

Summary

This sermon focuses on Peter's denial of Jesus and how our worst moments reveal us but don't define us. Pastor Bruce shares a personal story about failing to stand up for his faith as a young Christian, then examines Peter's three denials of Jesus around a campfire. The key message is that while fear may speak loudly in our moments of weakness, it doesn't get the final word. Jesus meets us in our failure, just as He met Peter after the resurrection at another campfire, offering restoration rather than condemnation. The sermon emphasizes that Jesus doesn't avoid our worst moments but brings us back to them for redemption and healing.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hearts, acknowledging that we all have moments we wish we could forget. As we gather together to study Your Word, help us to be vulnerable and honest about our struggles and failures. Open our minds to understand how You work in our weakness, and help us to see that our worst moments don't define us when we are in relationship with You. Guide our discussion today and speak to each heart according to what You know we need. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one food or meal that always brings back a specific memory for you, and why?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 26:58
2. Matthew 26:69-75
3. John 21:15-17

Questions

1. Why do you think Peter followed Jesus 'at a distance' rather than running away completely or staying close? What does this reveal about how fear affects our relationship with God?
2. The sermon mentions that 'fear doesn't need a big stage, it just needs a moment where something feels at risk.' Can you think of a time when a small moment revealed something significant about your character or faith?
3. How does Peter's progression from simple denial to cursing show us how unchecked fear escalates? What are some warning signs we can watch for in our own lives?
4. What's significant about Jesus meeting Peter around another campfire after the resurrection? Why do you think Jesus chose to recreate that setting?

5. The pastor said, 'Your worst moment will reveal you, but it doesn't get to define you.' How does this truth change the way we view our failures and mistakes?
6. Peter asked Jesus three times if he loved Him, corresponding to Peter's three denials. What does this teach us about God's approach to restoration?
7. How can we create 'safe distance' from Jesus in our daily lives, similar to how Peter followed at a distance? What are some modern examples of this?
8. What's the difference between shame that destroys and conviction that restores? How can we tell which one we're experiencing?

Life Application

This week, identify one area where you've been following Jesus 'at a distance' due to fear or past failure. Take one concrete step to move closer to Him in that area - whether it's having an honest conversation, making a difficult decision, or simply spending more time in prayer about that specific issue. Remember that Jesus meets you where you are, not where you think you should be.

Key Takeaways

1. Fear speaks loudly in our moments of weakness, but it doesn't get the final word in our story
2. Our worst moments reveal who we are, but they don't define who we can become in Christ
3. Jesus doesn't avoid our failures - He meets us in them and offers restoration
4. Following Jesus 'at a distance' due to fear often leads us into environments where compromise feels natural
5. God's grace is powerful enough to redeem even our most shameful moments and use them for His glory

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the example of Peter and the reminder that You don't abandon us in our failures. Help us to remember that when fear speaks, Your love speaks louder. When we feel defined by our worst moments, remind us that You see us through the lens of Your grace and redemption. Give us courage to step closer to You, even when we feel unworthy. Help us to extend the same grace to others that You have shown to us. May we live as people who have been restored by Your love. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.