



Life of Peter: Lessons In Discipleship

Life Group Series, Autumn 2020 – Birmingham City Church

Part 3: **Destiny**

Series Overview

There is a huge amount we can learn from the disciple Peter! This series unpacks key experiences and events from Peter's life to see what discipleship lessons there are for our own lives, as follows:

- Part 1 Discipleship
- Part 2 Friendship
- Part 3 Destiny
- Part 4 Insight
- Part 5 Faith
- Part 6 Integrity
- Part 7 Leadership
- Part 8 Suffering

Introduction

What would you say the main theme of each these films is?

- Beauty and the Beast
- Toy Story 3
- Lord of The Rings

In this session, we are looking at how God wove destiny into the life of Simon Peter via a major theme for Peter's life.

Peter's Destiny Had a Big Theme: 'Rock'

Rock: A Name for God in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

³ I will proclaim the name of the LORD.
Oh, praise the greatness of our God!
⁴ **He is the Rock**, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.

"Rock" is a common Old Testament name for God.

For God to be called the Rock shows us that He is solid, definite and the foundation on which we can build a life.

Moses and the Rock at Horeb

Exodus 17:6

I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

God's promise to provide for his people is trustworthy! As Moses obeyed God's command to strike the rock, God provided water for his people.

When in need, the people of Israel could turn to the rock for help.

(There is a fascinating hint of the crucifixion here: when that which represents God is struck, there is a life-giving flow from it...)

Paul's Interpretation of the Old Testament Rock

1 Corinthians 10:3-4

³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Paul is referring to God providing Israel with bread from heaven ("manna") and water from a rock.

He is suggesting that before Jesus came to the world in human form he was always with the Israelites in a spiritual form; and that He was there to supply their need for water.

Jesus' Own Teaching: Build Your Life on the Rock

Matthew 7:24

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Jesus ends his most famous teaching, the Sermon on the Mount, with an instruction to practice what He teaches – and that this will become like a wise man who built on rock.

Each of these pictures of the 'rock' show that a key quality of God is that He provides foundational strength and stability for people in their lives.

Jesus Names Peter 'Cephas'

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The apostle Simon was called 'Cephas' by Jesus because he was to be the rock upon which the Christian church was to be built. Cephas is the Aramaic for 'rock'. In most versions of the New Testament Cephas is translated into Greek 'Petros' or 'Peter'

(Our modern-day word 'petrify' means to 'turn into rock').

When Jesus makes this announcement, the solidness and strength of God is bestowed upon Peter for the things God has in mind for his future.

- **FOR DISCUSSION:** How would you feel if Jesus had said this to you?

Amazing Faith Step by Peter Towards the Solidness of Jesus

Matthew 14:29

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

In arguably the most amazing single discipleship step ever taken, Peter steps towards the solidness of Jesus in faith – and that faith overcomes the fluidity of water raging in a storm. It seems no accident that this miracle fits consistently with this major theme of Peter's life.

The Solidness of God Starts Becoming Really Noticeable in Peter

Acts 4:13

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

After Peter healed the lame beggar, he and John had been hauled before the Sanhedrin who accused them of preaching resurrection from the dead in Jesus. They ask by what power they performed the miracle – and Peter and John reply it was in the name of Jesus!

What is fascinating for our study is that the scripture Peter chooses to quote to the Sanhedrin is:

Psalms 118:22

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

Peter Matures into his Destiny and Teaches it to others

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Around 30 years later, in AD 62-64, Peter is writing to Jewish believers around Asia Minor.

He reminds them that (like him) they also are 'living stones' being built up into a spiritual house.

A Pattern for a Destiny in God



Holy Spirit Pause

- **FOR DISCUSSION:** What do you think a big theme from God might be in your life...? What might that be saying to you...?
- **FOR DISCUSSION:** If Jesus were to bestow a new name on you, what might it be...?

Life Application: So How Do We Work Out What Our Destiny In God Is?

I think it is very hard to come up with a discipleship formula for figuring out what your destiny in God might be.

All sorts of factors come into play – your character and how God made you is important of course, but also the time in history in which you live and the culture that you are in are also big factors.

God might also simply need something really specific doing!

Ananias didn't make God asking him to find Saul and pray for him a matter of his overall destiny – and yet without a doubt, his willingness played a huge part in helping Saul become accepted as a follower of Jesus.

So a better question to ask is...

How Can We Create Conditions For Godly Destiny In Our Lives?

1. Following Jesus is all about walking **in step with the Spirit** each day
2. Concern yourself more with your **availability** to God than your capability
3. Taking **action** is better than just having intentions
4. Spiritual disciplines create deep **alignment with God's will**
5. **Serving** stokes Godly input into you way more than spectating
6. Keep being brutally honest with yourself about your own kingdom **fruitfulness**

- **FOR DISCUSSION:** Which one of these 6 are you best at already? Which one needs most work?