



June 13,
2015

ADVENTIST LAYPERSONS SERVICE & INDUSTRIES (ASI) DAY

He Was Called a Rock

IT WAS in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. At that time it was not an affectionate, endearing term of adoration, but rather one of derision and rejection. This, however, became forever after a descriptive terminology of the lifestyle and character of those disciples and all who would succeed them.

Being a Christian is not a natural achievement for anyone. Because of our inherited sinful natures, the thoughts and inclinations of our hearts are evil continually. Becoming a Christian is a learnt behavior that we develop by modeling Christ daily. This was how it was for the disciples who were all cut from very rough timber.

It is very significant that Jesus did not choose His leadership team from the professionally qualified and academically capable practitioners in the temple. He chose from among individuals, some of whose personalities, interests and abilities were questionable. Fishermen, tax collectors, and political activists like Simon the Zealot, filled the spectrum of candidates. I wonder at times if it was because of the creative ability in Him why Jesus did not

use “finished products” as those leaders pretended to be, but rather chose rough, crude and what some consider unworthy material to make something beautiful, wonderful useful and lasting!! Whatever the motivation, Jesus taught what it meant to be a Christian and a true disciple, through the lives of those who later became apostles.

Today, we will focus on just one of these apostles who at birth were named Simon Bar Jonah. He was among the first to be called by Jesus when He and His brother Andrew were fishing by Galilee, and he later became part of Jesus’ inner circle. Simon seemed to have been a successful entrepreneur who had at least a boat and fishing gears of his own. This did not prevent him from immediately answering the Master’s call. It would appear from biblical evidence that Jesus had to do the most work on Simon to shape fashion and mold his character into something He could use. *Consider this:* Peter’s name is mentioned in the gospels more than any other except Jesus. No one else speaks as often as Peter did, and no one is spoken to as often by the Master as Peter was. No other disciple was so frequently rebuked by the Lord

**OPENING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal, no. 8*

**SCRIPTURE
READING:**
Luke 6:12-16

**CLOSING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal,
no. 531*

SERMON

as Peter, and no other disciple ever rebukes the Lord except Peter (Matthew 16:22). No one else confessed Christ as boldly or acknowledged His lordship more explicitly, yet no other disciple ever verbally denied Christ as forcefully or as publicly as Peter did. No one is praised and blessed by Christ the way Peter was, yet Peter was the only one Jesus addressed as Satan. The Lord had harsher things to say to Peter than He ever said to any of the others.

Simon displayed so much of the character defects we see in ourselves. What Jesus did for Simon, I assure you He can do the same for us, and more if necessary. In **Luke 6:12–16**, Simon was the only disciple who got a new name. Jesus did not just give him a new name to replace the old. He “also named him Peter” so he sometimes was called Simon, sometimes Peter and sometimes Simon Peter. **John 1:42** reports and confirms the event of Peter’s renaming which appears to be the first words Jesus said to him. “Peter” was a kind of nickname, which means “Rock or Stone.” Sometimes however, Jesus continued to refer to him as Simon, but on almost every occasion, it was a signal that Peter did something that required reproof or correction. The nickname was significant as Jesus had a specific reason for choosing it. Peter was by nature brash, impulsive, impetuous, vacillating, and undependable. He tended to make great promises he could not fulfill. He appears to be one who jumps fully clad into something but bails out before finishing. He seemed to fit James’s description of a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. **James 1:8**. It seems “Peter or Rock” was to be a constant reminder of what he **should become**. Could Jesus have been saying to Peter, I want you to become more like Me? I want you to imitate Me!

It seems when Jesus addressed him as Simon, he was acting like his old self, but when Jesus called him Peter, it was a commendation for acting the way he should. Peter learnt that Jesus could gently chide or commend him just by using one name or the other.

There were many lessons that Simon needed to learn on his life’s journey to becoming “Peter the rock.” Lessons such as: submission, restraint, humility, love, compassion, and courage. These are similar to the lessons every ASI and church member needs to learn as we journey to becoming the Christian we should be. Peter learned a lot through hard experiences. He also learned, for example, the crushing defeat and deep humiliation often follow our greatest victories. Just after Jesus commended him for his great confession of Christ as “the Son of the Living God” in **Matthew 16:16**; Peter suffered the harshest rebuke ever recorded of the disciples, in verse 23 Christ addressed Peter as Satan. Our journey to becoming more like Christ each day will suffer ups and downs, hills and valleys but if we do not become discouraged and give up, we will achieve the goal Christ has set for us.

Following his conversion and the experience of Pentecost, we see a different Peter. Acts 4 describes how Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin and charged to no more speak in the name of Jesus. Their declarative reply is instructive. “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19, 20).

Ellen G. White commented on Peter’s speech at Pentecost, which revealed his dramatic transformation after conversion. “Those present, who remembered the part that Peter had acted at the trial of his Master, flattered themselves that he could now be intimidated by the threat of imprisonment and death. But the Peter who denied Christ in the hour of His greatest need was impulsive and self-confident, differing widely from the Peter who was brought before the Sanhedrin for examination. Since his fall he had been converted. He was no longer proud and boastful, but modest and self-distrustful. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and by the help of this power he was resolved to remove the stain

of his apostasy by honoring the name he had once disowned” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 62).

When Peter became empowered at Pentecost, he became a powerful mouthpiece for Christ. He preached with power, in the name of Jesus; his very shadow healed the sick while crippled men were made to walk again, in the name of Jesus!

Are you a “finished product” or are you available for Jesus to shape and fashion you into something beautiful and useful? The process may be painful at times,

but we can be confident that if Jesus is our Master Craftsman, when He is finished with us we will be “like corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.” Jesus is ready to change your name and change your destination; are you ready and willing to experience the change? Make Jesus your “Rock” He is waiting to empower you for His service.

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