**Peter and Paul**

South of Kerrville and northwest of San Antonio, at the crossroads of State Highways 16 and 173, there is a little town of 873 folks called Bandera. While driving through this little town, (at least I think that’s where we were, though it could have been New Braunfels also- it was a long time ago!) we saw a sign for Catholic church that read, “Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church.” Donna quipped, “Well I guess they can’t rob Peter to pay Paul for their tithes!” My response was that it must be a pretty rough town if it takes two saints to manage it.

**I greatly respect and admire Paul:**

1. His stellar conscience, Acts 23:1; I certainly cannot say the same. I’ve violated my conscience MANY times by doing what I knew to be wrong. Through weakness, wrong desires, and/or downright rebellion, I did what I knew to be sinful anyway.
2. His tenacity and never-quit spirit, Acts 14:19-22; Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned him and left him for dead at Lystra, but *“he arose and entered the city”* and on the next day, he went to Derbe to preach there! I would have probably quit, or at least taken a sabbatical!
3. His insight and knowledge, Eph.3:3-5; *“when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ....”* I know/believe this to be true *generally,* but often struggle to *understand* some of what he wrote even after reading it seemingly hundreds of times. So, I tend to agree with Peter regarding Paul’s letters that *“some things are hard to understand,”* 2Pet.3:16.

**But I relate better to Peter, perhaps because:**

1. **He sometimes spoke *before* he thought:**
2. Occasionally he was right, and it and he sounded (and was) profound, Matt.16:13-20; but…
3. Often, he got it wrong- or at least not so good/great, Matt.16:21-23; and sometimes he wound up looking and sounding silly, John 13:8-10.
4. **He allowed his fear(s) to overcome his faith:**
5. He wanted to be like Jesus and *walk on the water* enough to propose it, to get out of the boat, and even to do it for a while, Matt.14:25-29; but…
6. Then he took is eye off the goal, and the “realities of life” overcame his faith, Matt.14:30.
7. **He let his confidence exceeded his abilities:**
8. He was so very confident that he would never *deny* Jesus or *fall away* from Him, Matt.26:31-35; but…
9. When the “rubber met the road” so to speak, he did both, Matt.26:69-75 (see also Luke 22:62, *“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.”*)

**Do you ever:**

1. **Speak before you think?**

I sure do, and it usually doesn’t work out very well! If I/we would just stop and think whether or not what I’m about to say is: 1) true; 2) helpful; and even if numbers 1 and 2 are “yes,” then, 3) am I the one who needs to say it? Eph.4:29; Col.4:6

1. **Allow your fears to overcome your faith?**

For me, the answer is “All too often!” The solution is two-fold: 1) Build your faith, Rom.10:17; and, 2) *“look not at things which are seen”* (the *winds* and *waves* of life’s difficulties- or even *impossibilities!*) *“but at the things which are not seen”* (Jesus in heaven as the *author* and *finisher of our faith!*), 2Cor.4:16-18.

1. **Let your confidence exceed your abilities?**

“Unfortunately, yes” is my personal admission. The problem is location. When we have confidence in *ourselves,* it is misplaced. My/our “track record” bears this out, Rom.3:9-18,23. *Jesus* must be the source and location of our confidence. He *overcame* all temptations, Heb.4:15-16; and our confidence must be placed *in Him* rather than ourselves, Heb.12:1-2.

1. **But Peter’s most endearing characteristic- and the one I (we?) need to emulate the most is he didn’t allow *past failure(s)* to keep him from *future success!***

Though he often *spoke before he thought,* despite sometimes *allowing his fears to overcome his faith,* and even when he *let his confidence exceed his abilities,* he got back up and tried to do better the next time, Luke 22:31-32 🡪 24:9-11 🡪 Acts 1:15ff 🡪 Acts 2:14ff!

**However many times you fail to *think before you speak,* or *allow your fears to overcome your faith,* or *let your confidence exceed your abilities,* get back up and try again/harder/better! Jesus will help you, and God will bless you!**