



## SERMON STUDY

GUIDE

### Small Group Guide: John 21.1-17

#### Open with Prayer:

#### Sermon Summary:

After the resurrection, Jesus appears to seven disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, cooks them breakfast, and then turns to Peter for a conversation that had been hanging in the air since the night of the denials. Before Jesus says a single word, Jesus tends to Peter first (feeding him, sitting with him, caring for him). Then He asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" The sermon draws a sharp distinction between Peter's *denial* and Judas's *betrayal*, showing that what made Judas's failure permanent was not the sin itself but the absence of return (i.e. repentance). Finally, we were challenged to recognize that Jesus can call us away from our normal comforts to embrace something completely different.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Read John 21.9-17 together as a group. What details stand out to you in the scene that Jesus sets up before the conversation even begins? Why do you think John includes things like the charcoal fire and the breakfast?
2. Jesus calls Peter "*Simon, son of John*" rather than Peter throughout this exchange. What do you think it means that He addresses Peter by his birth name here? How does that land differently than if He had said "*Peter*," like He did when he called Mary by her name?
3. The charcoal fire in John 21.9 and John 18.18, where Peter warmed himself by the fire while denying Jesus, are very similar. Why do you think that detail matters? What does it tell us about what Jesus is doing in this moment?
4. Compare Peter in this passage with Judas in Matthew 27.3-5. Both men failed. Both felt the weight of what they had done. What made their responses different, and what does that difference reveal about the nature of restoration?
5. A quote from the sermon: "*Your failure only becomes your identity when you walk away before the restoration scene.*" Is there an area of your life where you have let a past failure write the final word on your calling or your worth? What would it look like to stay in the story instead?
6. Jesus called Peter using fishing language in Matthew 4.19, but now He uses shepherd language in John 21.15-17. Think about your own life. Has the way

Jesus has been calling or shaping you changed over time? How does that sit with you?

7. The sermon ended with a question for the church collectively: *Are we willing to leave the nets on the shore when Jesus calls us to something new?* What does that look like practically for our church, not just an individual?

### **Key Takeaways:**

- You cannot give away what you have never received. Before Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep, He fed Peter. Being shepherded comes before shepherding others.
- Denial is not betrayal. What made Judas's label permanent was not the sin but the absence of return. The difference between a label and a testimony is whether you stay in the story long enough for God to respond.
- Jesus does not call you to do what you already know how to do. He calls you to become someone you have never been, and He has usually been building that person in you all along.
- Agreement is not truth, and volume is not authority. The label that has followed you is not the final word. The question is whose label you will choose to live under.

### **This Week:**

This week, take 15 to 20 minutes alone with a journal or a piece of paper. Write down two things honestly.

- **First**, write down the label you have been carrying that Jesus never signed off on. Name it specifically. Then write out Luke 22.31-32 by hand and sit with the fact that Jesus interceded for Peter before Peter ever fell, and He is doing the same for you.
- **Second**, write down one *quality, instinct, or habit* in yourself that you have always just thought of as "*who you are,*" and ask God in prayer whether He has been shaping that into something He wants to redirect for His purposes.

Bring what you wrote to share with your group next week if you feel comfortable doing so.