

Straight Thinking

010768

A MAN CALLED PETER

Sunday. Nobody in the Bible is pictured more vividly than the apostle Peter. His growth from a rash fisherman into an unwavering witness for the Christian faith offers a challenge to every disciple of Jesus. Early on, Jesus foreshadowed this change when he changed his name from Simon to Cephas—a rock (Peter). (Read John 1:40-42.)

Monday. Peter presents the strange combination of virtues and faults that so characterizes all of us. One minute he is borne aloft on a triumphant blessing from Jesus because of his Great Confession of faith; the next minute he is plunged into the depths by Christ's stinging rebuke: "*Get behind me, Satan!*" There is some of Simon in us all. (Read Matthew 16:13-23.)

Tuesday. Peter had amazing trust in Jesus. One night the twelve, caught alone on the Sea of Galilee, were drenched in a wild fury of destruction. Then Peter saw his master in the midst of the raging water and asked to walk with him on the waves. Could any of us have trusted Jesus enough to leave the safety of the boat for the dangers of the deep? (Read Matthew 14:22-30.)

Wednesday. Peter was a worker, a rolling stone that gathered no moss. He could work all night and follow Jesus all day. Simon Peter would not have been content to sit on top of a pillar becoming "holy" as did a fifth-century namesake Simon Stylites. Idleness is never a virtue; he that doesn't work shouldn't eat. (Read Luke 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.)

Thursday. Peter was a spokesman for Christ. When the authorities arrested the apostles and brought them into court, Peter was the one that spoke up in defense of the gospel and firmly declared that he and his associates would continue to preach it as before. There is a place today for Christians bold enough to stand their ground and stick to their guns. (Read Acts 5:26-32.)

Friday. Peter would contend against all odds and at all costs to himself. Just outside the gate of Gethsemane, he drew his sword against the whole mob that came to capture his Lord. As it turned out, he did the wrong thing; but God used his spirit of attack to establish the church in the very city where these Jewish leaders killed the Lord. God still needs people like Peter to carry the battle against overwhelming majorities at the expense of their own welfare. (Read John 18:1-11.)

Saturday. Jesus probably reprimanded Peter more than anyone else. So often Peter did wrong while trying to do right. Everyone that hopes to accomplish anything will slip up now and then. A great man is not one that doesn't make mistakes but one that profits from them. The man that Jesus named Peter has set an example that should encourage everyone that endeavors to serve. (Read John 21:15-19.)