

Why Peter said to Jesus: Depart from my boat for I am a sinful man?

Peter viewed himself as inadequate before the Lord. Regarding Luke 5:7-8¹, J. Vernon McGee wrote:

“... When Simon said, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord,” he was saying, “Lord you called me to be a fisher of men and I failed. I went back to fishing for fish—I thought I knew that kind of fishing better, but I find that I don’t! Depart from me. Let me alone. I am a sinful man. You should find someone upon whom you can depend.” The Lord, however, did not intend to get rid of Simon Peter. He was going to use him, and this applies to us also. All we have to do is recognize that we are not very good fishermen—recognize our failures and faithlessness. When we are willing to depend on Him, He will not put us out of the fishing business, and He will not throw us overboard. He will use us. This is an encouraging truth!²

David wrote, “A broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise (Ps 51:17b).” Though a Christian may become disappointed in himself; God, will see him through to victory (Phil 4:13). The difference between a believer and a non-believer or make believers is that; though he may stumble and fall, he will get up again (Pr 24:16). He overcomes: the world (Jn 16:33), the flesh (2 Pe 2:19, 20), the devil (1 Jn 2:13, 14)--and even himself (2 Pe 1:5-9).

Regarding a similar statement³ by the prophet Isaiah, J. Vernon McGee continues:

...He [Isaiah] sees himself as he really is in the presence of God—undone. It reveals to him his condition. When he had seen God, he could see himself. The problem with many of us today is that we don’t walk in the light of the Word of God. If we did, we would see ourselves...

...Job had an experience similar to Isaiah’s, and his reaction was, “I abhor myself.” Job was a self-righteous man. He could maintain his integrity in the presence of his friends who were attempting to tear him to bits. They told him that he was a rotten sinner, but he looked them straight in the eye and said, “As far as I know, I am a righteous man.” From his viewpoint he was right, and he won the match against them. But he was not perfect. When Job came into the presence of God, he no longer wanted to talk about maintaining his righteousness. When Job really saw who he was, he said, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6)...

...You will find that other men had the same reaction when they came into the presence of God. John, on the Isle of Patmos, wrote, “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead ...” (Rev. 1:17). When Daniel saw the Lord, he said, “Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength” (Dan. 10:8). That was also the experience of Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle. After Paul met the Lord, he no longer saw himself as a self-righteous Pharisee,

¹ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord [Luke 5:7-8].

² McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Gospels (Luke)* (electronic ed., Vol. 37, pp. 77-78). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts [Isa. 6:5].

but as a lost sinner in need of salvation. He then could say, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Phil. 3:7). He saw his need of Jesus Christ.⁴

The bible says that there is no one good—no not one (Ro 3:12). When one realizes this fact about himself (Jer 17:9), then he can be saved (Ac 20:24-28 Thess 2:13, 14). He must acknowledge the bad news before his heart is prepared to accept the good news of the gospel.⁵

Job longed for a mediator between God and himself (Jb 9:32–35). Thankfully, our loving Father provided this very thing in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16).

⁴ Ibid (pp. 69–71).

⁵ Confession (Ac 2:21) and repentance (Mk 1:15) in faith (Jn 3:14–18) are required to be saved. Men are saved by grace alone (Eph 2:8-9), through faith alone (Eph 1:13; 2 Ti 1:10) in Christ alone (Isa 45:21,22; 59:16; Ac 4:12).