

Encountering God

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Peter is a likable guy. I like Peter because I can relate to him. He was a regular guy (a fisherman, nothing fancy). He was also a man of God, a disciple of Jesus, and at times a major screw-up!!! He often put his foot in his mouth, and once, at least, he even denied Christ. Let's take a closer look at Peter.

Jesus was on trial the night before his death, and Peter, being a brave disciple of Christ, follows Him to the court... from a distance.

Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

[70] But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

[71] Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

[72] He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

[73] After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

[74] Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. [75] Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter was not so brave after all. Earlier that same night, while they were eating the Passover meal, Jesus said to his disciples that they would fall away on account of Him. Peter claimed that he would not fall away even if everyone else did, and Peter even said, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." (Matt. 26:35 NASB) Peter was bold in words, but fear gripped him when it mattered most. Peter denied Jesus 3 times because he feared for his own life. Peter didn't have what it takes to stand up for Jesus in the face of death. But... the story doesn't end there.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He hung out with the disciples for a while before He ascended into Heaven. One day Jesus had breakfast with His gang and then He went for a walk with Peter. Jesus asked Peter 3 times if he loved Him. Peter answered that of course he loved Jesus all 3 times. Peter was sad that Jesus even asked such a question, because Peter truly did love Jesus. Then Jesus dropped a bomb on Peter.

Jesus said,

John 21:18-21

I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." [19] Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

[20] Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") [21] When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

Peter just got done saying, "Of course I love You Lord!!!" Jesus tells Peter that he's going to die for the Gospel, and Peter chickens out. Peter pointed to John and said, "WHAT ABOUT THAT GUY!!!!!" "Jesus, I don't know about this dieing thing, you know, John loves you a lot too, and maybe he could die for You instead." Peter didn't really want to be a martyr for Christ some day. He was scared... wouldn't you be???

Once again, the story does not end there.

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. [2] Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. [4] All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:13-16

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

[14] Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. [15] These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! [16] No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:...

Peter goes on to share the most powerful sermon in history. For the sake of time we'll take a look at just the conclusion.

Acts 2:36-41

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

[37] When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

[38] Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

[40] With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." [41] Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Wow, what happened to Peter!!!! He was fearful for his life. He denied Jesus 3 times. He cowered at the thought of dieing for Jesus some day, and then he preached a powerful sermon on the Gospel of Jesus, even when people were mocking!!! 3,000 people got saved!!! Something was different about Peter. Peter had an ENCOUNTER with GOD!!!!

We today have the same opportunity to have the same powerful ENCOUNTER with the living God. Jesus freely offers us the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the same baptism that Peter enjoyed. Jesus wants to empower us to be witnesses in our generation. The Holy Spirit's baptism will give us the boldness, and the words to be speak, so that we too can be witnesses for Jesus Christ. All we have to do is ask, and receive.

Once Peter had an ENCOUNTER with God he went on to be a pillar in the early Church. His shadow even healed the sick. **What will you go on to do????**

Altar Call:

Baptism in the Holy Ghost