

# Help!

## Bible Glossary: People & Places

### Apostle Peter

#### Sermon Reference

Peter's experience during the storm on the Sea of Galilee where he steps out of the boat to walk towards Jesus but begins to sink and cries out for help.

#### Importance in the Bible

Apostle Peter's experiences illustrate key Christian doctrines of faith, repentance, and divine assistance in adversity. His cry from the storm to Jesus underscores the sermon's message of reliance on God as our ever-present helper.

#### Background Context

Simon Peter, originally a fisherman by trade, was one of the earliest and most prominent disciples of Jesus Christ. His background as a fisherman from Galilee introduces him as an ordinary man with a humble profession who was called by Jesus to become a 'fisher of men' (Matthew 4:18-20). His boldness and impulsiveness often characterized his interactions with Jesus and others. Peter is often seen as a passionate follower who exhibited both great faith and human frailty.

The storm on the Sea of Galilee marks a significant moment in Peter's spiritual journey. When he steps out of the boat in faith to walk on water towards Jesus and then begins to sink, it symbolically illustrates the Christian walk – one of faith challenged by fear and doubt. His cry for help, *'Lord, save me,'* is a profound acknowledgment of human helplessness without divine aid. This episode is deeply instructive for believers, showing that faith requires reliance on God's power, especially when facing overwhelming circumstances.

Peter's experience also highlights the theme of divine rescue and mercy. Despite his wavering faith, Jesus immediately reaches out to save him, reinforcing the compassionate nature of Christ towards those who call upon Him.

### Jonah

#### Sermon Reference

Jonah's refusal to obey God's call to preach to Nineveh, his subsequent flight by sea, being swallowed by a great fish, and his prayer for help from inside the fish.

### Importance in the Bible

Jonah exemplifies a prophet whose disobedience and subsequent deliverance reveal God's faithfulness and mercy. His narrative serves as a vivid illustration of the importance of asking God for help, repentance, and the readiness of God to save.

### Background Context

Jonah is a prophet prominently featured in the Old Testament book bearing his name. He serves as an example of prophetic mission and human resistance to divine plans. Initially, God commands Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh to deliver a message of impending judgment due to the city's wickedness. Instead of obeying, Jonah attempts to escape God's call by fleeing to Tarshish, evidencing his reluctance and disobedience. This decision sets the stage for a dramatic demonstration of God's sovereignty and mercy, highlighting the tension between divine authority and human will.

Jonah's journey on the ship and the ensuing storm describe a classic biblical narrative of judgment and grace. The sailors, recognizing the dire situation is due to Jonah's disobedience, throw him overboard to calm the sea. From a theological perspective, this event conveys themes of accountability and the inevitability of confronting God's purposes. The Mediterranean Sea, much deeper and more formidable than the Sea of Galilee, metaphorically represents the overwhelming danger Jonah faces as a consequence of defiance. Being swallowed by a 'great fish', likely a large sea creature provided by God, further illustrates divine intervention in even the most desperate circumstances.

Inside the fish, Jonah's prayer articulates distress, repentance, and renewed reliance on God. This moment is a profound example of the human condition of being trapped by one's own choices and yet finding hope through calling on God. The 'realm of the dead' reference underscores the extremity of his predicament, yet his faith remains alive. Jonah's subsequent deliverance and obedience leading to the repentance of Nineveh's inhabitants reflect God's inclusive mercy and desire for repentance, even for those outside Israel.

## Syrophoenician Woman

### Sermon Reference

The woman who approached Jesus seeking mercy and healing for her daughter possessed by a demon, pleading 'Lord, help me!' and Jesus acknowledging her great faith.

### Importance in the Bible

The Syrophoenician woman is a key biblical figure illustrating the breaking down of ethnic barriers in the reception of God's mercy and healing. Her story underscores the power of persistent faith and the accessibility of Jesus' help to all who believe. She serves as a model of humility and boldness in seeking divine assistance, reinforcing the sermon's theme of reliance on God's help in times of family crisis.

## Background Context

The Syrophoenician woman appears in the Gospel of Matthew (15:21-28) and Mark (7:24-30), representing a Gentile outsider approaching Jesus with a desperate plea. Her designation as 'Syrophoenician' indicates her ethnic background from the region of Phoenicia, south of modern Lebanon and Syria, highlighting her non-Jewish identity. In a period marked by sharp distinction and tension between Jews and Gentiles, her approach to Jesus stands out as an act of bold faith crossing social, ethnic, and religious boundaries.

In her request for the healing of her demon-possessed daughter, the woman engages in a poignant dialogue with Jesus. Initially, Jesus' statement, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel,' reflects his primary mission focus during his ministry. The woman's humble yet profound reply, 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table,' exemplifies her faith and resourcefulness. Her persistence and belief that Jesus' power transcends ethnic limitations underline the emergent inclusivity of the gospel message.

This encounter gains deeper theological significance in illustrating faith that is recognized and rewarded by Jesus. He commends her great faith and grants her request, immediately healing her daughter. The woman's story challenges prevailing social norms and expands the understanding of God's kingdom to encompass all who believe, regardless of ethnic origin. It powerfully signals that God's help and salvation are accessible to everyone who calls upon Him in faith.

In the broader biblical context, this narrative prefigures the church's later mission to the Gentiles and emphasizes that the blessings of God's kingdom break cultural barriers. The woman's faith and Jesus' response demonstrate an important biblical principle: genuine faith in God's power invites His help and intervention, reinforcing the sermon's message on the necessity and power of asking God for help.

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