

Session 2



“Jesus Over My Failure”

(Peter’s Restoration)

Purpose: To recognize how Jesus redeems and restores us.

Group Practice Check-In: Discipleship is about putting our faith into practice. Let's take a quick look back at last week:

- Which application option did you try this week and how did it go? (If you didn't do it, that's OK, but can you identify why not?)

Icebreaker: How do you handle failure?

Read: John 21:1-7 and Luke 5:1-8

Observe: Compare those passages. How are the two passages similar? How are they different? Think about both basic details and deeper personal responses.

Discuss:

The time between the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus was 40 days. In that time, Jesus appeared to the disciples for relatively short interactions before disappearing again. Before this moment by the lake, Jesus has given the apostles proof of life and appointed them as his witnesses, but he's told them to wait until they receive power. That's what they're doing now. . . waiting. In the lull, Peter decides to go fishing.

- How well do you handle extended periods of waiting?
- What's your comfort activity? When you're in a period of waiting, what are you most likely to do to fill the time?

Read: John 21:8-14

Observe: What do you see in the behavior of each person present in the passage?

Discuss:

Jesus already had fish on the fire, and we know he only needs one fish to feed thousands of people, but he still told the

disciples to bring the fish they caught (which they would not have caught without his help).

- How does this reflect our everyday discipleship?

Read: John 21:15-17

Observe: Compare Peter's reaction to Jesus in John 21:15 with Peter's reaction to Jesus in Matthew 26:31-33.

Discuss:

Peter has a history of big, over-the-top declarations. Whether he's swearing he'll never fall away, promising to build three temples (one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah), or asking Jesus not only to wash his feet, but his whole body. But this Peter seems to be more understated. He's learned something about himself, and it changed his perception.

- When has your walk with Jesus involved learning something new about yourself?
- Have you ever made a big promise to God that you didn't follow through on? How does that impact how you interact with God now?

Leader Notes: Do the different "loves" matter? In the original Greek, this passage shows a potential progression of love intensities. Jesus begins with agape: "Peter, do you agape me?" But Peter responds with phileo: "Yes, I phileo you." This repeats the second time. On the third time, Jesus switches to phileo and Peter again uses phileo.

The line is pretty split down the middle between the two sides. On one side, commentators say that agape represents a higher, more intense love. Because of that, Jesus is calling Peter to a higher love but meets Peter where he is when Peter struggles to match that energy. On the other side, commentators argue that John doesn't use a hierarchy of loves anywhere else in his book. Agape and phileo are used interchangeably. It is significant that most Greek language scholars seem to fall on the latter side, insisting that there's no significance.

Optional Question based on Leader Notes:

This is a non-essential issue that's sure to create spirited debates and fun discussions.

- If the change in "love"s matters, how do you think that impacts this passage?
- If the change in "love"s doesn't matter, how does that impact this passage?

The passage is undeniably a parallel to his three-fold denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-62, and John 18:15-18, 25-27).

Jesus didn't just rub Peter's nose in his failure; he used that failure to build Peter up again. God uses all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Even our greatest failures.

- Is there a failure or failing in your life that God has directly redeemed for good?

Jesus tells Peter, "Feed my sheep," each time Peter affirms his love for Jesus. In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love me, keep

my commands.” With each profession of love, Jesus gives Peter a command to keep.

There are general commands, true and applied for all believers, but there are also direct callings like this. Not everyone is called into a shepherding role, like Peter. Not everyone is called to the same task John was called to, and so on.

- Do you love God?
- If so, what command is He calling you to keep? Does anything specific come to mind?

Read: John 21:18-22

Our separate callings are affirmed here in John 21:18-22. Jesus calls Peter to follow him, even though it will end with Peter dying on a cross. When Peter wonders about John’s fate, Jesus essentially tells him not to worry about what God’s plans are for other people and again tells Peter to follow him.

- Do you find yourself comparing your discipleship journey to other people often?
- How do you feel knowing some Christians will go through life in general comfort and luxury, but others will spend their days in struggle and trial?

Notice how Jesus prioritizes relationship over performance. Before He gave Peter a job to do, Jesus invited him to sit by the fire, share a meal, and experience grace. Jesus isn’t looking for hired hands to complete a task list; He desires real communion with you. Our calling to serve Him is simply the

natural overflow of walking in close, restored relationship with Him.

Application Suggestions:

Leader notes: Ask everyone to pick a practice for this week, and explain that you will ask them about it next week

The Restoration Prayer. Identify one area where you feel like you've failed or fallen short recently. Spend two minutes praying: "Jesus, thank You that Your grace is bigger than my failure. Help me walk in Your restoration today."

"Next Step" Obedience. Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep" as his next step. Pick one simple, direct way to serve or encourage someone this week (a text of encouragement, an act of kindness, or serving at home/church) as a response to Jesus' love.

The Comparison Reset. Identify one place where you consistently compare your life or faith to others (e.g., social media, parenting, work). Take a 3-day break from that trigger (remove the app from your phone) this week to focus on your own walk with Jesus.