

# PEOPLE ARE RESTORED



**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

In giving Peter the opportunity to confess his love three times, Jesus demonstrated His forgiveness and desire to restore fellowship with His own.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

John 21

**+** **SETTING:**

Jesus had appeared to His disciples twice in Jerusalem a week apart. But that wouldn't be the only place He would come to them as the resurrected Lord. Jesus had left instruction for the disciples with the women who had come to His tomb: Go to Galilee. They would see Jesus there (Matthew 28:16). Galilee had been home base throughout most of Jesus's earthly ministry, so it probably felt like going home for them. We can only imagine them wondering what was coming next and waiting for Jesus's next appearance.

# DAY 1

## READ:

**John 21:1-19**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**John 21:1-6**

## NOTES

John sets up the story by explaining that Jesus had “revealed” Himself by showing up on the shore near His former-fishermen disciples. In verse 6, the revelation comes: Professional fishermen who had been skunked in an entire night of fishing had, in an instant, caught more than they were prepared to gather.

Jesus reveals Himself to us in the same way: when something happens that would never occur without His hand. Recently, I was walking my dog down the road at daybreak, choosing to praise Jesus aloud in the silence of the morning. After a few minutes I turned around at the very-uneventful place where I always turn around, but stood in shock: the sky was alight with orange, pink, purple, and blue—a sunrise that made my jaw drop. Jesus had revealed Himself to me, and that left a lasting mark.

I don’t know about you, but often I’m too quick to chalk things up to luck or science or being in the right place at the right time. Maybe this passage should remind me that Jesus still reveals Himself to us.

**When was the last time you saw, heard, tasted, or felt something that pointed you to Jesus and how did you respond?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

**Luke 5:1-11**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Luke 5:4-7**

## NOTES



## KEY DOCTRINE #89: EDIFICATION

Edification refers to the progressive growth and maturity of the church, both individually and collectively. The Bible talks about different ways maturity, or edification, may happen, such as through the fellowship Christians share with one another (1 Corinthians 12:26; Galatians 6:2). In addition, edification takes place through the church's preaching and teaching of Scripture (Ephesians 4:11-12), helping people understand and internalize the whole counsel of God. In the end, edification is building up the body of Christ, equipping people to live on mission for the kingdom of God.

Many Bible commentaries draw parallels between John 21:1-6 and Luke 5:1-11. They fit together nicely, and we are blessed to look at a few of the details.

The Luke passage took place early in Jesus's earthly ministry; you see in verse 10 that Jesus was just at that moment inviting the fisherman Simon (later called Peter) to quit fishing for fish and instead to fish for people. In this passage, there were only four fishermen, and they were cleaning up after a hard night of fishing with no results (v. 5). Yet the men were willing to obey Jesus's instruction; the result was an overabundant blessing.

The John passage took place at the very end of Jesus's earthly ministry, and actually happened after He had been crucified and resurrected. The same original four fishermen were there, joined by a few friends. Again, they fished all night with no catch. Again, Jesus had advice for them and made their haul successful. Again, they listened to what He said and saw the fruits of their labor.

May we all see the repeated themes of Jesus's interaction with the fishermen. He knows what you need to do your job well, so seek His face, listen to His voice, and enjoy the blessings that follow.

**What do you need to ask of Jesus to help you get through today or this week?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

**John 21:1-19**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**John 21:7-14**

## NOTES

Today's passage is what the teenagers would call an "LOL" story. If you don't giggle—at least inwardly—I don't think you're reading it with your whole heart.

Peter, known for sticking his foot in his mouth and speaking when he should listen, took center stage in this scene. Upon John's recognition that the man on the shore giving them fishing advice was Jesus, Peter put on his coat and jumped into the lake. Not carefully, either; some translations say Peter threw himself or plunged into the sea (v. 7), leaving the other six to guide the boat, barely able to drag the fish, toward the shore.

When Jesus told them in verse 10 to go get some fish, Peter alone heroically brought up the whole net. Over-achiever? Probably. Leader? Definitely.

But I see something else in Peter: desperation. He desperately needed the Lord Jesus. Peter had seen himself under pressure as Jesus was arrested, and he didn't like what he saw. Peter knew that Jesus alone could make it right, and he was desperate to show his devotion.

**How desperate for Jesus are you today and how is that exemplified in your life?**

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"To see Jesus, under the revealing influences of the Spirit, is to commit the soul to him, resting the whole weight of its salvation upon him, and to decide to be his, wholly his, only his, and his forever. These effects are always produced by a sight of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

—James Smith (1802–1862)

# DAY 4

## READ:

**John 13:1-23**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**John 13:12-17**

## NOTES

The Gospel of John, written by the disciple John, contains some form of the word “love” thirty-nine times; his epistles (1, 2, and 3 John) have it thirty-three times. Obviously, love is a theme of John’s writings.

It was also a theme of his own life. John’s record of the last supper (John 13:1-23) began with a declaration of love: “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (v. 1). Though one of Jesus’s own disciples had already started the betrayal process, Jesus got up from supper and took on the role of a servant, washing the feet of His followers. He washed the feet of them all, even the betrayer. Jesus then reclined to explain what He had done, and John revealed that the disciple whom Jesus loved was sitting close to Jesus (v. 23). That was John himself: close to Jesus, describing himself as someone beloved by the Lord.

It’s not surprising, then, that John chose to include the story of Peter’s restoration (John 21:15-19), again focusing on the love of Christ. We find ourselves and our faith in His love.

**What kind of personal statement can you make about yourself that is centered in the love of Jesus?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

**John 21:1-19**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**John 21:15-19**

## NOTES

Sometimes we just need to hear something more than once. If you are married, you've heard your spouse say, "I love you," over and over and over again. Your kids want to hear you say, "I'm right here," when the lights are out and they're frightened by a bad dream. And hopefully our friends don't mind when we ask, "How can I pray for you?" Some things are best when repeated.

But that's not the attitude Peter had when Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" We know enough about Peter to see his persona: he was a leader, he was the bold one, and he was the speak-first-think-about-it-later type. So he probably wasn't digging the introspection that Jesus was pressing.

I'm sure most of us would be just as frustrated or "grieved" (v. 17) that Jesus kept asking, particularly since Jesus knew the answer. But let's step back for just a second. We see what Peter couldn't: Jesus was getting ready to reveal how Peter would die, should he choose the life of faith.

Only love for Christ would compel a mortal man to willingly step into death.

**When has bold faith because of love for Christ led to persecution or trials in your life?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“We offer Christ the submission of our hearts, and the obedience of our lives; and He offers us His abiding presence. We take Him as our Master; and He takes us as His friends.”<sup>2</sup>

—Hugh Black (1868–1953)

### **POINT 1: The risen Messiah reveals Himself** (John 21:1-6).

Jesus will choose to reveal Himself anytime and anywhere—He shows up in His timing when needed.

- ?** What are some reasons we might struggle to recognize the presence or work of Jesus in our lives?

Sometimes Jesus’s instructions may seem unrealistic, but anything is possible when we submit to His will.

- ?** When has Jesus led you to do something odd or contrary to a societal norm and how did you respond?

### **POINT 2: The risen Messiah enjoys relationship** (John 21:7-14).

Whatever our state or circumstances, the appropriate response to Jesus’s presence is to come to Him.

- ?** How do you respond when you experience Jesus’s presence in any given moment?

Jesus desires and invites us to fellowship with Himself and others.

- ?** What does it look like to enjoy fellowship with Jesus and others today?

### **POINT 3: The risen Messiah restores fellowship** (John 21:15-19).

Jesus desires to forgive us and restore fellowship with us when we’ve strayed so that we may be used for His glory.

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**What can we be doing to minister to other believers, whether or not we're called to full-time service?**

Our life of faith may lead to undesirable situations, but we can be certain that it will glorify Jesus.



From Day 5: **When has bold faith because of love for Christ led to persecution or trials in your life?**

## MY RESPONSE

Because Christ has restored our relationship with God, we seek to live as God's agents of reconciliation, pointing others to how they too can be made right with God through Jesus.

- **HEAD:** How has a regret from your past led you to live more fully in His path and plan today?
- **HEART:** How do you know that you love Jesus?
- **HANDS:** With whom can you enjoy a meal this week to enjoy fellowship in Christ?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"When you are restored by a person who knows what he is doing, you will be restored in such a way that no one knows that you ever were broken."<sup>3</sup>

—Tony Evans