

WVPC

Memorial Day¹May 28th 2017**Scripture Reading**

²After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

⁷Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

⁸Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

Mark 9:2–8

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all scripture is from *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

Introduction

Three strikes and you're safe

Todd Misfeldt

Pastor Kim is away this Memorial Day weekend. She is seeing her youngest child, Jonathan play college baseball for the University of Michigan. You too may play some baseball this weekend and play or sit down to watch a game or two. So please forgive the baseball analogies. (Perhaps has a baseball bat to swing when Peter has a strike?)

This morning I want to look at the Apostle Peter and how he gets in trouble when he tries to act before listening to Jesus.

This is like us, when we try to do things ourselves, we fail. However, Jesus stays with us, no matter how many strikes we have.

- The Gospel of Mark is an account of Jesus life. We are told by early church sources that “Mark had been Peter’s ‘interpreter.’”² Peter of course was an original disciple of Jesus who saw and heard what Jesus did and said.
- In addition to telling us about Jesus, the Gospel of Mark is also an account of Peter’s experience with Jesus.
- How does Peter portray himself?
 - Peter, like the rest of the disciples, accompany Jesus but they are depicted as just not understanding what Jesus says.

² “Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.14–17) quotes Papias, who in his turn was quoting someone he, Papias, identified as “the elder.” In that third hand account, we learn that **Mark had been Peter’s “interpreter,”** and that he had written down “accurately all that he remembered” although “not in order.” Paul J. Achtemeier, [“Mark, Gospel of.”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 542.

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²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

²⁸ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

²⁹ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

Mark 8:27–29

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- Sometimes, Peter gets it right, he connects with the ball and hits it out of the ball park.
- For example in Mark 8:27-29 (Read Mark 8:27–29)
- Mark 8:29 is an example of Peter getting it right. Home run!
 - Jesus is the Messiah.

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- However, most of the time, when Peter tries to do it on his own, he misses the mark – he strikes out.
- In the next few verses, Peter gets rebuked by Jesus.
- In Mark 8:31–33 – we see Peter’s first strike—he gets rebuked by Jesus.

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³¹ He (Jesus) then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, ... he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Mark 8:31-33

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- What would you do if a person for whom have given up everything for starting talking about suffering and being killed?
 - Would you start thinking about the big picture, about everything you had seen Jesus do and say? Probably not.
 - You would do what Peter did. Take Jesus aside and say "Jesus, you have got to stop talking like this."
- Peter is trying to manage Jesus.
- Notice that he gets a public rebuke. In v. 33 it says:

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter."
- **Peter's first strike**—rebuked by Jesus.
- We do the same thing. We try to manage God don't we.
- We say "God, do this- heal this person, give me what I want, change that person"
- Are we so busy with what we want that we reject Jesus like the Jewish elders did so long ago?
- In Peter's next strike, Peter gets rebuked by God – at the transfiguration

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²After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:2-4

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- Wow. That would have been quite a scene. Jesus and a select group of disciples going up to the top of a mountain where they see Jesus transfigured.
- Theologian Rodney L. Cooper writes: “Peter, James, and John were given a gift that the rest of the world will not see until Christ returns. It was as though the veil between this world and the next was lowered for a moment so these disciples could see Christ as he really is.”³
- How does Peter react?

³ Rodney L. Cooper, [Mark](#) (vol. 2; Holman New Testament Commentary; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 156.

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⁵ Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Mark 9:5-6

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- Peter is totally awed and frightened.
- If you were Peter, what would your first thought be?
 - Run away because it is so frightening?
 - Take out your smart phone to get a picture and post it on Facebook?
 - Text your other Apostle buddies to get up on the mountain?
- Like you, Peter’s first reaction is to want to do something.
- He thinks: Oh my. Elijah, perhaps Israel’s greatest prophet. Moses, the person through which God gave us the law. They are talking with Jesus. They are looking like Gods. We don’t have any place to put them to honor them. Tents – Feast of Tabernacles remembering when God dwelled in a tent before the temple. Peter thinks “Lets put up some tents...”

- Is Peter doing the right thing?

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⁷ Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

Mark 9:7–8

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- God speaks
 - God doesn’t say to do anything or manage anyone – He says listen!
 - Who is God speaking to? Elijah-no. Moses-no. Jesus-no.
 - God is speaking to Peter, John, and James!
 - God is speaking to us!
 - God says to us “Listen to Jesus!”—this is your priority!

- Peter’s **second strike**—rebuked by God.

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²⁷ “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, ...

²⁹ Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

³⁰ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.”

³¹ But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”
And all the others said the same.

Mark 14:27, 29–31

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- Peter gets rebuked again at the Last supper. In Mark 14 it says (Mark 14: 14:27, 29–31)
- At the last supper, Jesus tells Peter something that Peter does not want to hear.
- If a good friend tells you that you are heading into sin, is your first thought to agree with them?
 - Do you say “Of course I’m working too much and it is going to break up my marriage and estrange me from my children. Thank you for telling me.”
 - No. You don’t listen and you probably disagree. You say “I’ve got this under control” and perhaps “Mind your own business.”
- Peter is still not listening.
- **Strike Three.** Again rebuked by Jesus.

- We see a pattern don't we. Peter is not good at listening
- Are we any better?
 - For me, the way that the Apostles are shown in the Synoptic Gospels gives me hope.
 - I don't always get it.
 - I don't always listen to what Jesus says
 - I try to do first instead of listen first to what God wants me to do.
 - I don't always have the faith that I should
- Like Peter, I try to swing at what Jesus says but I miss the ball, I should be called out on strikes.
- But how does Jesus treat Peter and us
 - He loves us
 - As Kim said last week "Jesus is never in a hurry."
 - He continues to teach us
 - Jesus does not give us up on us – even after we strike out.
 - We just have to get in the batter box and step up to the plate.
- After Jesus leaves this earth, he sends the Holy Spirit in a powerful way to Peter and the disciples.
- Jesus does this:
 - So that they will not be alone and to give them power to do what He's asked them to do.
 - What a difference it makes.
- Next Sunday we celebrate Pentecost—when as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' disciples.
 - The Holy Spirit, fortified the spirit of Jesus' disciples,
 - The Holy Spirit showed Jesus' disciples what Jesus' words and life meant.
- After the first Pentecost, we have a brand-new Peter
 - Peter is bold

- Peter speaks despite opposition
- Peter now knows what he was shown at the Transfiguration – that Jesus is the one that we should listen to and respond to. It is all about Jesus and not about us—listen, then act.

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²² For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.’

Acts 3:22–23

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- After Pentecost, Peter understood that he must first listen to Jesus.
- Peter has learned the lesson of listening. He reminds us of this in Acts 3:22–23
- Peter says (Read Acts 3:22–23).
- With the help of the Holy Spirit Peter shows that we get it right when we listen to Jesus.

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¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” ¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

2 Peter 1:16–18

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- Peter mentions the transfiguration later in his second epistle. He connects what he saw at the transfiguration with Jesus’ second coming in power. In 2 Peter 1:16–18 Peter says: (read 2 Peter 1:16–18)
- Despite not listening to Jesus before and getting three strikes against him, Peter is **saved!**
- Are you listening to Jesus? Not like the Peter in the Gospel of Mark but like the Peter of Acts?
- First, know there is hope because Jesus loves us.
- Second, the Holy Spirit is with all of us and will help us listen to Jesus.

Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is important in this.
 - The Holy Spirit leads us to faith in the first place.
 - The Holy Spirit guides our faith so that it remains true
 - The Holy Spirit Revitalizes our faith.

- If your faith is stagnant? Are you thinking that your faith is not as important as it used to be? Are you looking for something more?

- Kim is not going to renew your faith. In this message, I'm not going to impose a change upon your faith. Going to another church is not going to revitalize your faith.
 - The only way you can change is through the Holy Spirit.

- A refresh of your faith is not going to come from the outside.
 - It comes from within here (point to chest).
 - It comes from within your heart.
 - It comes from you and the Holy Spirit, together.

- You must do this!

- Listening to Jesus takes some work.
 - It takes some discipline.
 - It takes patience at times.
 - But it is very doable and it is so worth it!

- Many of you know this by experience.
- I'm currently going through of period of listening. In 12 days, I'll be done with my Masters in Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary. It will have been a 4 ½ year process.
- When people hear this, the logical question to ask is "what are you going to do with your degree?"
 - My answer is "I don't know."
 - I'm waiting to hear from God what he wants me to do. I'm waiting upon God. I'm trying to listen to God.
- For me, at first this was hard. I'm the type who always had a short term, 1-5 term and 10-year plan for what I was going to be doing in my life.
- Whenever I tried to think and pray about what I was going to do afterwards, I felt a curtain closing. I got the message that now wasn't the time. I needed to have patience and trust God.
- Then listening became a pleasant experience. All I had to do was to trust God. I left behind all of the second guessing, sleepless nights, and worrying about the future.
- It is hard work to do it all ourselves. Instead:
 - Listen to Jesus.
 - Trust Jesus.
 - Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you how to listen to Jesus.
- Next week is Pentecost. The church's celebration of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus' disciples as a physical manifestation of tongues of fire after Jesus' ascension into heaven.
- There is no better time to get re-acquainted with the Holy Spirit than this week, leading up to Pentecost.

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This Week:

- Take time this week, every day this week, to listen to Jesus.

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- Here is what I'm asking you to do.
 - Take time this week, every day this week, to listen to Jesus.
 - Last week Kim started us off with a minute of silence.
 - This week I want to you extend it and do it each day this week.
 - How long each day?
- Baseball blogger Rick Johnston has calculated that the average time for each at bat for a Major-League hitter is 65 seconds.⁴ Say you are on a pretty good team and you get to bat 9 times a game or a total of a little less than 10 minutes a game at bat.
- I'm asking you to spend 10 minutes a day, listening to Jesus.

⁴Rick Johnston, "Your Time in the Batter's Box...How Precious is an At Bat?" "The Baseball Zone Blog," "<http://blog.thebaseballzone.ca/baseball-blog-toronto/bid/33570/Your-Time-in-the-Batter-s-Box-How-Precious-is-an-At-Bat>" (accessed May 20, 2017)

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This Week:

- Take time this week, every day this week, to listen to Jesus.
- Listen for 10 minutes a day.

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- I'll give you three options:
- If you want to spend your 10 minutes in scripture, read for 5 minutes and then pray/listen to God for another 5 minutes.
- If you want to pray in the car (or private place). Take 5 minutes to share with God what is on your mind – ask God questions, thank Him, or complain. I do this out loud in a car. Then, for the last few of minutes give it to God and listen.
- If you want to do a mini Examine, find a quiet place and spend 10 minutes reviewing the day, asking God what was God trying to show you through the events of your life that day.
- Pick one of these. Do it every day this week!
- Be alert for the Holy Spirit speaking to you at any time and in any way during your day.
- Keep in mind that “The Spirit does not show us himself; rather, he shows us the face of the Father in the face of the Son.”⁵

⁵ Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. 2008. *Pneumatology: the Holy Spirit in ecumenical, international, and contextual perspective*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 18.

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This Week:

- Take time this week, every day this week, to listen to Jesus.
- Listen for 10 minutes a day.
- Listen and obey.

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- When Jesus speaks,
 - listen and obey.

- I have confidence that by next Sunday:
 - You will have heard the Holy Spirit directing you,
 - that Jesus has spoken to you,
 - your trust in the Lord has grown, and
 - you will be renewed!

Memorial Day Sunday

May 27, 2017

Scripture Passages:

- Mark 9:2–8 – The Transfiguration
- Mark 8:27–30 - Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah
- Mark 8:31–33 - Jesus Predicts His Death
- Mark 14:27–31 - Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial
- Acts 3:22–23 – Peter: Remember to listen
- 2 Peter 1:16–18 – Peter remembers God's words

Exercise for This Week – 10 minutes a day listening to Jesus:

- In Scripture: Spend 10 minutes in scripture, read for 5 minutes and then pray/listen to God for another 5 minutes.
- In a private place: Take 5-8 minutes to share with God what is on your mind – ask God questions, thank Him, or complain. Then, for the few minutes give it to God and listen.
- Mini Examine: Find a quiet place and review the day for 10 minutes asking God what was God trying to show you through the events of your life that day.

Pick one of these. Do it every day this week!

Be alert for the Holy Spirit speaking to you at any time and in any way during your day.

Questions

1. Do you think that Peter listened well? What you learn from Peter's listening habits?
2. What has been your experience in listening to Jesus?
3. What has helped you listen to Jesus?
4. What new ideas can you try in the future to listen to Jesus?