

HE WHO BEGAN SOME GOOD WORK IS COMMITTED TO BRING IT INTO COMPLETION

The Life and Times of Peter the Disciple of Jesus

The story of Peter comes into shape when he is called by Jesus. As a matter of fact, his story starts when he is called out to start doing something new and abandon his former fish-fishing business.

It is the same with us today, our story will take shape when we decide to abandon some fishy business or behavior and turn to Christ and follow him. Peter also responds to the call of Jesus. The word call could be simply compared to the call you make on a phone. You make a call with an intention and purpose. It the same with Peter, God called him with a purpose and destiny.

Again, it is Jesus who called Peter and not Peter who applied to be in Jesus' ministry. There was nothing like application forms distributed by Jesus. In other words, it is Jesus who saw Peter first and not Peter who saw Jesus and was interested in him. Perhaps, what we would call today – appointment. Jesus saw Peter and was interested in him. As the bible says, the 'the one who began a good work in us, will surely bring it to completion.' It is not Peter who started the work, it is Jesus.

It is the same with you today. God saw you first and was interested in you first. You could not recognize him all by yourself. Therefore, having called you means he has a purpose for you and he will surely bring it to completion.

God is unstoppable

At times you may feel the work God began in you has stalled or like it will never be. But here is the ultimate comfort, 'he began the good work, he will surely bring it to completion.' You do not need to know which means he will use, but unto him who does not lie or change. Unto him who is unstoppable. He will surely bring the good work to completion.

Peter at one point felt Jesus was not committed to completing the good work he began. See what he did, he led the other disciples into fishing after the death of Jesus. Sadly, the whole night, they caught nothing. We also fall into a similar trap. When things don't seem to add up, we slide back into our old fishy business, comfort zone habits, and sin. Our comfort is, 'they caught nothing', but in the morning Jesus appears and makes them have a big catch.

They caught nothing

Have you ever realized when you are going back into some fishy business, you never ‘catch anything?’ It never amounts to anything. It only leads to more frustration and disappointment. Check Judas, he slid back into his fishy business, betrayed Jesus, ended up frustrated and he died.

The storyline was so with Peter and the disciples. They tried all night long but nothing was coming through. Finally, in the morning, hungry and tired, Jesus comes into the picture. And gives them a big breakfast.

Now, someone might ask, where was Jesus when the disciples felt empty and frustrated until they went into a fishy business. Here is the answer, at times we all feel like asking that question too. To Moses, he could have asked that similar question. When he tried to liberate the Israelites and ends up killing someone, God allows him to escape to Midian. Only for God to come and ask him, 40 years later, to go back into the liberation mission. It looks like a twist or trick. But see what is required – patiently waiting upon God.

Wait upon God

If only the disciples had patience, they would have waited for Jesus. In your life, just check some of the fishy things which you have done. A great percentage of them is because of lack of patience. Eve could not wait, she fell. David could not wait he fell and Gehazi too could not wait and absolutely he fell.

But here is the consolation, Jesus comes through to save us out of our mess. Why? Because he started some good work in us and he is surely committed to bringing it to completion. You will be amazed, God is more committed to your prosperity, hope, and good future than you are.

Let us check just a simple argument. When we sleep, we take rest from our work and our service to God. How about God, does he rest? In fact, he doesn’t even need to rest because he doesn’t get tired. Doesn’t he? His love is enduring and so he cannot take a break. He doesn’t sleep or slumber.

At times I wonder, what he is doing when I am sleeping. Here is a tip, he is working towards the completion of the work he began. And so, our comfort is just but one, ‘he who began some good work is committed to bringing it to completion.’

Leaving for Christ

Peter also responds to the call of Jesus leaving behind his father Zebedee and other close friends they might have fished with for a while. By him leaving his father, it is a symbol showing us that response to Christ's call will cost us relationships with others. It doesn't mean being an enemy of the people but it will come by default. Due to your changed behavior, beliefs and way of doing things, some relationships will just fall apart.

Jesus tells Peter, follow me. The word follow, actually is closely related with the word walk with which is used in Genesis to indicate how Enoch walked with God. If you are following someone it means you do everything they do. It is the same if you walk with someone, you imitate them. If they jump you jump, if they slow down you also follow that pace and so on.

Therefore, Peter is called into imitating Jesus – being like him. The proper English for that statement is to be a reflection of Jesus. Which means, if someone did not see Jesus but saw Peter, they could literally follow Jesus because Peter was following Jesus. Is that clear? You can read it again if it is not clear.

Let us say a new student just came into class when the teacher has just left. The new student asks you what you learned in class. You try explaining how you were calculating the math and deriving the formulas. In the end, the new student will feel as if he heard the teacher explaining the calculations. Even if he didn't. Why? Because someone who was following the teacher has explained it all.

Are you a follower?

In your life, today, are you a follower? Can other people follow you and thereby follow Jesus? Like Paul, could you say, follow me as I follow Christ? It's a question to ponder on.

Again why did Jesus have to start by calling Peter who was a fisherman? Why did he not start with a tax collector or someone in any other business?

First, he called a fisherman like Peter to show how his ministry looks like. His ministry looks like a fisherman's business. Fetching people from their lost world. Again Jesus calls a fisherman to signify the kind of people his disciples should be. A fisherman is a person who works, sometimes, during odd hours – at night, to get some good catch. The fisherman also dips his nets strategically and he doesn't dip nets in the same place all the time.

Working in odd hours for fishermen could be the new slogan for disciples. That at times they will sacrifice in order to reach out to the next person. Like the fisherman who sacrifices in order to get a good catch by going to the deep sea, the disciple will have to serve and love some people who do not even care to reciprocate the love. He will have to forgive those who sin against him and perhaps intercede for them in odd hours, as a night watcher or an early riser. He will have to go an extra mile of enduring.

You look like God

I heard it from a speaker the other day, okay, can't remember her name. She put it this way. If God made you in his image and likeness, then you look like who. Like him, absolutely. Therefore, if God's love is enduring as David puts it in Psalms 103, then in Matthew 23:13 he also says, those who will endure will be saved. Check the correlation. God is saying. "I made you to resemble me", now resemble me as you deal with people. So that when they see you they can see me. And they will follow me just as you follow me. Period.

The disciple will have to be a fisherman who moves even to the deepest sea to fish. He does not sit at the shore and casts nets, every day. Rather he moves away from the shore, from the comfort zone, to get a good catch. It is the same to us, at times just sitting in church, will not help as much.

Could I be wrong on this? The person who needs to be brought to Christ may be somewhere outside the church. Therefore, casting the nets just around the church compound could be likened to casting nets around the shores and no good catch will come forth. That's why people go for missions.

I am not against the church. But just a hint. Thinking that church is our fishing ground and our estates or work is a vacation as we wait for an altar call in church on Sunday is wrong. We must decide like the fisherman, to go out there.

Out there

Out where? Out of our comfort zones. Have you ever noted at times we just associate with people who are like us. Of course, psychologically, it is allowed, like poles attract. If you love watching football, you will end up having a friend who loves football. You hang out with people who are just like you because you have similar likes or problems. But Jesus presents to us a fisherman

story, that his ministry is not about fishing at the shore where you are comfortable. But in the deep sea where it is risky and commitment and sacrifice is required.

Sunday is not enough

Again, Peter is called during a day other than Sabbath. Why would Jesus not wait for Sunday to call disciples? Perhaps because the harvest is plenty, the laborers are few and Sunday is not enough. We need Monday, Tuesday and any other day if we have to harvest this plenty harvest and finish. Otherwise, if we only do it on Sabbath, we will only do a portion.

Check again here, what time did Jesus call the disciples. I may not statistically know the exact time. But here is the point, he called them when they were fishing. Check the word there, when they were fishing, not when they were done fishing or when they were starting to fish. He called Peter when he was fishing, right in the middle of the act and Peter responded.

Have ever been in the middle of a fishy business and God calls you out? At times we feel like questioning God. Why did he call me out when I had not started doing what I am doing? Why did he not stop me from getting into that affair? But the point is not to ask why but to respond right in the middle of where you are.

In Genesis, God does not appear when Adam and Eve are dragging the whole world into sin. But he comes when they have messed up and they are now trying to reclaim what they lost. And God calls, what happens, they were hiding. Right in the middle of their mess and hiding, God calls them out. And they responded. And they were saved.

Everyone who is a believer today was called when they were in the middle of some fishy business. Others were doing this or that. Let me not mention it, but already you can figure out people you know or yourself specifically. When they became believers they were somewhere in the middle of a fishy life.

Jesus calls you to him

Again Jesus calls them to come to him but not for him to go to them. Is that clear? Okay, lets me put it in another way. He called them to come and do his work but he did not join them at first to finish the fishing then they can go to his business.

In life, we at times feel this way. God should come bless me with a good job, wealth and a lot of stuff I want and then now we can go to his agenda. But it is him first. Matthew puts it this way, 'seek his kingdom first'. Kingdom? Yeah. What happens in a kingdom? In a kingdom, we have a king with other people working towards some goal.

When we respond to his call, what happens? We go out there and start loving other people. What happens? By loving others he knows we are his disciples. And what is the reward of disciples? They shall receive 100 fold and on top be given eternal life.

What is the secret here? You go out there and love someone, you solve someone's need and in the end, your need is solved. Amazing.

I realized the other day if you have dirty hands and you wash dirty dishes, both of you end up clean. Is that new or common to you? Go try it out today. If your hands are dirty, as you wash the dirty dishes, you emerge clean. More so, your hands become soft and handsome, somehow.

Here is the sense. Jesus is calling us to go out there and help someone, love someone. As if we were trying to clean someone by sharing the love with them. Cleaning them of their troubles. Comforting them. In the process we shall be refreshed, satisfied and clean. Yeah, with a clean bill of health to enter heaven.

Meaning of the Name Simon

Jesus called Simon and later his name was changed to Peter. Simon is a name which means 'reed-like' or shaky. The name suggested how Simon was easily swayed by issues. You remember how easily he could deny Jesus. Again you remember him leading other disciples back to fishing after Jesus died. He was a man of unstable decision. But as the saying goes, the lord does not call the qualified but qualifies those he calls.

At times people have an expectation that you will be perfect in all areas, but that's not true. At times you may, but should not be swayed like the grass or reed. But the bible offers hope because a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. To me, Peter seems like that smoldering wick and surely Jesus did not snuff him out.

In the end, Simon is changed to Peter. Peter means 'petros' or small rocks. At this time, Peter, after walking with Jesus had become steady and thus like a rock.

See how sweet the story ends, a man of unstable decision, weak and shaky character finally becomes strong. How and why? Because he responded to the call to go fish other people out of their shaky and unstable situations where they did not know Jesus. Peter went out there solving someone's need. Someone who was oscillating between idol worship and true worship, Peter brought him into shape. What happens to him in the end, he gets into the shape too. He becomes a rock.

It is the little secret hidden in service. Psychologically, as you help others you are refreshed. That as you wash others, you too become clean.