



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

MARCH 6, 2021

When Peter put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Peter that will help us put God first in our lives today?

Peter was one of the oldest disciples Jesus called. He was determined and trustworthy. On a stormy night, Jesus appeared to the group as a ghost walking on water. Peter was the first to speak out in his desire to be with Jesus, even if it meant jumping out of the boat and walking on water. Putting God first seemed to come easy for Peter. Until he almost drowned.

Soon after walking on water, Peter doubted. As Peter began to be engulfed by the tempestuous water, he must have felt the shame of public failure. He had asked to come to Jesus and all the disciples could now see that he had failed. Putting God first in our failures isn't easy. But Peter did it. He shouted for help and Jesus saved him.

This story repeats itself when Jesus is arrested and crucified. Peter had promised to be next to Jesus, no matter what, but Jesus warned him of his betrayal that very night. Peter wasn't scared. He was ready to die for Jesus. This is clear from Peter's attack in Gethsemane. Despite the soldiers surrounding them, Peter tries to kill someone.

Thankfully, he was a fisherman, not a soldier. He missed and cut the man's ear instead.

What Jesus did next confused him. Jesus healed the man and said He didn't need protection. What could that mean? Peter was ready for conflict and Jesus rebuked him for it. He followed Jesus from a distance and denied knowing him three times that night, as Jesus predicted. Meanwhile, John stayed right next to Jesus throughout the horror of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Peter had failed again. How could he possibly lead anything after that?

Putting God first in the midst of our failure, confusion and shame is impossible. It is only through God's power that we can accept God's forgiveness and start again. Later, Peter would become an excellent leader as Jesus trusted him again and again. Perhaps you've been unfaithful with your tithe and offerings in the past. Perhaps you've failed. Putting God first means asking for and accepting God's forgiveness today. It means starting again to trust in God with your finances.

Peter put God first. His example compels us to do the same. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.