it is a challenge to find a job, from the perspective of the employer, it is a challenge to find an employee that has certain qualifications.
4. Sometimes we know that the qualifications that are set forth are very high.
 - 1) Several years ago when seeking a place to preach, I learned that the brethren wanted a 35 year old preacher, with a family, with at least a Master's Degree, and 25 years experience.
 - 2) It was just a little hard for me to obtain a Master's Degree, and a preaching appointment at the young age of 10.
 - 3) Granted, that is being facetious, but the expectations were somewhat ridiculous.
5. It is hard to select the right people, especially when it comes to those involved in the Lord's service.
6. When Jesus chose His disciples, we might have questioned His wisdom knowing what we know for example of the apostle Peter.

DISCUSSION:

I. HE WAS A SINNER.

- A. The occasion was Jesus having asked Peter to move the boat a little off the shore to let down the nets.
 1. Peter and the others had just finished a night of fishing; they were tired, and it had been a disappointing effort.
 2. **Luke 5:5-9.**
 3. Peter freely confessed that he was a sinful man; such would certainly not look very good on a resume`.
- B. Generally speaking, when looking for a good applicant for a position we are interested in someone who has better qualifications.
 1. For instance, the Bible speaks of Simeon.
Luke 2:25 *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.*
 2. Now let's picture this in our minds; the Lord did not choose a man like Simeon, but instead chose a confessed sinner.

II. HE WAS FICKLE.

- A. Fickle - “marked by lack of steadfastness, constancy, or stability : given to erratic changeableness.” (Webster’s Dict.)
- B. Even after Peter was informed that he would deny Jesus:
Matt. 26:35 *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*
- C. We know from Scripture that Peter did indeed deny the Lord (**Matt. 26:69-75**).
 - 1. He had been emphatic of his statement of devotion to Christ, willing even to die with Him if necessary.
 - 2. But when faced with the situation, he lost that resolve.
- D. Now in an effort to select one for such a noble position as an apostle, you would assume the Lord would select one that is reliable; one that is brave and steadfast.
- E. One might tend to think that our Lord would want someone with the same level of courage as that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
 - 1. When faced with being forced by the King of Babylon to worship an image, an idol, they showed the courage and strength that one can truly admire.
 - 2. **Dan. 3:17-18**
- F. I guess it may be somewhat surprising that Peter was not of this caliber.
 - 1. Instead of being dependable, he was just the opposite, completely undependable.
 - 2. He was someone who could not be trusted, and was subjected to weakness.
 - 3. Not exactly sterling remarks on anyone’s resume`.

III. HE WAS IMPULSIVE, RASH, & IMPETUOUS.

- A. Impulsive - “a sudden spontaneous inclination or incitement to some usually unpremeditated action.” (Webster’s Dict.)
 - 1. This was evident in Peter often speaking without thought.
 - 2. There are in fact a number of references in the New Testament which show that he spoke before the other disciples.
- B. For example:
 - 1. In **Luke 8:45**, it was the occasion where a woman had touched Jesus and power had gone out from Him and healed her.
 - 1) The crowds were all about him.
 - 2) It was Peter who spoke first: **Luke 8:45** *And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*
 - 3) We note that Peter’s name is referenced specifically and the other disciples simply mentioned in generality being with the Lord.
 - 2. On the occasion of the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John accompanied the Lord up the mountain.
 - 1) It was Peter who spoke first.
 - 2) **Matt. 17:3-4** *And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*
4 *Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.*
 - 3. And there was the occasion in which Peter had confessed Jesus as the Christ, the

Son of the living God (**Matt. 16:16**).

- 1) After this occasion, in which we might say was a high note for Peter, we see his rash and impetuous nature come out again.
 - 2) **Matt. 16:21-23**
 4. It was Peter who responded rashly in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus had been betrayed by Judas, who took his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus (**John 18:10**).
 5. It was also Peter, after the Lord's resurrection who, learning that it was Jesus on the shore, who dove from the boat and swam to the Lord; the rest of the disciples coming in by small ship (**John 21:7-8**).
- C. So, now on Peter's resume we can add that he tends to act rashly, and impulsively; doing things with little to no thought, and in turn, on some occasions, he is rebuked for it.
- D. So how is he doing? Is he looking like a promising candidate to be an apostle? Ah, but wait, we are not done yet.

IV. HE WAS WEAK.

- A. Even after becoming an apostle we are made aware of an incident of weakness.
- B. In **Gal. 2**, the apostle Paul reveals to us a situation where Peter had been sitting and eating with the Gentiles.
1. But when certain individuals came from James, Peter separated himself from the Gentiles and sat with the Jews.
 2. Now pause for a moment and consider: how do you think the Gentiles must have felt, to have Peter in their immediate company, but as soon as some of these Jews arrived on the scene, Peter wanted nothing to do with these Gentiles.
 3. Why? Because there still existed an animosity in their society between Jews and Gentiles.
 4. Peter's actions played right into the prejudice of the day; and were in fact so hurtful, that Peter influenced Barnabas to also follow his actions (**Gal. 2:13**).
- C. According to **Gal. 2:11**, Paul said that he withstood Peter to the face.
- D. **Gal. 2:14** *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*
1. This was not just a rebuke, but in fact a public rebuke.
 2. Such would certainly not look good on any resume`.
- C. Earlier I mentioned briefly his denial of Christ.
1. When the first maid came to him and accused him of being with Jesus, he denied it. His showed his weakness in telling a lie.
 2. He opted to pretend that he didn't know what she was talking about.
 3. Then another maid accused him, and this time he chose to deny it with an oath.
 4. Then others made their accusations and he began to swear and say, *I know not the man.*
 5. Jesus knew this would transpire, and even told Peter that it would happen (**Matt. 26:34**).

- D. And yet our Lord chose this man to be an apostle.
- E. Now we already know that his resume is poor to say the least, but there is something else that we need to add to it.

V. HE WAS CHILDISH.

- A. There were times during the Lord's earthly ministry that Peter came across a little childish, and sometimes a little nosey, and then again, occasions of being jealous.
- B. For example, after Jesus was crucified, we read of the incident in **John 21**, where Jesus told Peter the manner in which Peter would die (**John 21:18**).
 - 1. After Peter had heard these words, he looked at John and asked a nosey question.
 - 2. **John 21:21-22** *Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*
- C. Of course, we realize that this childishness was manifested by other disciples as well.
 - 1. This is rather obvious from the discussion in **Matt. 18:1ff** in their discussion as to who was to be the greatest in the kingdom.
 - 2. Have we any reason to doubt that Peter was involved in such a conversation?

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Now based upon these things, let's consider Peter's resume`.
- 2. He was a sinner, fickle, unreliable, undependable, untrustworthy, unfaithful, impulsive, rash, always talking, weak, easily intimidated, a liar, nosey, and jealous.
- 3. Now, based upon such qualifications, does that sound like a prospective candidate to be an apostle of Christ?
- 4. I would surmise that if man had been left to select others for such a wonderful service, Peter likely would not have been selected.
- 5. But we can thank God that men were not involved, for our Lord knew Peter's heart, and saw potential in him that man could not see.
- 6. Such reminds us of the Old Testament passage when Samuel was looking at the sons of Jesse for a new king to replace Saul.
1 Sam. 16:7 *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*
- 7. Yes Peter had weaknesses, like any of us, but when we open the book of Acts we find a lion of a man.
 - 1) He faced the crowd on Pentecost and preached a lesson to them even pointing out that they had been responsible for the Lord's crucifixion (**Acts 2:36**)
 - 2) He and John appeared before the Sanhedrin and faced them undaunted, even telling them point blank that they had crucified the Messiah (**Acts 4:10-12**).
 - 3) Even in the face of threats, Peter and the other apostles were able to say with firm conviction, *We ought to obey God rather than men* (**Acts 5:29**).
- 8. What is it that I can learn from this? Quite simply, the patience and gentleness of our Lord, whom we should imitate.

- 1) He knew that Peter had plenty of faults, but He also knew that in time, Peter would accomplish a great deal in the Lord's service.
- 2) Respect for this apostle has been evident through the centuries, and most certainly that respect continues unto this day, and will until our Lord returns.
9. When we realize that Jesus had to be patient with Peter, maybe in this, we will learn to be patient with others.
10. Peter admitted his faults to the Lord, even confessing that he was a sinner, but the Lord did not turn him away, but rather put him to work.
11. If we could learn to treat others with the same gentleness and kindness, with that much needed patience and understanding, much more might be accomplished for the Lord.
12. But let's add the icing to the cake: often we are hardest on ourselves.
13. True, you might feel very uncomfortable if a resume was made out spelling out your qualifications as Scripture does with Peter.
14. Too, you might be genuinely surprised what the Lord might see in your life.
15. He might well say, as He did with Peter, *Fear not, I will make you a fisher of men (Luke 5:10)*.
16. The key is to see what Peter did that started him on the road to being the apostle that he was, the willingness to admit that he was a sinner.
17. **Matt. 23:12** *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*
18. You may not have a sterling resume`, but Jesus will accept you if you will hear His words and obey them.