

Think about who Peter was: where he came from, his background, his weaknesses and strengths. What does Jesus' call to Peter tell you about his call to you? To anyone? What does Jesus ask of those he invites to be his friends and disciples?

How do I or anyone else know Peter? We know him from the gospels and other books in the New Testament including his letters. Not a lot to go on and the subject and focus of these writings is Jesus and not Peter. We know that he was a fisherman, he was married, he had a brother, Andrew, he was vocal, he was faithful, although a sinner just like the rest of us. If his preaching was like his letters than he was not long on words, his message was on point. He loved Jesus. He was a favorite of Jesus. He was an apostle. Jesus made Him the first pope. He took his assignment seriously and took his preaching to the center of the world that he knew, Rome.

It has taken me most of my life but I have learned that Jesus calls to me. He wants me to follow Him, to love Him, to obey His commandments. I need to listen. I hear Him best in prayer and meditation. His calling is a call of love, not a command. I am free to choose, but when I hear His call, when I say yes, when I freely choose to follow Him, to receive His grace, to surrender my life in service to Him, then my life changes. He gives me the grace I need to succeed in fulfilling His calling, but I must trust Him completely.

How I wish that I had learned to listen and say yes earlier in my life. However, each time I hear Him, each time I say yes, He asks more and more of me. To be His disciple is to serve Him with all that I am and all that I have. It's not easy but when I do, there is more joy in my life, more satisfaction, more love, more of everything that makes life worth living, but most of all there is hope. Hope for this life. Hope for eternal life.

God knows me as He knew Peter. I am His creation. Made from nothing for love and service to Him. In fulfilling His requests, I am freed, liberated, fulfilled. I am what I am, His creation. He knows my capabilities and limitations but it is His knowledge and love of me that directs me to be the disciple He designed me to be.

Paul says that with faith in Jesus and his Resurrection, sin and death no longer have power over us. Think about how that happens in your life. What kinds of things have power over you? How could drawing closer to Jesus give those things less power?

None of us get to choose the circumstances of this life. Some are born into poverty, others into wealth. Some are born healthy, others with disability. Some have great intelligence, many are mostly average, some can barely function in society. Some are born into loving families, others have no family to call their own. And the litany continues. God chooses, not us. Also in the world are temptation and evil. Temptation pulls us into sin, we do what we know we should not. Evil can hit us squarely between the eyes at any moment of our lives, as well as natural disasters. To list it all could give the impression that there is no joy to be found in life, and were it not for the Good News of Jesus transmitted to us over the ages by the church, that would probably be true for almost everyone. But to hear the Good News of what Jesus has done for us, for our redemption, to secure a place in His kingdom for us, to give us every grace we need for this journey through life, is to find hope. Hope for today. Hope for the future. Sin is still in the world and in our lives. Death is inevitable. Through the sacraments that Jesus instituted we can find forgiveness for our sins and the grace we need to overcome our sins and improve our lives. In redeeming us from our sins and opening the gates of heaven, we have hope in a future beyond this life. All of this hope, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, etc., can be found only in Jesus. So

the closer I get to Him, the stronger is my trust, the deeper is my hope, and I can find joy even in this world. The saints in heaven completed the journey and so can I with the help of Jesus. Help me, Lord.