

# THE FISHERMAN WHO BECAME A PREACHER

**BIBLE TEXT** : Acts 9:32-43; 10:1-23

LESSON 302 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Acts 9:32-43**

<sup>32</sup> And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

<sup>33</sup> And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

<sup>34</sup> And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

<sup>35</sup> And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup> Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

<sup>37</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

<sup>38</sup> And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

<sup>39</sup> Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **Four Fishermen**

A gentle breeze is blowing; gulls are soaring overhead; the warm rays of the Judean sun are beaming upon us as we walk, in our imagination, along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. A glance down the beach reveals a Figure coming toward Peter and Andrew who are fishing. “Follow me,” His voice calls, “and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). As if nets, fish, and work mean nothing, Peter and Andrew leave them all and follow the Stranger, whom we recognize as Jesus. Going on down the beach, we see two other brothers, James and John, leave their work and follow the Lord.

Now that we have met the four fishermen, let us single out Peter and review a few years of his life. Let us talk to him, and listen as he speaks — sometimes wisely and at other times very unwisely.

#### **Peter’s Words**

You were very willing to leave your fishing tackle and follow Jesus, were you not, Peter? You were a consecrated person. On another day, as we stand near by, we hear you say to Jesus, “We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matthew 19:27). Didn’t you know that one follows the Lord because of love for Him? and didn’t you know that “following Jesus” means being willing to forsake houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for Jesus sake? Everlasting life awaits those who truly follow Jesus.

Twice we hear strong confessions of your faith in Jesus, from your very own lips: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). But another time we are startled by your answer to Jesus after He had told you that He must suffer, and die, and rise again the third day. What was it that caused you to rebuke Jesus: “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Matthew 16:22). Jesus rebuked you for that, Peter. Perhaps you did not know that your friend Matthew would write it down in the Book, where millions could read it.

#### **His Faith**

There was that other day, very early in the morning, as Jesus walked toward your ship when it was tossed with the waves (**Matthew 14:25** <sup>25</sup> **And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.**). Your faith in your Master caused you to say, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” By faith you stepped out of that boat and walked upon those waves to go to Jesus. But fear crept into your heart as you looked at those huge waves — and down you went.

How much like people of today — we go along smoothly for a while, walking on the waves, as it were. Suddenly a trial or temptation comes along and we get our eyes off Jesus for just an instant, and down we go. But if, like Peter, we are close enough to Him to reach out our hand and say, “Lord, save me,” His strong arm will lift us, and we shall again be on top of the waves. Our waves may be slight persecutions from school friends; but, to a child, sometimes those things seem as big as waves of the sea.

#### **A Sad Experience**

Peter, as the Lord is praying that sad night in Gethsemane, we are very much disappointed that you were sleeping instead of watching, for

weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

<sup>40</sup> But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

<sup>41</sup> And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

<sup>42</sup> And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

<sup>43</sup> And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

### **Acts 10:1-23**

<sup>1</sup> There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

<sup>2</sup> A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

<sup>3</sup> He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

<sup>4</sup> And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

<sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

<sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell

that one hour (**Matthew 26:40** <sup>40</sup> And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?); and again, a little later on, we see you following afar off (**Matthew 26:58** <sup>58</sup> But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.). We shudder as three times we hear you actually deny your Lord and Master. We feel very sorry indeed as your face shows your deep regret; when the cock crows, you remember the words of Jesus, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Matthew 26:75). What a cowardly thing you did! We see you as you weep so bitterly, and we also go out of the room and weep with you. That will never happen again, will it, Peter? You have learned your bitter lesson, haven't you? Your Master has not denied you, Peter, but He stands ready to forgive.

How do we follow Jesus today? Are we following afar off? Would we also betray Jesus if someone pointed a finger at us and said, "Thou also art one of them" (Matthew 26:71-73)? or, perhaps, "This boy also loves Jesus"? Let us search our heart and make sure that we are not ashamed to own Jesus as our Lord.

### **Peter the Stone**

But oh! How much we admire you later on, Peter, when you are in Jerusalem, as you stand forth with boldness and declare unto the council and the high priest, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). And then, although you are beaten for your boldness in preaching Christ, we see you rejoicing that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name (**Acts 5:41** <sup>41</sup> And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.). We say within ourselves, "Oh, that we had just a little of that same spirit!"

You are no longer weak, are you Peter? It must be because you were one of those who obeyed the command of Jesus to tarry in Jerusalem until you would be endued with power from on High. You were in that upper room when the sound came "from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (**Acts 2:2-4** <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.).

We are amazed as we listen to the sermon you preached on that outstanding day. We can hardly believe that it is you, Peter, for you preached with such force and power. About three thousand souls are added to the Church through that one sermon (**Acts 2:41** <sup>41</sup> Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.). The prophecy of Christ has come to pass: "Thou shalt be called Cephas," which means "a stone" (John 1:42).

### **Power to Heal**

We marvel at the great miracles, which take place. Through the power of God the lame man at the Temple is healed (**Acts 3:6** <sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.). You are very careful to take no credit for this, but you give God all the glory. We see sick people stretched upon beds and couches waiting for you to pass by, Peter, so that your shadow might fall upon them and they might be healed (**Acts 5:15** <sup>15</sup> Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.). We

thee what thou oughtest to do.

<sup>7</sup> And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

<sup>8</sup> And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

<sup>9</sup> On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

<sup>10</sup> And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

<sup>11</sup> And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

<sup>12</sup> Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

<sup>13</sup> And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

<sup>14</sup> But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

<sup>15</sup> And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

<sup>16</sup> This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

<sup>17</sup> Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from

witness, too, in our mind's eye, the raising of Æneas, who had been sick of the palsy for eight years; the dead woman, Dorcas, restored to life once more! What marvellous miracles these are!

### To Every Creature

There is still something, Peter, you must learn. It matters not how far along in the Christian life one has gone, thee is always something more to learn. No one yet has reached the fullest measure of grace, knowledge, and power with God.

While you are in Joppa, Peter, just after raising Dorcas to life, you have a very strange experience. Through a dream, the Lord shows you that God is no respecter of persons. He loves all men and women, Jews and Gentiles alike, and wants the Gospel of the Lord preached to all people. Jesus had told you and the other Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature (**Mark 16:15** <sup>5</sup> **And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**). Now Jesus shows you through the dream that you should not call the Gentile people common or unclean. Although the Jews are God's chosen people, and it was contrary to the Law for a Jew to keep company with one of another nation (**Acts 10:28** <sup>28</sup> **And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**), there is no difference with God. He wants all people of the world to hear the Gospel and be saved.

When you awake, Peter, and wonder just what the dream means, three men stand at the gate and ask for you. The Spirit of God tells you to go down to them and go with them, doubting nothing. Forgetting all about your hunger, you obey the Voice and go to the gate, and say, "I am he whom ye seek." You invite them in to stay overnight, and the next day you and the others go to Cæsarea. There you are to have an opportunity to preach Christ to the Gentiles.

### What You Have Taught Us

Many helpful lessons you learned from your Master, and you have passed them on to us. We are indeed grateful to you, Peter, for what we have learned from the study of your life. When you sinned, you were quick to repent and return to your Lord. We have read your First and Second Epistles, and we are inspired and blessed by your writings. The council in Jerusalem before whom you spoke (**Acts 4:8-12** <sup>8</sup> **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,** <sup>9</sup> **If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;** <sup>10</sup> **Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.** <sup>11</sup> **This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.** <sup>12</sup> **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**) said that, although you were unlearned and ignorant, they realized you had been with Jesus. He was your great Teacher, wasn't He, Peter? It was from Him that you received your wisdom, your boldness, and your power to preach Christ.

You are one of the twelve Apostles, Peter, and your name is inscribed upon one of the twelve stones of the foundation of the City of God. We expect to see you up there in that City some day.

**"We will talk it o'er together by and by,  
When we reach that holy city, you and I,  
How through grace we've overcome, and have  
reached  
The heavenly home;  
We will talk it o'er together by and by.**

**"There with Moses and Elias, and with Peter and with**

Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

<sup>18</sup> And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

<sup>19</sup> While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

<sup>20</sup> Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

<sup>22</sup> And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

<sup>23</sup> Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

**Paul,  
We'll recount the triumphs of redeeming grace;  
Best of all, we'll see our Saviour, hail and crown  
Him  
Lord of all,  
And unite His praise to sing through endless days."**

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Tell of some of the miracles performed by Peter.
2. When and where had Peter received power to do these things?
3. Who showed the vision to Peter?
4. What was Peter's occupation before Jesus called him?
5. Tell something of Peter's failure.
6. How do we know he was restored to salvation?
7. What is promised to those who forsake all to follow Jesus?
8. Tell some of the hard things endured by those who followed Jesus.