

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

“Questions Jesus Asked: Do You Love Me?” - John 21:15-19

Sermon Summary:

This sermon explores Jesus's question to Peter in John 21—"Do you love me?"—as a framework for understanding biblical restoration. Unlike dictionary restoration that returns something to its former condition, biblical restoration transforms the broken into something brand new. The message emphasizes that restoration involves both pain and purpose: the pain of genuinely grieving our sin before God and the purpose of being called into God's mission. Peter's restoration after denying Jesus three times demonstrates that our failures aren't final when we encounter Christ's restorative grace.

Key Points:

- Biblical restoration differs from dictionary restoration: God makes broken things **brand** new, not **like** new
- The process of restoration is painful and requires genuine grief over sin
- Peter was grieved when Jesus asked him three times "Do you love me?" reminding him of his three denials
- Jesus used specific reminders to help Peter confront his failure
- Confession should go deeper than surface-level acknowledgment to address the sin beneath the sin
- The process of restoration is purposeful—God calls us into mission despite our failures
- Peter's next step was preaching to thousands, demonstrating that failure isn't final
- Baptism is the next step of obedience for those who have trusted Christ
- Baptism is an outward sign of inward change, a public declaration within the church community

Scripture Reference:

- John 21:15-22 (primary focus on Jesus's interaction with Peter)
- References to Peter's denial in Matthew, Mark, and Luke
- Psalm 51 (David's grief over sin)
- Luke 7 (woman grieving)
- Acts (Peter's sermon after restoration)

Stories:

- Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel and its 15-year restoration process after 400 years of accumulated dirt and grime
- The concept of furniture and car restoration as metaphors for understanding restoration
- Peter warming himself by a charcoal fire when he denied Jesus, and Jesus cooking fish over a charcoal fire during their restoration conversation
- The pastor's early marriage experience of offering insincere apologies to his wife
- Historical account of Peter's death by upside-down crucifixion and his wife's death by crucifixion
- The illustration of children asking "What are they going to do?" when given chores, paralleling Peter asking about John's fate

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening question:

1. Think of something you've seen restored (a car, a piece of furniture, a building, etc.). In what specific ways was it different from simply being "cleaned up" or "repaired," and how might that help you distinguish between being made "like new" (dictionary restoration) and being made "brand new" (biblical restoration) in Christ? (Compare 2 Corinthians 5:17)

I. The Process of Restoration is Painful

2. John 21:17 – The text says Peter was "grieved" when Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" Given that grief here is tied to conviction over sin, how does this kind of grief differ from mere regret or self-pity? Use 2 Corinthians 7:9–11 to identify at least two marks of godly grief versus worldly grief.

3. Psalm 51:1–4 – David confesses, "Against you, you only, have I sinned." In what *precise* way is David's perspective similar to what Peter is experiencing in John 21:15–17, and how does that perspective intensify the pain of restoration while also directing it toward God rather than other people? (See also Luke 15:17–21)

4. Luke 18:9–14 – Compare the tax collector's prayer ("God, be merciful to me, a sinner!") with a vague confession like "Lord, forgive me for my sins." Identify two concrete differences between specific, heart-level confession and general, "flyby" confession, and explain why only the former aligns with true restoration.

II. The Process of Restoration is Purposeful

5. John 21:15–17 – Jesus responds to Peter's "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you" with three commands: "Feed my lambs," "Shepherd my sheep," and "Feed my sheep." What do these commands reveal about (a) how Jesus views Peter's future usefulness, and (b) how Jesus ties love for Him directly to service to others? Support your answer with 1 John 4:20–21.

6. Acts 2:14, 36–41 – Compare Peter's fearful denial in Luke 22:54–62 with his bold preaching at Pentecost. Identify two specific evidences in Acts 2 that Peter has moved from failure to purposeful mission, and explain how this change illustrates that "your failure isn't final" when Christ restores you.

7. John 21:20–22 – When Peter asks, “Lord, what about this man?” (referring to John), Jesus replies, “What is that to you? You follow me!” In what concrete ways does this response confront (a) comparison and (b) distraction from our own calling, and how should this shape the way you think about your “next step” of obedience? Use Hebrews 12:1–2 to support your answer.

III. Restored people take a next step of obedience (illustrated by baptism)

8. Acts 2:37–38, 41 – After Peter preaches, people are “cut to the heart” and ask, “What shall we do?” According to these verses, what is the clear, immediate next step for those who have repented and believed, and how does this support the idea that baptism is a first act of obedience rather than an optional extra?

9. Romans 6:3–4 – Paul describes baptism as being “baptized into Christ’s death” and being raised to “walk in newness of life.” Identify at least two specific truths about what baptism *symbolizes* (not causes), and explain why understanding this symbol matters for someone deciding whether they should be baptized. (Compare Colossians 2:12)

10. Matthew 28:18–20 – Jesus commands His disciples to “make disciples... baptizing them... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Based on this commission, what sequence do you see between (a) becoming a disciple, (b) being baptized, and (c) learning to obey, and how does that sequence challenge both delaying baptism and treating it as merely a tradition?

5 Day Devotional

Day 1 – Facing Jesus After Failure

Reading: John 21:15–17, Proverbs 28:13

Devotional: Peter has already denied Jesus three times, and now the risen Lord looks him in the eye and asks, “Do you love me?” three times. Jesus does not ignore Peter’s failure or move around it; He moves directly through it, revisiting the very wound that hurts most. But His goal is not to crush Peter—it is to restore him and re-commission him. God’s mercy is not for those who hide their sin, but for those who confess and forsake it. Real restoration begins when we stop concealing and start facing Jesus with what is true.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask the Lord, “What sin or failure am I currently trying to conceal or minimize before you?” Pray honestly through Proverbs 28:13, confessing that specific area and asking for both courage to forsake it and faith to receive His mercy.

Day 2 – Grief Over Sin vs. Vague Regret

Reading: John 21:17 , 2 Corinthians 7:9–11

Devotional: Peter is “grieved” when Jesus asks him the third time. This is not shallow embarrassment; it is deep sorrow that his actions have wounded the One he loves. Paul calls this “godly grief,” a sorrow that leads to repentance, earnestness, and a desire to make things right. Worldly grief stops at self-pity and shame; godly grief moves us toward God with repentance and hope. When the Spirit brings you into grief over your sin, it’s not to trap you in condemnation but to lead you into restoration.

Reflection: Read 2 Corinthians 7:10 slowly. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you whether your sorrow over sin tends to be “worldly” (self-focused, stuck, vague) or “godly” (repentant, earnest, specific). Pray: “Lord, give me godly grief that leads to true repentance and life, not worldly grief that leads to death.”

Day 3 – Restoration With a Purpose

Reading: John 21:15–17 , Ephesians 2:8–10

Devotional: Every time Peter affirms his love, Jesus responds with a task: feed and shepherd My people. This shows that restoration is never just about feeling forgiven; it is about being re-sent into God’s purposes. In Christ, we are not only saved by grace; we are also “created in Christ Jesus for good works... that we should walk in them.” Your failures do not disqualify you from serving God; in His hands, they can actually deepen your ministry to others. Restoration comes with responsibility and calling.

Reflection / Prayer: After reading Ephesians 2:10, ask: “Lord, in light of Your forgiveness, who are the ‘sheep’ around me that You are calling me to serve, encourage, or disciple?” Pray for one specific person and one concrete act of love or service you can do this week as an expression of your love for Jesus.

Day 4 – Following Jesus When It Costs You

Reading: John 21:18–19, Luke 9:23

Devotional: Jesus not only restores Peter; He tells him that faithful obedience will one day cost him his life. Then He simply says, “Follow me.” Genuine restoration doesn’t lead us into an easier, more comfortable life; it leads us into deeper surrender and sometimes real sacrifice. Yet even Peter’s death is described as a way he will “glorify God.” When Jesus restores you, He doesn’t promise safety—He promises Himself, and He calls you to follow regardless of the cost.

Reflection / Prayer: Ask God, “Where am I resisting you because obedience feels costly, inconvenient, or risky?” Pray through Luke 9:23 and honestly offer your comfort, your plans, and your reputation to Him, saying, “Lord Jesus, help me to follow You, even when it leads where I would not choose.”

Day 5 – Stop Comparing, Start Obeying

Reading: John 21:20–22, Hebrews 12:1–2

Devotional: Even after being restored, Peter’s instinct is to look over at John and ask, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus gently but firmly rejects comparison: John’s path is not Peter’s concern. Each disciple has a race marked out for them by God. When we fix our eyes on others—how God is using them or what they’re spared from—we easily lose sight of our own calling. Jesus’ words, “You follow me,” call us back to a single focus: run **your** race, with your eyes on Him.

Reflection / Prayer: Read Hebrews 12:1–2 and picture a race track with your lane marked out by God. Ask, “Lord, where am I wasting energy comparing my story, calling, or timing to someone else’s?” Pray, “Jesus, help me to fix my eyes on You and to be faithful in **my** lane. Whatever You call others to, what is that to me? You have told me: ‘You follow Me.’”