

The Way of the Cross

Failure

Failure paralyzes us. Jesus restores us. Peace sends us (Luke 22:33-62). Peter – one of Jesus' closest friends and followers – experiences the weight and crippling effect of his own failure and shame. Just hours after swearing allegiance to Jesus at their last meal together, Peter denies knowing Jesus three separate times. At his third denial, a rooster crows and Jesus looks at Peter. Peter, fully aware of his failure, leaves and weeps bitterly. In his shame, Peter loses all sense of purpose in Jesus and returns to his old life of fishing. The shame of his denial does not just turn him from God but drags him back to being the person and the ways he thought he had left behind. But Jesus pursues Peter – and us – with the heart to restore and give His peace. Jesus, after His resurrection, finds Peter fishing and powerfully restores him to his real calling and destiny. He imparts His peace to Peter and sends him out with a specific mission. Like Peter, Jesus wants to restore us from our past failures and send us out with His peace to live the life God has for us.

VISION FOR THIS WEEK

To encounter Jesus in our failure and shame, and to receive His restoration and peace.

GET THINGS STARTED

Who do you know personally that is distinctly **not** walking in their God-given calling and destiny? What derailed them from living out their full potential in Jesus? What do you think it would take for them to experience restoration?

GO DEEPER WITH SCRIPTURE

1. What do you think was at the heart of Peter's three denials of knowing Jesus (Luke 22:54-59) mere hours after pledging to go to prison and death with Jesus? What was Peter's true calling and destiny, according to Matthew 16:16-18? How did Peter respond in his failure and shame, from Luke 22:62 and John 21:2-3?
2. In John 21:4-8, Jesus finds Peter and a few other disciples with him. What does it take for them to recognize that it is Jesus? Why is it significant that Jesus questions and challenges Peter three times (John 21:15-19)? What was Jesus doing with Peter, and what was He restoring in him?
3. What does God call Gideon to in Judges 6:11-16, and what is Gideon's response? What name of God is revealed to Gideon in Judges 6:22-24, and why is it important to us?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What failure (and its corresponding shame) is paralyzing you right now? What is God's heart towards you, and what does He think about your failure and shame? What does God desire for you?
2. What does it look like to receive the peace of God? What is a step you can take this week to receive and embrace more fully the peace God offers to you?
3. In His peace, who is God calling you to be in this season?

PRAYER AS A GROUP

Take time as a group, in an attitude and posture of prayer, to invite the peace and restoration of God into your hearts and lives. Ask Him to reveal more fully the failure and shame that He wants to heal and pray that He imparts fresh identity and purpose to you. Ask Him for new courage and boldness to act on that fresh identity and purpose, and to reveal some key first steps that you can take this week. Pray for and encourage anyone in your group that is overwhelmed and paralyzed by their failure and shame.