



Group Leader Guide

“How Do I Start Following Jesus?” – Building Blocks

October 19-20, 2019

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Message Summary

Guest Speaker **Chad Bruegman** returns this week to continue our series **Building Blocks**. This week, Chad uses the story of the apostle Peter's life, focusing on **Matthew 16:13-23**, to lay out how to start following Jesus, and what that means and doesn't mean for your life. And like Peter, we find that God always changes our name *before* He changes our behavior!

Chad is the former teaching pastor at Red Rocks in Golden. He last spoke here this summer for the **Our Next Guest** series. We are thrilled to have him back this week!

// Biblical Background

John 21: The Bible does not record the death of Peter. The closest we get is Jesus' cryptic prediction of how Peter will die, recorded in **John 21:18-19a**: “Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.)” “Stretch out your hands” was a euphemism for crucifixion. The parenthetical note following the prediction was put in there by John, the author of the Gospel, and another of the twelve disciples. The Gospel of John was completed sometime in the late first century, after Peter's death is

traditionally believed to have happened. So, this note makes sense in the text as it was John reflecting back on what he remembered Jesus saying and connecting the dots to what he now knew of Peter's death.

// **Peter's Death and Burial:** Church tradition claims that Peter was killed by crucifixion by Emperor Nero in Rome somewhere between 64-68 AD. Early church father Clement I mentions Peter's martyrdom in a letter dated to around the same time as the Gospel of John. Other, later sources (such as Tertullian, Lactantius, and Eusebius) set the tradition that Peter was crucified upside down due to him proclaiming that he was not worthy of being crucified like Jesus.

In the fourth century, Emperor Constantine built a St. Peter's Basilica over the place remembered as Peter's grave. “A more modern basilica now stands atop the ancient church, and excavations beneath the current church have unearthed tombs and bones that plausibly date to the early empire, though none can be definitively identified with Peter.”* The claim was that the altar of the basilica was directly over the exact burial place of Peter. During WWII, human male bones were found underneath the altar of the original basilica. The Catholic Church maintains today that these are probably the bones of Peter.

// What's In A Name?

Peter's name was originally Simon. Upon his confession of Jesus as the messiah in **Matthew 16**, Jesus changes his name to Peter, claiming that upon this "rock" He would build His Church. The Greek word used here is "Petros," which means "rock." In **John 1:42**, this name change is portrayed somewhat differently, where Jesus changes his name upon meeting him. Here, he changes it to "Cephas," which is another Greek word meaning "rock" or "stone." Paul refers to Peter as "Cephas" in **Galatians 2**. The discrepancy of names is cleared up when you realize that Jesus was actually speaking Aramaic, in which "Peter" and "rock" are the exact same word.

There are several interpretations of what Jesus meant. Catholics hold that the "rock" was Peter himself and that the Church would be built upon him, claiming him as the first pope. His papal authority was therefore transferred to any subsequent pope. As this is not stated in this passage, nor any other, this is probably not accurate. Instead, it is widely accepted by protestants that what Jesus was referring to was Peter, a man, *in his faith*. Naming him Peter was a symbol of the truth of this first confession. The Church would be built upon people of faith, not necessarily Peter himself. However, Peter was instrumental in getting the early Church started (see **Acts**).

// References

* Currid, John D., and David W. Chapman. *ESV Archaeology Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Crossway Books, 2017.

Beale, Stephen. "The Incredible Story of the Hunt for St. Peter's Bones." *Aleteia*, Aleteia, 29 Oct. 2018, <https://aleteia.org/2018/10/29/the-incredible-story-of-the-hunt-for-st-peters-bones/>.

Green, Michael. *The Message of Matthew*. InterVarsity Press, 2000.



Discussion Questions

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DISCLAIMER: Chad doesn't write a manuscript as Jim or Ben do, but rather a brief outline. Therefore, I do not have much to go on in terms of content and application, as this is written before the message is given on Saturday. I have provided a few discussion questions based on what I know, but feel free to adapt this week based on what you all took away from Chad's talk!

// Bible References

Matthew 16:13-23

// Core Questions

1. Chad mentioned several characteristics of Peter. They included being blue-collar, married, impetuous, hot-headed, a natural-born leader, a risk-taker, passionate, impulsive, traditionally uneducated, and a work-in-progress. Which one or ones do you relate to?
2. Who does God declare that you are *before* any of your behavior has changed?
3. Have you fallen into the lie that these things are usually the other way around (new behavior leads to a new name)?