

# Great Beginnings, Great Endings

## You Can Change

### I. God Deserves Our Best

2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Hebrews 12:3 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Consider him (Jesus) who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

### II. The Fisherman

#### A. The Lessons of Beginning

Matthew 4:18-20 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

Mark 8:27-29 (NIV)

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" <sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" **Peter answered, "You are the Christ."**

Matthew 14:28-30 (NIV)

<sup>28</sup> **"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."** <sup>29</sup> "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

John 18:10 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> Then **Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant**, cutting off his right ear.

Matthew 26:31-35 (NIV)

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" <sup>32</sup> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." <sup>33</sup> **Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."** <sup>34</sup> "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." <sup>35</sup> But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

John 20:3-6 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> **Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb.** He saw the strips of linen lying there,

#### B. The Transformation of Pentecost

Acts 2:14-15 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> **Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:** "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Acts 3:6-10 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Acts 5:14-15 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. <sup>15</sup> As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats **so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.**

Acts 5:27-29 (NIV)

<sup>27</sup> Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. <sup>28</sup> "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." <sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!

Acts 8:14-17 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup> When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 12:1-18 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. <sup>2</sup> He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. <sup>3</sup> When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. . . . <sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. <sup>6</sup> The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

## C. Letters to Friends

2 Peter 1:1-4 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have **received a faith as precious as ours:** <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Peter 2:7-10 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> and if **he rescued Lot**, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- <sup>9</sup> if this is so, then **the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment**, while continuing their punishment. <sup>10</sup> This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings;

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for calling me out of darkness and inviting me to follow Jesus. Grant me a willing spirit, may the joy of my salvation always thrive within me. Grant me the strength and courage to finish the course You have marked out for me. May my words and actions bring honor to the name of Your son. Amen.