



Bible Heroes

Peter
get's it wrong

Teachers
Story notes

Essential Teachers notes:

A huge part of understanding scripture comes from understanding the context that it's played out in. In passages like this where Peter challenges Jesus' planned schedule as absurd, we have to see the wider picture to understand the actions of the characters. This shift in Jesus' teaching is totally incompatible with the expectations and teachings of a coming Messiah and Peter putting his foot in it is a very predictable response. It's easy to make Peter look like a fool or a man of weak faith in this conversation but neither is true. By understanding why he had trouble grasping this concept we also shed light on why the religious leaders lead Jesus to his death.

Tell this story or a similar one of your choice from a favourite bible translation or story book.

Main Passage : Matthew 16

Everything seem to change after that conversation, the one where Simon had said he thought Jesus was the messiah, the Christ, the long awaited saviour.... and Jesus had said yes! Simon had been given a new name - Peter - because he was going to be the rock Jesus built his new church on. He walked around like he was king for a few hours with his new found importance. Peter knew who Jesus was, even if Jesus told them to keep it a secret for now.

They had been waiting for a messiah for hundreds of years. The Messiah was going to take back the crown of David their ancestor, be the new king. He would save them from the Romans who ruled over the Israelites so they could be independent again. He would bring in a new time of peace and prosperity and worship to God. Every child, man and woman longed for the messiah to come and Peter had found him!

But the next day Jesus started teaching the disciples something new. He started to teach them that a time was coming when Jesus would be arrested and killed. The Messiah killed? Peter was outraged. The messiah wasn't going to be killed. He was going to be a great leader, he was going to unify the people, bring back the temple as the focus of peoples lives, make the nation strong. Not get arrested like a common rebel and die. But Jesus kept saying the same thing again and again and again.

Finally Peter took him aside.

"No Jesus, God won't allow this, it must never happen!"

Now Jesus looked mad, he shouted at Peter,

"Get behind me deceiver, don't be something I'll fall over"

Peter stepped back in amazement - what was going on?

Jesus looked deep into Peter's eyes, he wanted to make sure Peter understood he wasn't going to be the Messiah Peter expected, his kingdom wasn't going to be like the one Peter wanted.

"Peter you look through human eyes not God's eyes. If you want to save your life you must be willing to lose it. If you want to follow me you need to take up your cross."

Peter thought about the thick wooden crosses they used to kill prisoners, they were so heavy to carry, it was a horrible way to die.

"Peter," said Jesus softly now "It does not work like you think. If you lose your life for me, you will gain so much more!"

Peter looked at Jesus, he didn't fully understand, but he knew that Jesus was worth risking everything for, even dying on a cross.

Today's heroes is Simon-Peter because he shows us the gift of a cross

