

## Summary

This sermon explores the story of Peter's denial of Jesus and subsequent restoration, emphasizing that God never writes us off despite our failures. Rick shares a personal story about disrespecting his mother-in-law at work and receiving undeserved mercy, paralleling Peter's experience. The message focuses on how Peter, despite being a devoted disciple, denied Jesus three times out of fear during Jesus' arrest. However, Jesus later restored Peter through a conversation by the sea, asking him three times if he loved Him. The sermon emphasizes that while we often focus on not getting what we think we deserve, we should be grateful for the times we don't receive the judgment we actually deserve. Instead, God offers grace, mercy, and second chances.

## Intro Prayer

Father God, as we gather together in this small group today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be vulnerable with one another and receptive to Your Holy Spirit's leading. Lord, we know that each of us has experienced moments where we've felt written off or disqualified, but we thank You that Your love never fails. Guide our discussion today and help us to encourage one another in Your truth. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

What's one time in your life when you received mercy or a second chance that you didn't deserve?  
How did that make you feel?

## Key Verses

1. Luke 22:31-34
2. Luke 22:54-62
3. John 21:15-17

## Questions

1. Why do you think Peter followed Jesus 'at a distance' after His arrest instead of staying close or leaving entirely?
2. How do you think Peter felt during the three days between Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, knowing that his last interaction with Jesus was denying Him?
3. What significance do you see in Jesus asking Peter three times 'Do you love me?' - the same number of times Peter denied Him?
4. Rick mentioned that 'reconciliation requires a conversation.' Can you think of a relationship in your life that needs this kind of intentional conversation?

5. How does fear cause us to act in ways that contradict our true beliefs and values, as it did with Peter?
6. What are some lies that Satan tries to convince Christians of when they've made mistakes or fallen into sin?
7. How can Peter's story encourage someone who feels like they've been 'written off' by God or others?
8. What does it mean practically to 'be free' from guilt and shame as Rick challenged us to do?

## **Life Application**

This week, identify one relationship where you need to have a conversation for reconciliation - either to seek forgiveness or to offer it. Take the initiative to reach out and have that conversation, following Jesus' example of pursuing restoration rather than waiting for time to heal the wound.

## **Key Takeaways**

1. God never writes us off, even when we fail Him or others
2. Reconciliation requires intentional conversation, not just hoping time will heal wounds
3. Fear can cause us to act in ways that contradict our true beliefs and values
4. Jesus pursues us for restoration even when we try to hide in shame and guilt
5. We need to be free from guilt and shame to effectively serve God and others

## **Ending Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for the powerful reminder through Peter's story that You never give up on us. Help us to live in the freedom that comes from knowing we are loved and accepted by You, not because of our performance, but because of Your grace. Give us courage to have difficult conversations that lead to reconciliation, and help us to extend the same mercy to others that You have shown to us. May we walk confidently in Your love, knowing that You have called us back into the game of life and ministry. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.