

# Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Risen Christ • Week of May 22

## Introduction

How many times do we lose our keys? We disappoint ourselves because often it is simply a mindless mistake. Our mind is on something else, our thoughts are scattered and we're not focused on the task at hand. Maybe instead of putting our keys back in the designated 'key spot' we go for convenience and foolishly think we will remember. It is one thing to lose a key to our house or car. But losing keys is especially troubling when important keys are on the ring like office, church, store, worksite, or some other door we are responsible for—there are other people to think about. What to do? Stop. Take a deep breath. Think. (Pray!) Close your eyes and go back to the last place you had them. Where do you last remember seeing the key?

When something important is lost, we must go back to the last place we held it in our hands. Often when couples are on the brink of splitting up and come for counseling, our pastor says he asks: Tell me how you first fell in love? How did you meet? Where did you go on the first date? Go back to the early days of falling in love. Revisit the commitment you made to one another. What do you think happened? Strongly paralleled is our relationship we had with God in the beginning of time, in the Garden of Eden. God loved Adam. And Adam, the first man, loved God. There was a pure friendship with God enjoyed that each of us still longs for, a relationship built on trust, mutual honor and respect, compassion – and yes extravagance.

## Background

After the Fall, surely the overarching question in Adam's heart and mind was "Does He still love me?" Like Adam, after we sin in our heart against God, lose our innocence, betray our first love and scorn God's trust – we wonder: "Does God still love me? I need to know." In the New Testament, it is likely that Simon Peter felt the same pain. In a moment of weakness, the onset of Jesus' trial in the courtyard of Caiaphas the high priest, Peter denied three times that he even knew the Lord. How could this happen? Certainly, Peter was scared, caught off guard, uncertain of how things were unfolding. But denying his Lord! How could this have happened? The Lord knew ahead of time that Peter would deny him and told Peter —

"Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later." "But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you." Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me" (John 13:36-38).

Like Peter, we can all relate to the pain of denying our Lord in a moment of weakness. Earlier at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter was the one who boldly declared "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven" (Matthew 16:16-19).

Jesus gave Peter the 'keys of the Kingdom of Heaven' – he lost them. Now Peter would have to go back to the place he last had them. And Jesus was going to help him. In John, chapter twenty-one, Jesus asks Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Here they are, several of the disciples, having just had breakfast on the shore with the risen Lord. Peter and the others had been out fishing all night, caught nothing, when at dawn someone from the shore calls out 'to throw out their net on the right-hand side of the boat' – a catch of 153 large fish. John recognizes it's Jesus, tells Peter who immediately jumps in and swims to the shore where Jesus has 'fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread' (John 21:9).

## Reading the Text

### Read John 21:15-25

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

## In Closing

The Lord asks Peter three times – Do you love me? Peter did love Jesus and the Lord knew it. But the question was important for Peter to hear, three times. We can only imagine the pain that swelled up in Peter as he recalled the words he had boldly declared: “Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you” (Matthew 26:33); and in the other passage, when the Lord says, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.” Peter says: “Why can’t I come now, Lord? I am ready to die for you” (John 13:36b-37). Painful, yet, each time the Lord asked Peter: ‘Do you love me?’ Peter was being restored for the three times he denied Jesus. Jesus took Peter back. Peter ‘lost the keys’ around a charcoal fire in the courtyard of Caiaphas (John 18:13-18); Peter was now recovering the keys Jesus gave him around another charcoal fire by the Sea of Galilee near where the Lord first called him (see Matthew 4:18-20). God is good.

## ***Close in a Time of Prayer asking:***

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

## **One Year Bible Readings**

May 22: 2 Samuel 1:1-2:11, John 12:20-50, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 15:27-28

May 23: 2 Samuel 2:12-3:39, John 13:1-30, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 15:29-30

May 24: 2 Samuel 4:1-6:23, John 13:31-14:14, Psalm 119:17-32, Proverbs 15:31-32

May 25: 2 Samuel 7:1-8:18, John 14:15-31, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 15:33

May 26: 2 Samuel 9:1-11:27, John 15:1-27, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 16:1-3

May 27: 2 Samuel 12:1-31, John 16:1-33, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 16:4-5

May 28: 2 Samuel 13:1-39, John 17:1-26, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 16:6-7

# 40 DAYS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

Text: John 21:15-19

## PLAIN TRUTH:

We answer Jesus’ question by \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.