

Chained to Our Past??

- *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1-2*
- We all have weights.
- Things from our past that come into our minds and remind us of our failures or of commitments and promises we made but did not or could not keep.
- The Bible is filled with such people and as our “*cloud of witnesses,*” they help us lay them aside.

Laying Aside the Weights

- None of us are immune
- David spoke of the bones God had broken and being dried up and pleaded with God to restore the joy of salvation to him (Ps 31:3-4; 51:10-12).
- Paul spoke of being the chief of sinners (1Tim. 1:12-17), unworthy to be called an apostle (1Cor. 15:9) and less than the least of all the saints (Eph. 3:8).
- God is concerned. He wants us to comfort others.
- *This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. 2 Cor 2:6-9*

Can We Forget What Lies Behind?

- *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:13*
- **God always forgets as soon as we repent and confess**
- *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9-10*

Simon who will be called Cephas

- *When Andrew brought him, Jesus said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter)” Jn. 1:42*
- What a compliment to him. Changed his name to a large rock.
- Jesus saw a steadfast perseverance.
- No matter what happened he would never quit, give up or stop trying.
- He would be faithful till death.
- Jesus saw his strength of character and stability.
- He would be a disciple to rely upon.
- Yet it was a name that took many years to grow into

How Rocks are Made

- *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Jas. 1:2-5*
- **Moses** pushed himself beyond what he thought he could do (I am not eloquent).
- **Jeremiah** pushed himself beyond what he thought he could do (I am but a youth).
- Although we will fail more often, it is better to push past our limitations and grow even if it brings trials. It is those very trials that make rocks!

How Simon Became a Rock

- He tried... failed ... tried again ... and failed
- As Jesus walked on the sea in the dark of night his disciples “*cried out for fear*”
- Peter thought he was strong
- “*he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink*” (Mt.14:30).
- Never had he faced such a challenge!
- His initial courage was admirable, but it was beyond his ability at that time.
- Jesus saw the problem: “*O you of little faith, why did you doubt*” (Mt. 14:31)?
- Did Peter wish he had never tried?
- He did not shine as a stable rock yet, but even in failure Peter continued to be dependable.

Peter's Bold Confession

- *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*
- Jesus called him Peter, promised to give him the keys to the kingdom and inspiration to bind and loose Mt. 16:16ff
- One of his highest moments.
- Yet in the next conversation, Jesus spoke of His crucifixion
- Peter *“took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You”*
- What a shock: *“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”* (Mt. 16:22-23).
- Peter took the rebuke and continued to follow Jesus.

At the Transfiguration

- Jesus takes Peter, James and John to witness.
- They see Moses and Elijah.
- Yet once again, Peter falls short and ruins the memory with failure.
- *Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" Luke 9:33-36*

Forgetting What Lies Behind.

- *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1:16-18*
- The painful part of the memory forgotten.
- He had laid aside the weight and was running the race with patience.

Peter's Bold Promise to Jesus

- *The Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." Lk. 22:31-34*
- *31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise. Mk 14:31*

A Sin to be Confessed ... Forgotten

- *Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." 70 But **he denied it before them all, saying**, "I do not know what you are saying." 71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 **But again he denied with an oath,** "I do not know the Man!" Mt 26:69-75*

A Sin to be Confessed... then Forgotten!

- *73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." 74 Then **he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"** Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly. Mt 26:69-75*

A Sin to be Confessed... then Forgotten!

- 61 And **the Lord turned and looked at Peter**. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So **Peter went out and wept bitterly**. Lk 22:61-62
- How does someone get past something like this?
- It can only be done by a rock!
- Someone so stable and so firm that they will not even allow their own failures to stop them.

Peter Slowly Cleansed Himself

- *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2Tim. 2:20-22*
- Peter had a lot to cleanse himself from.
- Yet he never gave up.
- He trusted in the grace and mercy of God.
- He always got back up after each failure.

Peter in the Book of Acts

- Preached the first sermon as a Rock
- Preached the second sermon and took the persecution like a rock.
- Chosen to preach to Cornelius and bring in the Gentiles. Still a rock.
- All through the book of Acts Peter lived up to his name.

Peter in Galatians

- *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Gal 2:11-15*
- Peter was not acting like a rock and Paul had to rebuke him.

Peter Still a Rock

- *and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:15-16*
- Peter still saw Paul as a beloved brother. He felt no bitterness. He didn't even remember it. It was a favor to him. That is how a rock takes a rebuke.

Applications

- *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1-2*
- Peter is another witness.
- He can testify to how difficult it is to become a rock stable disciple of Jesus.
- He can speak to us of the terrible memories that can be overcome.
- He can speak to us about forgiving himself and forgiving others.
- We can be just like him. We can make mistakes and commit sins ... Yet always get back up and remain faithful