



Small Group Study Guide

PETER

*A FLAWED, YET FAITHFUL
FOLLOWER OF JESUS*

August 30, 2020
"From Cowardice
to Courage"

OPENING PRAYER

O Gracious and Forgiving God, we come today with a longing in our hearts to be your faithful disciples, but we know that like Peter, we sometimes stumble and even deny that we know you. We come today with open hearts, asking for forgiveness. As we follow this account of your forgiveness of Peter, we are filled with hope and trust in your forgiveness for each of us. We pray that as we seek to see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus, we would be emboldened to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:

John 21:4-17 (CEB)

⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realize it was Jesus.

⁵ Jesus called to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?"

They answered him, "No."

⁶ He said, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

So they did, and there were so many fish that they couldn't haul in the net. ⁷ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard it was the Lord, he wrapped his coat around himself (for he was naked) and jumped into the water. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they weren't far from shore, only about one hundred yards.

⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire there, with fish on it, and some bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you've just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter got up and pulled the net to shore. It was full of large fish, one hundred fifty-three of them. Yet the net hadn't torn, even with so many fish. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples could bring themselves to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ He asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" He replied, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

INTRODUCTION

Simon Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, but that was not the end of his story. When the disciples find the tomb was empty, they begin to understand that the grave could not hold their Lord. When the Resurrected Jesus calls on Peter, Jesus asks Peter to affirm his love, not once, but three times. What will it mean for Peter to repent and be forgiven? What could repentance and Jesus's forgiveness mean for you? And how then might Jesus be calling you to demonstrate your love?

QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the biggest way you have changed since you were a child? If you consider your life as a journey, would you say this was a positive or negative change?
- 2) Read again John 21:1-7. In this story, (like the one in Luke 5:1-10), Jesus shows experienced fishermen, including Peter, where to find a startlingly large catch of fish. Have there been times in your life or place of ministry that you found yourself ineffective, perhaps because you were not open to Jesus's wisdom? When has a spiritual practice of walking with Jesus clearly made your efforts more effective?
- 3) Read again John 21:8-14. One thing this passage makes clear is that Jesus is no ghost, he was truly, physically alive. He built a fire and cooked breakfast! In fact, Jesus said, "bring some of the fish you've just caught." Why doesn't Jesus just do everything for us? Why does he seem to want to join our effort with his spiritual power? What gift or work has Jesus asked of you as you journey with him? What gifts have you noticed in a fellow group member. Tell them what you see.
- 4) Read Mark 16:1-7. Peter thought his denial of Jesus would haunt him the rest of his life. Thankfully, unlike Judas (Matthew 27:3-5) he did not succumb to despair, but the scriptures suggest that he never imagined that he would be welcomed as one of Jesus's disciples again. In Mark 6:7, the messenger told Mary Magdalene, "Go tell his disciples, *especially Peter*, that he is going ahead of you into Galilee." What do we learn about Jesus's grace for Peter? For you? Can you share a time you experienced God's grace?
- 5) Read Acts 2:1-24, 37-41. Did Peter's restoration make difference? Oh yes! Pentecost, the Hebrew harvest festival, came 50 days after Passover, and God sent the Holy Spirit in a powerful way. Peter, who was fearful of being recognized by a servant girl as he stood warming himself near a fire, begins to courageously touch many hearts with his preaching. And a tiny, ragtag group of Jesus followers turn into a movement of thousands. How does Peter's transformation change your outlook on life?

FINAL APPLICATION

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Peter who denied even knowing Jesus at Passover, was boldly preaching victory in Christ just 50 days later at Pentecost. You have been given that same power to live your life boldly. Pray for God to send that power into your life, stirring you to action.