

The Confession of St. Peter – January 18, 2015  
Text: Acts 4: 8-13  
Theme: "The Greater Confession"

**You have heard me preach many times on St. Peter's great confession, "You are the Christ! The Son of the Living God" and then a couple verses later he is being rebuked and called Satan because while he believes that Jesus is the Christ, he doesn't want that fact to interrupt his plan for life. As you know, I love St. Peter because he is so human – so much like us. While St. Paul probably would have hung out in Hyde Park sipping Cappuccinos with the University of Chicago crew, St. Peter would have been more at home here in Villa Park, bellying up to a good potluck and probably playing darts on Tuesday nights.**

**Peter had a great confession that day when Jesus asked him who he said Jesus was, but today I want to talk about St. Peter's greater confession. When he told Jesus he was the Christ, how hard could that be? It's the Sunday School answer. He couldn't go wrong. They were walking along in Caesarea Philippi where there were pagan shrines all around them. Herod the Great's temple to Rome was nearby and Jesus asked who they thought he was. That's like the Sunday School teacher asking the children who loves them enough to die on a cross for them. It's a gimme.**

**But in the book of Acts, Peter was facing a different crowd. He and John had healed a lame man in the temple courts and the people had been amazed. So, Peter began to proclaim the power by which he did such a thing. Soon the priests and the rulers of the people heard what was going on and arrested them. So the next morning, when they were on trial, what did Peter say?**

**“Well guys, you know sometimes people just get better when you show them a little love and care and besides, that guy was seeing doctors and he probably just needed a little encouragement to get up and walk. I’m sure that if any of you guys had been there he would have walked for you too. Now let’s just all get along and love each other.” Not hardly. What Peter said was his greatest confession because it took place under fire. He damned the torpedoes and went full steam ahead with,**

**“Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” He pulled no punches. He trusted in Christ and laid it in the table. This is done by the power of Christ**

**and it is just too bad if you don't like it because I am not going to shut up about Jesus to make you more comfortable in your socio-political religion built around a thriving sacrificial temple system. People need to know the truth and if the truth makes you uncomfortable, maybe you better examine your lies.**

**That is the Peter I want to be. We face persecution in milder forms to be sure. No one is going to stone us for professing our faith, not yet anyway, but even so, it is sure easy to stay quiet and let people say all kinds of nonsense because it's just too hard to fight it. Just recently one of you told me about a community sports team that fines people for using foul language while playing but uses the name of God as though it were nothing important. You can scream out the name of the Lord most high every time you serve into the net but if you use the slang for defecation, you have to pay a fine. Does that make any sense at all? I was incredibly proud of our member who stood her ground and said as much to the other players.**

**Of course it makes you look like a religious fanatic. In in our culture, a religious fanatic is anyone who believes that his religion is right and other religions are wrong. I know it is scary to stand with St. Peter, but we believe that Christianity is the one, true religion and all other religions are false. It is not a popular view, but at least**

**we stand in good company with the Angels and Arch-Angels and all the company of heaven, including St. Peter himself.**

**In the end, we either have confidence in Christ or we don't. Peter stood at the beginning of the Church. He only knew what Christ had told him and showed him and he had little else. He didn't have fancy degrees or a demographic study. He didn't have popular opinion or recent polling research. He just confessed loudly and boldly that which Christ had first told him.**

**We stand in a place that is all too similar to Peter. People are not flocking to the doors of the Church and begging to be enlightened like they were in the 1950's and 60's. In fact, most people do not even think that what the Church has to offer is particularly valuable or worthwhile. And in this nation of complete tolerance, God help anyone who boldly says that they have the only right answer. What shall we do? We have a critical message to proclaim. Like Peter, proclaim it to anyone who will hear. Keep yourself filled with God's Word and nourished with his body and blood and remember that Jesus Christ, Lord of the Universe, stands with you and empowers you to do what he commands.**