



WALK ON THE WATER

BY KEITH A. BUTLER

God has plans for you! He has an assignment with your name on it! As part of His family, you have a part to play in bringing His will to pass on the earth. When we pray, *“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”*, we have some responsibility in seeing that prayer answered.

God works through people on this earth, and whether you realize it or not, no one that God uses is perfect! *Romans 1:17* tells us that we are all growing from faith to faith. We all *“are changed into the same image from glory to glory ...”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Partner, if you’ve been waiting to step out into what God has called you to do because you are not yet a flawless Christian, I’ve got good news for you: God uses imperfect people! The Apostle Paul wrote, *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...”* (1 Corinthians 1:27). I consider myself to be one of those foolish things, and I am

thankful that despite my imperfections, God has used me for over 40 years to teach, preach, and minister His Word to people all over the world.

When God first called me to pastor, I told Him that I didn’t have the right personality to shepherd His sheep. However, I soon learned that God uses all kinds of personalities as long as they are submitted to Him.

God used Paul—a highly educated man who had the coveted status of being a Roman citizen. He also used Peter—an ordinary Jewish fisherman from a small town.

“Partner, when you follow God, you may find yourself walking on water while those around you are sitting in the boat!”

Peter and Paul were very different in personality, skills, and backgrounds. Yet, besides Jesus, these two men were probably the most important figures of the New Testament.

Partner, don't assume that God prefers one personality type over another. He uses willing vessels, whether they are scholarly like Paul or straightforward like Peter. I think many Christians can relate to Peter; I believe the Holy Ghost will reveal some truths to you as you consider how God used an imperfect man named Peter.

Peter was a family man, a business owner, and what you might call "just a regular guy." His family lived in the city of Bethsaida on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. If you go with me on my next tour to Israel, we will visit Peter's house. A church now stands on top of the dwelling, but you can still see the very regular home where one of the most influential leaders of the early church lived with his wife, mother-in-law, and his brother, Andrew. Peter and his family later relocated to Capernaum, where Jesus' ministry was based. Partner, God can use you right where you are, but you should also be willing to move if God says, "move."

Peter's given name was Simon. *Simon* means *hearing*. However, Jesus renamed him, Peter. *Peter* in Greek is *petros*. It means *a small rock*. In Aramaic, Peter's name is Cephas. The New Testament refers to him 183 times in nine books using his different names. Your family, friends, and co-workers may know you by various names and titles, but God calls you His child.

John 1:12

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Partner, don't minimize the influence your faith can have on your family! Peter's brother, Andrew, was a disciple of John the Baptist. He later became an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and he was the one who brought Peter to Jesus.

John 1:40-42

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Let God use you to bring your family members to Jesus. Invite them to church. Tell them what God has done for you. Never stop praying for them and let the goodness of God in your life lead them to the Lord! (See Romans 2:4.)

Peter didn't immediately drop everything to follow Jesus; he went back to fishing, but Jesus sought him out.

Luke 5:1-3

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Jesus didn't write Peter off. In his second encounter with Jesus, Peter learned to trust the Lord for his provision, and he willingly left his fishing business to follow Jesus.

Luke 5:4-11

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Partner, follow God! Where God guides, God provides! Peter had never had such a huge catch of fish! I believe that this one blessed day of fishing provided the necessary finances for him to take care of his family while he went into full-time ministry, on the road with Jesus.

The Apostle Paul called Peter a pillar of the church: *"And when James, Cephas, [Peter] and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellow-*

ship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9).

Peter boldly delivered the church's first sermon on the day of Pentecost, and 3,000 people got saved!

Acts 2:14-21

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my hand-maidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

However, Peter was often impetuous and spoke when he should have been silent. Scripture records at least one time when Jesus publicly chastised him for contradicting Him.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. *"Then*

Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21-23).

Jesus called Peter, the rock, the pillar of the church, “Satan!” Another time, the Father told Peter to stop talking and listen to Jesus!

Matthew 17: 1-5

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Partner, I hope you can see that God uses imperfect people! You don't have to have it all together to serve God; just get started and let Him instruct you as you go! Peter's impulsive mouth got him into some trouble, but his bold faith allowed him to walk on water while the other disciples sat in the boat! *“And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:28-30).* Some people call that a failure on Peter's part, but I see it as a victory. Who else do you know that has walked on water? Peter got distracted and didn't finish his water-walking journey, but his bold faith took him somewhere none of his boat sitting companions had been. God used an impetuous, imperfect man to do a very important job.

Partner, when you follow God, you may find yourself walking on water while those around you are sitting in the boat! Take a step towards what God has called you to do. Don't let your past or your imperfections hold you back. God will work with you and take you from faith to faith and from glory to glory as you walk on water with Him!

Partner, Pastor Deborah and I pray for you daily. You are important to us. More importantly, you are important to our Lord! You are always on our minds and in our hearts.

If you have a specific prayer request and would like prayer, please call us at our KBM Partner Care Center at 248.353.3476, ext. 256. Or, if you would like to email your prayer request, you may do so by sending it to partners@keithbutler.org. You may also submit your prayer request through our website at www.keithbutler.org.

