

Outline

Me and My Angry Commuter

Play sound clip of *Me and My Gang* by Rascal Flatts as I take the stage Just to remind you, this message series was inspired in my heart by a very “non-churchy” song that got me to thinking about the kinds of people that God loves to hang with as illustrated in the Bible by the kinds of people that Jesus hung with, and the Rascal Flatts hit, *Me and My Gang*, sort of characterizes my image of Jesus’ disciples.

We have looked at Matthew, a crooked CPA, whom Jesus accepted right into His Gang without asking him to change a thing. God’s Grace is open for anyone, no matter their past.

We have looked at Thomas, the skeptical pessimist, whom Jesus encouraged to be in His gang with all of his questions and quirky personality. God’s Grace is open to be questioned and challenged by our lack of understanding.

Today, I want you to concentrate on someone who had few questions, accepted what Jesus said to be the truth with little difficulty, but struggled to believe that God’s Grace allowed for Failure and Sin – Peter, Jesus’ Lead Disciple.

Once again, we see someone who Jesus chose to be in His gang that is an unlikely candidate. While Matthew and Thomas might have been white collar guys, there is no doubt that Peter is blue collar all the way.

- What job do you think Peter would have had if he had lived in Fredericksburg in May 2009? I can come up with a bunch of them: mail carrier, carpenter, electrician, roofer, etc. But one thing is for sure, he would probably have been a **commuter**.
- One of our first introductions to Peter is Jesus’ challenge to Peter to go back out on the Sea of Galilee after not catching any fish and try fishing off the other side of the boat found in Luke 5:

When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." Luke 5:4,5 NIV.

- **Modern translation?** “Hey Peter, why don’t you try the right hand lane in this traffic to get us home a little faster.” And just as absurd as the fishing on the wrong side of the boat was to Peter back then, I know that he would have cocked an eyebrow and an askance glance at the Savior and said, “Just leave the driving to me” as he yelled out the window at a semi-truck trying to cut in front of him and showed him the one-finger salute while Jesus was looking out the other window.
- **Yep, Peter was a speak first, ask questions later kind of guy.** He was a regular guy with a regular job.
 - ◇ He was good at what he did and he knew it.
 - ◇ He did not like the government prying into his business and the church folks down the road were just a bunch of freaks that thought they were better than him.
 - ◇ He probably had a pretty colorful vocabulary and if you crossed him, he would let you know with words that you usually heard only after hours on HBO specials or in the local high school hallway. Peter was all man, all the time. He drank Budweiser, chewed on Skoal, and cheered for Little E (even though he really hated the idea that he was now the team mate of pretty boy Jeff Gordon, which would cause another string of those choice, colorful words to flow).
- Peter is definitely not the type one would think Jesus would include in his gang and, frankly, one would not think that Peter would be the type that would want to be in Jesus’ gang. But as we look into the Bible, we find Peter in Jesus’ gang.
 - ◇ As a matter of fact, he quit the commute and the daily grind and the sure paycheck to do just that – join Jesus’ gang.

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- ◇ And Peter did not change too much for Jesus to be in his gang. As we will see, Peter remains a pretty brash, passionate, speak your mind, no nonsense kind of good ol' boy the whole time he is with Jesus. And Jesus never once asks him to change who he is. As a matter of fact, Jesus is often seen celebrating Peter's passionate approach to life. When Jesus is walking on the water and Peter says, "I want to do that!" Jesus says come on and I think He said it with a smile on his face.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. Matthew 14:25-29 NIV

- ◇ When Jesus says, who do you guys think I am and Peter without even batting an eye says – "God," Jesus gives him a promotion and tells him that He will start His Kingdom with Peter leading the way.

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do **you** say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." Matthew 16:13-18 NIV

But Peter is flawed. He is moody. He is brash. He is downright rude at times.

When Jesus is trying to teach Peter about His future, Peter is condescending.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Matthew 16:22,23 NIV

When Jesus is trying to teach Peter, he is un-teachable.

...They caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break...When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Luke 5:6-8 NIV

When Jesus is trying to teach Peter about his potential for failure, Peter is cocky.

Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." Matthew 26:33-35 NIV

When the pressure is on, Peter abandons and betrays Jesus.

Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken, and he went outside and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:74,75 NIV

What does Peter being in Jesus' Gang tell us about who God likes to hang with?

1. Initiation is for everyone, no matter the profession or personality.
2. Gangsta's all blow it sometime (or even lotsa' sometimes).
3. Sin and mistakes will not get you kicked outta' da' gang, gansta'!

Don't believe me, well, let Jesus and Peter do the talking:

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Sound familiar?

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

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Heard this before haven't you?

When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish... Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."... It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."

God has divine Grace that forgives the small and big mistakes of those in His Gang!

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, **do you truly love me more than these?**" "Yes, Lord," he said, "You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, **do you truly love me?**" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "**Simon son of John, do you love me?**" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus knows you sin and that you make mistakes. He has room for your mistakes and will help you grow through them rather than rejecting you because of them. Let's commit today to living in His grace rather than fearing His rejection! Be confident in being a part of Jesus and His Gang!

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