

## Rebuking In the Bible



Matthew 16:22 *“Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”*

This is a funny beginning to rebuking the disciples in the Bible. Peter takes Jesus aside and rebukes him for saying that he must die. To know the word rebuke is saying that Peter sharply said “no” to the Son of God. I would even go as far to say that Jesus and Peter got into it. This could have been a yelling match. Strong words were used. Look at Jesus response.

Mark 8:33 *“But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”*

I am amused by this turn of events because people think Jesus and his disciples were best buds. That everything Jesus said fell on men pawing at his feet. Yet, this is not the case. Judas was confused over Jesus’ use of words and lack of action. Peter put his foot in his mouth often. Several times the disciples were confused over the actions of Jesus. Why do I mention this conflict? It’s to illustrate that rebuking people has consequences. Jesus time on earth resulted in arguments, misunderstandings, and disagreements. I suspect that Peter might have stormed off after Jesus called him Satan.

The disciples in the Bible had strong opinions. Several of the characters were strong willed. Just look at this exchange between Jesus and his disciples below.

Matthew 19:13 *“Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.*

The disciples thought that they had power with Jesus. Were they powerful, important, and special? Imagine their surprise when Jesus put more importance on children or the lame? In one story, Jesus was talking about going to the cross to die. Right after we find the disciples arguing over who is the greatest in Luke 9. So, it’s not a stretch to find the disciples rebuking these children. I think that the rebuke word is used here to show how strongly the disciples believed that they were in control. I think they felt that they were the new religious rulers. To be fair, this type of overbearing authority is all they had even known.

Mark 14:5 *“It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.*

Jesus is compassionately anointed by a mysterious woman at a party. It says that the disciples rebuked her for wasting expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. Just imagine the conversation between Jesus and them after they implied, he wasn’t worth it. The real discussion was over two things in my way of thinking. The first is that this woman is thought to be a prostitute. Was she worthy to be there in the first place? What gave her the right to touch Jesus? Only the disciples were worthy right? Secondly, these same disciples felt that they were godly. How dare you waste something that the poor could use. This rebuke probably was indignant and full of disrespect. In both the children and the woman story, the disciples were missing the point of God. That Jesus came to love over rebuking as the previous religious rulers had done.

Mark 16:14 *“Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.”*

Clearly, a rebuke between friends seems harsh. Jesus was stern at times about kingdom matters. The disciples didn't really get much of what Jesus was doing and saying. John 12:16 *“At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.”* There was a conflict between two worlds. The disciples wanted Jesus to be the Messiah that took the Romans down. I am sure that the disciples thought that they were the new commanders of Jesus army. They had status, power, and wisdom. They forgot that Jesus came to empower them to be his disciples. Jesus wanted to save the world by love and the word of God. At times they seemed to be on a different page.

Luke 19:39 *“Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”*

There is another interesting story in Luke 19 of the disciples singing the coming of the Lord in public. The religious rulers must have been horrified. At times Jesus told people to be quiet about his work. He knew it would cause trouble. As the disciples were singing the religious rulers were angry. So much so that they asked Jesus to rebuke his followers. Did you notice that the religious rulers did not do it themselves? These men knew that the public opinion was swinging towards Jesus. I feel that they were trying to get Jesus to knock down (rebuke) this wave of change from Jewish beliefs.

It's not that Jesus had a love/hate relationship with his beloved disciples. Sometimes the ways of heaven conflict with the ways of humans. There is no doubt that the rebuking was harsh. The disciples must have felt hurt at times. I am positive that Jesus felt hurt and misunderstood too. Yet, we know that in the end Christianity flourished because the disciples got the message after Jesus rose from the dead. I do believe that Jesus came to wade through the disconnect between earth and heaven. Sometimes it means that there needs to be a good rebuking between friends.