CHAMP SPORTS

DEVOTIONAL





CHAMP Office – 704.341.5387 Weather Hotline – 704.341.5473 <u>www.champsportsinfo.com</u>

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Season Schedule

Practices Begin: Week of August 22
Uniform Distribution: Week of August 22
Game Schedules: Week of August 29
Opening Day: Saturday, September 10
Season Ends: Saturday, November 5

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Weather Hotline: 704.341.5473 Updated Mon-Fri. at 3:00 PM; Sat. at 7:30 AM

Join us weekly for Sunday morning worship at 9:45 AM in person or via livestream.

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Week of August 22-26

Welcome to CHAMP Sports! We are excited that you are here! It is our goal at CHAMP Sports to help you grow. We want to help you grow as a soccer/football/baseball player, and we want to help you grow in your relationship with God! If you have questions this season about God or about how you can know Him better, ask! Asking questions helps all of us learn faster!

This season we are going to talk about how God transformed a wishy-washy fisherman into a man of rock-solid faith. Can any of you guess who we are going to talk about? If you said *the Apostle Peter*, you are correct!

The Apostle Peter went through a great transformation during his life. We call the great transformation "being born again" or "being born from above."

God wants to transform people into the image of His Son, Jesus. What does this mean? It means that God's Son is perfect and God wants each one of us to be "perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Why was Jesus perfect? Jesus was perfect because He "always did the things that pleased His Father" (John 8:29). God wants each one of us to be like Jesus! The question is *how* can we be like Jesus? The answer is that God must transform us into the image of His Son!

How does God transform us? Have you ever seen a butterfly? What did that butterfly used to be? That's right, a caterpillar. How does a caterpillar turn into a butterfly? First, it eats a lot of food, and then it goes into its cocoon and goes through a miraculous process that we call "metamorphosis," and then it comes out of its cocoon as a butterfly.

God wants each one of us to go through a process of metamorphosis. He wants to change us from being like Adam and Eve, who didn't trust Him fully, to being like His Son, Jesus, who does trust Him fully. Metamorphosis happens over time and then suddenly. The caterpillar changes into a butterfly slowly and then all of a sudden it comes out of the cocoon a new creature.

As we think about the Apostle Peter's life, we will see how God changed Peter, and that will help us understand how God wants to transform us. Do you want God to transform you?!

<u>John 3:7</u> Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again."

Questions: What does it mean to be born again? How did Jesus live a perfect human life?

So Many Fish!

Week of August 29 – September 2

Simon grew up in the town of Bethsaida in the land of Israel. (Simon was the Apostle Peter's name when he was young. Jesus later changed his name from Simon to Peter.) Bethsaida was right on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. Many of the men who lived and worked in Bethsaida were fisherman. When Simon was old enough to work, he became a fisherman too.

Being a fisherman wasn't an easy job. Some days there were a lot of fish. Other days there weren't many. Some days the weather was great. Other days it poured rain. Most days Peter was probably awake when other people were asleep because fish are most active early in the morning and late at night. Pulling in the fishing nets was hard work, and working with fish was messy.

One day, Jesus came alongside the Sea of Galilee. He saw Simon and Simon's brother, Andrew, and He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). What do you think Simon and Andrew did? Did they follow Jesus? Yes! The Bible says that they "immediately left their nets and followed Jesus." Wow!

Jesus promised to make Simon and Andrew "fishers of men." Jesus was giving Simon and Andrew a new job. Their new job would be hard just like their old job. Some days they would speak to people who loved to learn about Jesus. Other days people would hate them for talking about Jesus. Some days they would see God's miracles done. Other days would be dark and lonely. Working to bring people to Jesus was a messy job but a wonderful job!

One of the most difficult lessons that Simon had to learn as he worked under the direction of Jesus was that God's work must be done in God's way. One day, after fishing all night for fish and catching nothing, Jesus told Simon Peter, "put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4). Peter answered, Master, we worked hard all night and got nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." When Peter let down the nets again, he caught so many fish that his fishing nets started to break! As Peter was trying to pull in all of those fish, he was learning about the power of God to draw men, women, and children to Jesus!

Do you know Jesus? Are you a child of God?

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Questions: What kind of work do you think Jesus wants you to do? Are you quick to obey Him?

Peter Means Rock!

Week of September 6-10

Names are important because they have meaning. The name "Jesus," which means "to rescue, to deliver, to save," was given to God's Son because "he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The name Simon means, "to hear, to listen carefully to." God wants all of us to be good at hearing. Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28). Simon Peter spent a lot of time listening to Jesus and thinking about what He said. This is what God wants each one of us to do. If we treasure God's Word in our hearts and seek to understand it with our minds, we will grow wise!

Simon had a great name, but like many of the great men and women of the Bible, God gave Simon another name. This is how it happened. John the Baptist had just baptized Jesus and declared that Jesus was the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was with John the Baptist the next day, and when Andrew had believed that Jesus was the Messiah (God's Anointed One), he went and found his brother, Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ)." And Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas."

What a moment! Can you imagine what Simon felt like? He had just met Jesus for the first time and the first thing that Jesus did was give him a new name. Simon's new name, Cephas, meant "stone," which is the same as "Peter," which means "rock."

The fact that Jesus gave Simon the name "Peter" is an incredible thing because God is "the Rock." In the Psalms, David writes, "For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?" (Psalm 18:31). So, if God is a Rock, how can Peter be a rock? The only way that Peter could be a rock is by listening carefully to all that God says and trusting 100% in God and the power of God's life. God's plan for Peter's life was that he would learn day by day to trust in the Rock and teach other people to do the same. Do you want to trust in God with your whole heart? If you do, ask God to help you. Ask God to strengthen your faith!

<u>Psalm 18:31</u>

For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

Questions: Is God trustworthy? Do you trust God?

Walking on Water!

Week of September 12-17

When Jesus turned thirty years old He began His public ministry. Jesus spent His days teaching people about God's kingdom, showing people God's power, and helping people understand God's truth. After each day's work was done, Jesus would often go somewhere quiet to pray. He would talk with His Father about anything and everything.

One night Jesus went up on a mountain by Himself to pray, and His disciples got into a boat to go across the Sea of Galilee. That particular night the winds were strong and the sea was choppy, and the disciples were having a very hard time making the boat go across the sea. At about three o'clock in the morning, Jesus came walking across the sea towards their boat. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were terrified and said, "'It is a ghost!' and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid'

"And Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, 'Lord, save me.' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (Matthew 14:26-33).

What a story! Did you know that besides Jesus, Peter is the only person in the Bible who ever walked on water? What gave Peter the ability to walk on water? The simple answer is that the power of God did. It was God who held Peter up so that he didn't sink as he walked on the water to Jesus. However, we could also say that it was Peter's faith in Jesus and Jesus' command to "Come" that gave Peter the ability to walk on water.

The wonderful thing about God's commands is that when God tells us to do something, He always provides the power to do what He commands. When God says, "Love God and love your neighbor," the power to do these things is God Himself. God is Love! When Peter obeyed Jesus' command to "Come," the power of God was present to do what Jesus commanded and Peter was able to walk on water by the power of God!

<u>Psalm 20:7</u>

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Questions: How did Peter walk on water? Why did Peter start to sink? Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus is the Son of God!

Week of September 19-24

When God's Son became human and lived in this world with us, people had a lot of questions. They weren't sure who Jesus was. They knew that He said wonderful things and did amazing miracles, but they weren't sure if He was just a great teacher or another prophet like Elijah or something more.

One day, Jesus went to a place called Caesarea-Philippi. This area in Israel was known for its worship of false gods. The people who lived there knew a lot about the false gods of Greece and Rome. It was here that Jesus chose to ask His disciples a question. Jesus said, "'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven'" (Matthew 16:13-17).

Peter's statement that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" was a huge statement! If Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," then everyone in Israel, and everyone else in the world, should immediately stop everything and bow down and worship Him! If Jesus was the Son of God, then He had unimaginable power and authority because He was "God of very God" (Nicene Creed). The religious leaders of Israel understood that if Jesus was the Son of the living God, then He was equal with God the Father, and they couldn't stand that idea. In fact, it was because Jesus said that He was the Son of God that Israel's religious leaders declared that He should die the death of the cursed on the cross! (Luke 22:70-71).

If we want to live our lives well, we must believe what God the Father says about His Son, Jesus, like Peter did. We must choose a side. We will either be on God's side or we will be on Satan's side. If we choose God's side, we will be filled with the Holy Spirit and God the Father and His Son, Jesus, will come and make their home with us (John 14:23). If Jesus lives inside of us, we will overcome the world because "everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world"!

Do you believe that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," like Peter believed?

<u>1 John 5:4</u>

<u>Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has</u> overcome the world—our faith.

Questions: Have you been born of God? What does it mean to "overcome the world?" Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Rebukes Peter (Invitation Week)

Week of September 26 – October 1

Why did Jesus come into the world? There are many, many answers to this question. But high on the list of answers is, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish [die] but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Jesus came into the world to save the world, but saving the world wasn't easy or cheap. In order to save the world, Jesus had to live a perfect human life and then offer His perfect human life up to God as a sacrifice for the lives of sinful humans. In other words, in order to save the world, Jesus had to live a perfect human life and then die.

When Jesus told His disciples that He had to be killed in order to save us from our sins, Peter wasn't happy. Peter loved Jesus. Peter didn't want to see Jesus die! So, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. Peter said, "'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you. But he [Jesus] turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man'" (Matt. 16:22-23).

Why did Jesus speak so strongly to Peter? Why did He say to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!"? Jesus said this to Peter because Peter was tempting Jesus to disobey God the Father! Remember when Satan did the same thing when Jesus was in the wilderness? The name "Satan" means "adversary" or someone who is "against you." Satan is always against God and His plan. In that moment, Peter was against God and His plan. God's plan was for Jesus to die so that each one of us could live by believing in Jesus and accepting the free gift of salvation paid for by the blood of Christ.

It is a very good thing that Jesus didn't listen to Peter when Peter told Him that He shouldn't die on the cross and be raised on the third day! The Gospel [God's good news] is that God has made a way for us to be saved forever from sin, death, and eternal destruction. The Way is Jesus. It is by believing in Jesus and accepting Him as our King and Savior that we are saved!

***Coaches, please present "The Gospel" devotion on the next page. If any players on your team respond by praying to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, have them sign their name in their own handwriting on the card provided. Please return signed cards to the equipment shed. When we follow up with players we will give them their signed card to take home. Thank you!

<u>Acts 2:21</u>

And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Gospel

Invitation Week Continued (September 26 – October 1)

What is the Gospel? The Gospel is God's good news about His Son Jesus Christ.

What is the good news? The good news is that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners.

How did we become sinners? By disobeying God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Each one of us has also disobeyed God.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

The bad news is that:

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

The good news is that:

"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

How do we receive God's free gift?

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

What does it mean to "believe in the Lord Jesus"?

It means that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to the pay the penalty for our sins, that He was buried, and on the third day God raised Him from the dead. It means that we receive Christ as our Savior and surrender our lives to Him as our personal Lord and Master.

Jesus promised, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Today, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

If you want to believe in Jesus and confess Him as your Savior and Lord today, please raise your hand. If you have raised your hand, please pray this prayer with me.

Heavenly Father, today I believe in your Son, Jesus. I believe that He died to pay the penalty for my sins and that He was raised from the dead so that I could be justified and receive eternal life in His name. Today, I surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and acknowledge Him before men. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me! Amen.

Jesus Transfigured!

Week of October 3-8

What would Jesus look like if we could see Him right now? Would He shine with light? What color would His hair be? What does Jesus' divine glory look like? What does the Bible say?

In Matthew 17, Peter, James, and John went up on a high mountain with Jesus. While they were there, Jesus was transfigured before them. What does "transfigured" mean? It means "to change form or appearance." What did Jesus look like when He was transfigured? "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matthew 17:2). In that moment, Jesus' appearance changed so that Peter, James, and John could see Him as He is in His divine nature.

While Jesus was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared, and they talked with Jesus. This was an incredible moment! Moses and Elijah were two of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament times, and there they were talking with Jesus! One can only imagine what they talked about!

As Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were talking, Peter said, "Teacher, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah, for he didn't know what to say, for they were terrified" (Mark 9:6). At that moment, "a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'" After this, Moses and Elijah were gone, and Jesus was there by himself with Peter, James, and John.

What did God want Peter, James, and John to learn through this experience? He wanted them to learn that Jesus was His beloved Son and that they should listen to Him. What are we supposed to do as God's children? First, we are to "know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent" (John 17:3). Secondly, we are to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I [Jesus] have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Do you know the One whose face shines like the sun? Do you know God's Son? If someone asked you to tell them about Jesus, what would you say?

<u> John 17:3</u>

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Questions: What color is Jesus' hair now? "White like wool, like snow" (Revelation 1:12-16).

Peter Denies Jesus

Week of October 10-15

Peter was a man who wanted to do what was right, but like all humans, he was weak because he was human. God is Spirit. God is all-powerful. God can do anything that He wants to do. God has life in Himself. He doesn't need anyone else. Humans are not like God. We are weak. We don't know all things. We don't have life in ourselves. We need God.

Before Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He was brought before the religious leaders of Israel. They were trying to find something wrong with Jesus so that they could kill Him. They brought in witnesses who said all kinds of bad things about Jesus, but none of the things that they said about Jesus were true because Jesus was perfect in every way.

While Jesus was on trial, Peter waited in a nearby courtyard. Peter's mind was probably spinning because so much had happened. Peter had just heard Jesus teach wonderful things at the Last Supper; then he and the other disciples had sung a hymn with Jesus on the Mount of Olives; then Jesus had said that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed the next morning; then Judas had betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders; and now Jesus was on trial! It was all so crazy!

As Peter waited in the courtyard, a young servant girl saw Peter and said, "'This man also was with Jesus,' but Peter denied it, and said, 'Woman, I do not know him'" (Luke 22:56-57). Twice more that night, Peter denied that he knew Jesus. And when the rooster crowed early in the morning, Peter remembered what Jesus had said, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter was learning a very important lesson. He was learning that we can never trust in ourselves. Peter thought that he was strong, but when he denied Jesus three times, he came face to face with his own weakness. That was good! We must each learn how weak we are in order to realize how much we need Jesus!

Does Jesus reject us because we are weak? No! Jesus told us that God's kingdom belongs to the "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). When we realize that we are spiritually helpless, we are ready to believe in Jesus and enter into God's kingdom! Are you ready to confess your weakness and be filled with God's strength?!

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Questions: What does it mean to be poor in spirit? What is God's kingdom like?

The Holy Spirit is Poured Out

Week of October 17-22

What is the most powerful thing that you can think of? A tornado? A volcano? The sun? These are all powerful, but God made them all. God is all-powerful. He literally spoke the heavens and the earth into existence!

One of the last things that Jesus said to His disciples before He went back to heaven was, "Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This was an amazing promise! How did God fulfill this promise?

Ten days after Jesus went back to Israel there were a special feast in Israel called the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. Every man in Israel was supposed to come to this feast every year. So, you can imagine how many people were in Jerusalem for the feast. It was about nine o' clock in the morning on the day of Pentecost when God fulfilled His promise to clothe His people with power from on high! How did he do it? He poured out His Holy Spirit on all flesh!

Before this moment, the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of people, but He didn't live inside of people. Now, because of what Jesus had done on the cross, God said that His Holy Spirit would live inside of God's children and fill them with all of His power, life, energy, truth, and wisdom!

The Apostle Peter was one of the first people to recognize what was happening as the Holy Spirit was poured out, so he stood and explained to the people who were standing there what was happening. Peter said, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh…and it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'" (Acts 2:14-17, 21).

That day, about three thousand people believed in Jesus and were filled with the power of God's Holy Spirit! Do you want the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's power?!

<u>Acts 1:8</u>

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Questions: What must we do before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit? Believe in Jesus!

No Silver and Gold!

Week of October 24-29

The days after God poured out His Holy Spirit on Pentecost were super busy and exciting. Just think, the disciples had seen thousands of people believe in Jesus! They probably couldn't wait to wake up each morning to study the Scriptures and learn from the Holy Spirit. They were seeing God do great signs and wonders. It was a time of great joy and celebration among the people of God!

One day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer and there was a lame man [a man would couldn't walk] lying at the gate of the temple. This man asked Peter and John for money. What do you think Peter and John did? Did they give him money?

Here's what happened: "And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him" (Acts 3:4-10).

Why did God do this miracle? First, God is Life, and He loves to give life. Secondly, and more importantly, the people who knew this man were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. When Peter saw that the people were "utterly astounded" by this miracle, he was able to explain to them that this man was "given perfect health," not by any power that Peter or John had, but by "the faith that comes through Jesus" (Acts 3:16). After that, Peter encouraged the people to listen to Jesus and do whatever Jesus says.

Life is all about listening to God and doing what He says. As we listen to God, He will strengthen us to do what He says. As we do what God says, we will find joy, and people will see us, and they will be amazed as they see the power of God at work in us!

Hebrews 13:5

Keep your life free from love of money, and <mark>be content with what you have, for God has said,</mark> <mark>"I will never leave you nor forsake you."</mark>

Questions: What is the greatest gift that God can give us? Himself! **Please remember to pray for your team and their families!**

Peter and Cornelius

Week of October 31 – November 5

Will God save any person who believes in Jesus, or only certain types of people? The answer is, "God will save every person who believes in Jesus!" How do we know? God sent Peter on a special mission to show us that salvation is for anyone who believes in Jesus, not just Jewish people or other types of people.

Cornelius was an Italian man who feared God. One day, God sent an angel to Cornelius and told Cornelius to "send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." So Cornelius sent men to find Peter.

The next day, Peter was on top of the house around lunchtime. He was there to pray, but he was very hungry and asked for something to eat. While the food was being prepared, Peter fell into a trance and saw a great sheet descending from the heavens. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air that God had previously said were unclean and therefore not to be eaten. But God told Peter to eat these things. And Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." But the Lord said, "What God has made clean, do not call common" (Acts 10:14-16).

Peter was wondering what these things meant, when "the Spirit said to Peter, 'Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." When Peter arrived at Cornelius' house, Peter said to Cornelius and his family and close friends, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." Then Peter preached the good news about Jesus Christ to them and "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word," and they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is great news! We don't have to become a certain type of person in order to be saved! We can believe in Jesus right now, and we will be born again from above and filled with the Holy Spirit. After that, God will begin the work of changing us into exactly what He wants us to be, which is to be transformed into the very image of His Son! If you haven't believed in Jesus yet, don't delay! Today is the day of salvation!

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, <u>if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation</u>. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Questions: What changes when we become new creations in Christ? Are you "in Christ"? **Please remember to pray for your team and their families!**