

The God of Second Chances: Do You Love Me?

John 21:15–17

Your failure does not have the final word. Jesus specializes in restoring broken people and recommissioning them for His purposes.

Peter's Failure

Peter was the disciple who:

- Got out of the boat and walked on water.
- Drew a sword to defend Jesus.
- Boldly declared he would never deny Christ.

Yet in a moment of fear, Peter denied Jesus three times. What made the failure so devastating was the gap between who Peter thought he was and what he actually did.

Guilt says: "I *did* something wrong."

Shame says: "I *am* something wrong."

Jesus Pursues the Broken

After the resurrection, Jesus specifically sought out Peter.

At the empty tomb, the angel instructed the women:

"Go, tell his disciples and Peter..." (Mark 16:7)

Jesus intentionally met Peter on the shore, beside a charcoal fire—the same kind of fire that would have reminded Peter of the night he denied Christ. Jesus didn't avoid Peter's painful memory; He walked right into it in order to heal it.

Jesus built the fire.

Jesus prepared the breakfast.

Jesus initiated the restoration.

Restoration and Recommissioning

Three times Peter denied Jesus.

Three times Jesus asked:

"Do you love Me?" (John 21:15–17)

And after each answer, Jesus responded:

- Feed My lambs.
- Tend My sheep.
- Feed My sheep.

Jesus wasn't simply forgiving Peter; He was restoring him and sending him back into ministry.

Restoration is more than forgiveness.

It is recommissioning. Jesus doesn't just wipe the slate clean. He invites us back into His work.

Love Is the Foundation

Jesus did not ask:

- "Will you do better?"
- "Can I trust you now?"
- "What's your plan moving forward?"

He asked: "Do you love Me?"

Why? Because:

- Performance fails.
- Confidence collapses.
- Love endures.

Obedience flows from love—not the other way around.

Four Takeaways

1. Your failure does not have the final word.

Peter's denial was real, but it wasn't the end of his story. It doesn't have to be the end of yours either.

2. Shame is a liar.

Shame says you're disqualified. The Gospel says Jesus has already dealt with your disqualification.

3. Restoration is recommissioning.

God doesn't simply forgive you and put you on the bench. He restores you and calls you forward.

4. Love is the foundation.

Not perfection. Not performance. Not a flawless track record.

Just "Do you love Me?"

This Week's Challenge

Spend some quiet time with Jesus and bring Him:

- The failure.
- The shame.
- The regret.
- The thing you've convinced yourself disqualifies you.

Then honestly answer the question: **"Do you love Me?"**

Remember:

"Nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

Jesus built the fire.

Jesus prepared the meal.

Jesus asked the question.

All Peter had to do was show up and answer honestly.

Bottom Line:

God is not looking for perfection. He's looking for a genuine heart that loves Him and is willing to follow Him one step at a time.