



SPRING 2023 // WEEK 4

Life Group Questions

Here and Now // May 6-7, 2023

The Resurrected Jesus and Our Failures // John 21:1-25

## Introduction

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Continuing in the Gospel of John this week, the resurrected Jesus appears to seven disciples while fishing. A familiar scene for these disciples leads to a pivotal conversation between Jesus and Peter. Perhaps Peter needed special encouragement in the aftermath of his denial – he may have felt completely dejected. Yet the resurrected Jesus is ready to meet Peter, and us, in the challenging moments of failure.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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1. In which activity would you like a lesson from an expert?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Who is the most optimistic person you know?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
    - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
    - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
    - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
  
  - 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.
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## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) In verses 1-5, the disciples fish all night, some of them are professional fishermen yet they are unable to catch a single fish. **How defeated do you think Peter felt in this moment?**

Share of a time when you have experienced a moment of defeat in your life. What was a source of encouragement for you during this time?

- 2) The scene we see in verses 6-7 reminds us of an earlier scene in the ministry of Jesus, but there are some striking differences. Read Luke 5:4-10. **In what ways are Peter's reactions different?**

**What has Peter seen Jesus do or heard Him say that might explain this different reaction?**

**What truth about Jesus from the first miracle do you think Peter is recalling in this second miraculous catch of fish?**

- 3) In verses 15-19, Jesus calls Peter to be a shepherd, and He tells Peter it's a calling that will eventually lead to his death. Peter's ability to live on mission seems to be rooted in Jesus' simple question, "Do you love me?" Peter had denied Jesus three times (Matthew 26:69-75), and yet here Jesus is. **What do you think Jesus was trying to teach Peter by asking him the same question three times?**

Sometimes, it can be easy to beat ourselves up for past mistakes. **How does loving Jesus and trusting in His forgiveness help you put past mistakes into perspective so that they don't define your future?**

Share of a time when you felt stuck in your failures and it was a challenge to live in the forgiveness of Christ. How did God transform this failure into a step to follow Jesus?

- 4) In verses 18-24, Jesus tells Peter the type of death he would receive. Despite what Peter's future held, Jesus told him to follow Him. Immediately, he turns to John and asks Jesus, "What about him?" It is hard not to compare ourselves to others. **In what areas do you often find yourself comparing (e.g., finances, skills, appearance, opportunity)?**

**How do you continue to follow Jesus in your life when comparison creeps into your thoughts and choices?** Share suggestions as a group and pray for one another in this regard when you close your time in prayer.

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

**Prayer Focus:** Breath prayers are a simple way of becoming more aware of God's presence. They are an opportunity to pray without ceasing. Compose a simple breath prayer to use whenever you find yourself stuck in comparison. (e.g., Jesus, help me follow you.) The words need not be eloquent or impressive; breath prayers are not mantras to be repeated mindlessly or magic incantations. Find a short sentence or phrase that you can offer to God who is able and willing to help us.

**Scripture Focus:** Defeated thoughts can creep into any area of our lives. We may feel like we've failed as a friend, spouse, or parent when we let mistakes of the past determine our worth. In these moments we can choose to change our thoughts about failure. Choose one of the following verses to meditate on this week when you feel like you've failed. Let these verses encourage and strengthen you. We are not failures. We are victorious through Jesus!

Proverbs 24:16

Philippians 3:12

Psalms 37:23-24

Philippians 1:6

Psalms 103:13

## Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?