



EPISODE 4 – THE ROCK ON WHICH IT IS BUILT

The first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and say to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (John 1:41)

When he had finished speaking, Jesus said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered him, "Master, we worked hard all through the night and caught nothing. But at your word I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets were about to tear apart. ...When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord." (Luke 5:5-8)

Watch

This episode leads up the account of Jesus calling four disciples in Luke 5:1-11. Read that account. (Also, Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:14-20; Jn 1:35-51)

The first segments in this episode are entirely comprised of historical fiction, background stories for the brothers Peter and Andrew, and Zebedee with his two sons, James and John. The fictional background story for Peter's character (fighting, gambling, spying for the Romans on tax evaders, double crossing Rome) is improbable. But the real Peter did in fact more than once waver in his confidence in the Lord. This episode presents him nearly falling into spiritual and emotional despair before meeting Jesus. Then he is chosen and called to be a disciple.

Discuss

- 1) Note the ironic outcome of the fictional events which lead to Peter having his own ear injured. What sort of background might have led the real Peter to carry a sword with him?
- 2) The true sons of Zebedee were bold (Mark 10:35). They were part of a fairly well-to-do family-owned fishing business (Mark 1:20). Together with Peter they became part of Jesus' inner circle. Evaluate the likelihood that that Zebedee would have been breaking the Sabbath to avoid Roman taxation and that Peter would have considered betraying him.
- 3) Compare the portrayal of Peter to what the true Peter confesses in Luke 5:8. What does the lifestyle of Peter presented in this series emphasize about being "chosen" by God?
- 4) This episode presents Pharisees discussing John the Baptizer. It draws on true Scriptural accounts. (John's outcry against Herod Antipas, his condemnation of the Pharisees.) What would have made Nicodemus stand out? Compare with John 3:1-2; John 7:50-51.
- 5) This episode leads to the pivotal true moment when Andrew (a disciple of John the Baptizer) tells his brother, Peter, that he found the Messiah. (John 1:41). Evaluate how this episode portrayed Peter's response which is absent in Scripture.

- 6) The true gospels mention the sickness of Peter's mother-in-law. All the other background details for Peter are fictional. Evaluate historical accuracy of the family conflict portrayed.

- 7) The miraculous catch of fish was a real miracle. What did the true miraculous catch of fish convey to Jesus' disciples? This episode includes Peter ranting against God on the night before he meets Jesus. He has nearly lost his faith and just desperately wants to catch fish. Discuss what perspective is added to the miracle by the fictional backstory of Peter's debt.

Learn

- a) Roman taxation was heavily resented by the Jews. It is plausible that some of Jesus disciples hated Rome and circumvented taxes. Read 1 Peter 2:13-17. Summarize how the true letter by Peter indicates our faith in Jesus changes our attitudes toward authority.

- b) Nicodemus is presented with a growing interest in investigating beyond tradition and the Sanhedrin. Interest in hearing Jesus can be driven by religious disillusionment. Or someone may be driven by rumors of miraculous events. Which of these two factors seem to influence people today so that they might want to hear Jesus?

- c) The true Peter did struggle to display great faith. The fictional character Eden portrays Peter's true unnamed wife, and asks him, "Where is your faith?" (Compare with Jesus in Luke 8:25). What sort of struggles are families "losing faith" under today?

- d) Recall how this episode portrays Peter as brash and busy, unexcited to hear from Andrew about Jesus. Instead, he questions his faith. Discuss: Families often are divided and respond differently to hearing about Jesus. Mostly they get lost in the busyness of their daily concerns and don't care to make time for Jesus.

Rejoice

- 1) Peter has only one place he turns to when life is too much. His work. (Compare the quote at bottom of the page with John 21:1-3.) What ought believers to do when they are at their wits end and can't keep up with life's challenges?

- 2) Jesus came to mercifully forgive us for our sins and call us to be his own. What comfort do we have in knowing Jesus chose to call "sinners"? How does the gospel change our lifegoal?

Peter, at wits end: "I'm still going fishing... If I go down, it will be doing what God built me to do."
