

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 48
1 & 2 Peter

This episode is sponsored by two amazing companies that are helping with the Safe Haven ranch for women in crisis. Could I just tell you that if you live in the Salt lake area and you need anything that has to do with rock, gravel, concrete, decorative rock: the Staker parson company is the one to call. They are amazing and an organization that focuses on giving back. This week we also had an amazing opportunity to work with For-shor. If you're a concrete worker I'm sure you have heard of For-Shor. They have everything anyone could ever need for any concrete project, from forms to equipment to chemicals. Even if you are a first time DIY-er and you want to tackle a sidewalk or a driveway project these guys are amazing. And we are so grateful for both of these local generous companies willing to contribute to this project.

This week we are focusing on the books of Peter. The same Peter that was a disciple of Christ, the one Jesus calls the rock upon which the church would be built. In fact the name Peter, literally means in greek: stone or rock. And if you recall, this is the name that Jesus gave him. His given name was Simon, then in Matthew 16 we read that Jesus gave him the name of Peter that he would then be called for the rest of his life. And so we don't mis-understand when Jesus gave him the name Peter, in Greek he used the feminine singular Petra which means little pebble, or little stone. Not to be confused with the masculine petros which is bolder or massive stone. Peter was to lead the church and it was to be built on him as Jesus stated, but he was just a small stone or pebble is the foundation of the church, it was Jesus that was the foundation upon which the church is sustained.

What I find interesting is that in first Peter he starts his letter to the saints stating that he is Peter the apostle of Jesus. But then in second Peter he calls himself Simon Peter, using both his given and new name. Why do you suppose that is? Well, I would venture to think that maybe it was because even though he was changed by Jesus, there was still some Simon still left in him that he was battling. I would think that is the case because of what we know of Peter. Here are some interesting facts about this powerful man:

- his name is mentioned more times than any other person in the four gospels, beside Jesus.
- no one speaks in the gospels as often as Peter did.
- and Jesus spoke more to Peter than to any other individual.
- Jesus rebuked Peter more than any other disciple.
- Peter was the only apostle that dared to rebuke Jesus
- Peter confessed Jesus more boldly than any other apostle.
- Peter also denied Jesus more forcefully and publicly more than any other disciple.

That gives us a little bit of background about his personality and where he is writing from.

In first Peter he writes about the dangers from the outside: persecutions, oppressions. Those that were non-believers afflicting the church. But in second Peter he shifts his focus to dangers

from the inside: deception, and false teaching. So in the beginning of second Peter he really gets to the heart of spiritual growth.

“3 According as his divine power [he says, meaning Jesus’s power] hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1: 3-4)

That is a powerful message. A whole sermon could be preached on these 2 verses. And it is a very real problem in our day. Perhaps even more so than in the days of Peter. It was not too long ago when President Nelson said:

“I fear that there are too many men who have been given the *authority* of the priesthood but who lack priesthood *power* because the flow of power has been blocked by sins such as laziness, dishonesty, pride, immorality, or preoccupation with things of the world.

I fear that there are too many priesthood bearers who have done little or nothing to develop their ability to access the powers of heaven. I worry about all who are impure in their thoughts, feelings, or actions or who demean their wives or children, thereby cutting off priesthood power.

I fear that too many have sadly surrendered their agency to the adversary and are saying by their conduct, “I care more about satisfying my own desires than I do about bearing the Savior’s power to bless others.”

I fear, brethren, that some among us may one day wake up and realize what power in the priesthood really is and face the deep regret that they spent far more time seeking power over others or power at work than learning to exercise fully the power of God.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/04/the-price-of-priesthood-power?lang=eng>

Now, if that doesn't describe the challenges we face today, then I don't know what does. The power of God that we seek is found in forsaking the ways of the world, and turning solely to the ways of Heaven and the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

For the last few weeks we have been discussing faith. What it is, and how we can be more faith filled in our lives. One of the most important parts of this topic that we didn't discuss is that faith is the first principle of the gospel. It is the first step in our progress towards God. We must have

faith before we can move forward in any degree to joy and peace. And Peter realizes this. That is why he says, "To your faith add:

-*virtue*; and to virtue *knowledge*;

-And to knowledge *temperance*;

-and to temperance *patience*;

-and to patience *godliness*;

-And to godliness *brotherly kindness*;

-and to brotherly kindness *charity*.

For if these things be in you, and *abound*, they make *you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 peter 1:5-8)

Please notice the specific way in which this is written. It was deliberately put in a format to reject the idea that we can pick and choose the items we want to apply, and those we wish to ignore. No, this list is a comprehensive one by one, building on each other, list of character traits we each need to develop in order to become like our Savior.

Once we have faith, once we trust that God is our loving Father that will bless us with everything we will need, then we can realize that: If God is to bless us then we need to keep ourselves clean from the lusts of the world and be virtuous, meaning morally clean. That is step one and two. Then once we have faith and virtue, then we can increase our knowledge. But not just any knowledge. In the Greek there are 2 words for knowledge one is gnosis; which means gaining information by studying. That's gnosis. The word here is Epignosis which means "a personal encounter in which we learn by experience." That is the knowledge that it is referring here to. Knowledge of all things in existence. Knowledge of all things as they are created in the eyes of God. And it is that knowledge that will allow us to see past the things of the world and be temperate, then patient, which will then bring about Godliness, brotherly kindness and then the crowning jewel of charity. And remember that if we have not charity then we are nothing.

Do you see the value in the progression of these characteristics of God? How they build on each other line upon line. Do you see how this could be a lifelong journey to achieve and that we really don't have time to waste on the empty promises of the world? God's precious promises are so much more fulfilling if we are willing to put in the work to be as He is. And though we must be in the world it does not mean that we need to be of the world. In fact, if we hope to survive the trials and tribulations that are coming we must be willing to change now. In that same talk by President Nelson he said this:

"I urgently plead with each one of us to live up to our privileges as bearers of the priesthood. In a coming day, *only* those men who have taken their priesthood seriously, by *diligently* seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others. Only a man who has paid the price for

priesthood power will be able to bring miracles to those he loves and keep his marriage and family safe, now and throughout eternity.

So I ask, how would our family members, friends, and coworkers say you and I are doing in developing these and other spiritual gifts?¹² The more those attributes are developed, the greater will be our priesthood power.

How else can we increase our power in the priesthood? We need to pray from our hearts. Polite recitations of past and upcoming activities, punctuated with some requests for blessings, cannot constitute the kind of communing with God that brings enduring power. Are you willing to pray *to know how to pray* for more power? The Lord will teach you.”

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Are we willing to pray to know how to pray for more power? That is an excellent question. One that we might take some time to ponder.

My friends, now is the time to prepare to meet God. Now is the time to seek diligently after Him. to forsake our pride and learn to develop these spiritual gifts that will help us to protect ourselves and our families in the days to come. This is my earnest prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.