

Resurrection Power

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK ONE – APRIL 16

GONE FISHING

Resurrection
Power



READ: John 21:1-14

Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as you come to study. Pray: ***“What do You want to teach me/us in these moments?”***

Opening question:

“How have you followed the Spirit’s lead this past week?”

Bottom Line: Believe it or not, there were still a great deal of questions and confusion taking place in the days following the resurrection of Jesus. While the disciples were beginning to work through their faith and see Jesus as He had always been, their lingering, pregnant question was: “Now what?” Peter responded by going back to what he knew—to fishing, his former way of life. One morning, after fishing all night long, Jesus reminds Peter of his original call—by doing the miraculous, restoring, and calling him to be a fisher of people all over again.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with receiving resurrection power, there are some things we need to do (or not do):

DON’T GO BACK TO YOUR FORMER WAY OF LIFE (John 21:1-3)

While Simon Peter had been called to fish for men, he went back to his former way of life—fishing for fish on the Sea of Galilee. As we look at Peter, we remember he was the first to declare Jesus as the Christ. Jesus gave Simon the name Peter (meaning the “Rock”) after this declaration—saying that “on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of hell will not conquer it.” Peter had defended Jesus with a sword after swearing he would never desert Him. He’s the one who denied Jesus three times and retreated into the shadows of guilt and shame. He saw the empty tomb and believed—but here Peter is, days after seeing the risen and living Jesus, fishing all night and catching nothing. He has gone back to his former way of life.

Peter’s a reminder that, without Jesus, going back to what you know—and doing what you always did—will produce the same results. He was no further ahead than if he’d never followed Jesus in the first place—or was he?

- Can you recall a time when you allowed a circumstance or a situation to drive you back to your former way of life (before you met and followed Jesus)?
- What makes it easy for us to do so? And why is it so important we be on our guard to make sure we don’t?

REMEMBER JESUS IS WHO HE SAID HE IS (John 21:4-7)

As dawn breaks following a fruitless night of fishing, Jesus saw Peter and his friends in their boats from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus finds out they haven't caught any fish, He tells them to let down their nets on the right side of the boat. A similar experience is recorded in chapter 5 of Luke's Gospel where Peter and Andrew caught so many fish they almost swamped their boat and had to call James and John to come and help them. This scene must've been running through Peter's mind as he lets down his nets and experiences a massive catch. As this happens, John recognizes Jesus—and Peter jumps into the water and begins to swim toward Jesus. This is a reminder to those of us who sometimes lose sight of who we are in Christ and drift back to our former way of life—Jesus will find ways to remind you of who He is and what He can do.

- Can you recall a time when Jesus reminded you of who He is and what He can do?
- What happened? And how did you respond?
- Do you think we're open to allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives in a way that He reminds us in an ongoing way of who Jesus is and what He's done and wants to do in our lives?
- What needs to happen for this to take place?

JESUS IS SAVIOR OF ALL (John 21:8-11)

When Andrew, James, and John get to shore, Jesus had the coals of a fire ready to cook some fish. He asks them to bring some of the fish they caught. Simon dragged the net to shore—and when they counted the fish, there were 153 large fish and the net wasn't torn. This was a nod to the parable of the net—speaking to the way the kingdom would catch all kinds of people. The early Church Father, Jerome, in his Commentary on Ezekiel propounded the hypothesis that 153 was meant to represent the whole universe of fish—citing as proof that contemporary poets believed there were 153 species of fish in the world. Since Peter had now symbolically caught the total number of species of fish in the world in his former life, this is a reference to fishing for all kinds of people for the Kingdom in his new life. Jesus reminds Peter (and us) He's not only our Savior, but He's also the Savior for all people.

- Do you think we live our lives, as Christ's disciples, in a way that reflects we believe Jesus came to be the Savior of all people?
- In what ways does our discipleship reflect that we indeed do?
- In what ways do we fail to do this?

BE STILL AND KNOW THE LORD IS GOD (John 21:12, 13)

Jesus invites the disciples to have breakfast. No one dared ask who He was—they KNEW. They recognized Him as He took the bread and gave it to them. The last time he'd been at a table with them was the Last Supper. We see Jesus do something similar with Cleopas and his companion at the end of the first Resurrection Day when they invite the One who walked along the road with them to offer the blessing and break the bread. Imagine how they felt when they saw Him serving them again.

Meals are sacramental in nature for us. When we break the bread and spend the time enjoying the meal and the company, we're reminded of the presence of God with us. So, the next time you sit down at a table to share a meal, remember the risen and living Jesus is there—just like He was at the Last Supper—just like He was with the pilgrims to Emmaus—and just as He was with Simon, Andrew, James, and John. We're called to slow down and know that Jesus is Lord.

- Do you think we take the time to slow down in our lives to simply be still and give God the opportunity to speak to us through His Holy Spirit?
- What are some of the obstacles that keep us from doing so?
- What changes need to take place in your life for this to happen?

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO JESUS—HE'LL OFTEN REPEAT THE MESSAGE UNTIL WE RECEIVE IT (John 21:14)

This passage was the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection. He first appeared to the disciples in the upper room—and a week later to Thomas—and now to Simon, Andrew, James, and John. As we look to Jesus, we find He's both patient and persistent and will continue to interrupt your life until you get the message. He wants you to get it.

- Can you recall a time when Jesus interrupted your life in order to get your attention?
- What are some ways He has done that? How did you respond?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you concerning living out resurrection power?
- What next steps do you need to take in order to live your life in resurrection power?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help you?

WEEK TWO – APRIL 23

IDENTITY RESTORED



READ: John 21:15-22

Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as you come to study. Pray: ***“What do You want to teach me/us in these moments?”***

Opening question:

“How have you followed the Spirit’s lead this past week?”

Bottom Line: The resurrection of Jesus acknowledges Jesus not only *wants* what’s best for us, but He *knows* what’s best for us. We see this as Jesus both confronts and reinstates Peter as a disciple. While this conversation would have been difficult to experience, it was necessary and best for Peter. This represented a pivotal moment for Peter—setting him on a trajectory of faithfulness that changed history. *That* is the power of the resurrection.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with resurrection power, it’s necessary for us to understand the importance of:

BEING FORGIVEN AND RESTORED FROM PAST MISTAKES (John 21:15-17)

Here we find a powerful exchange in which the risen and living Jesus restores the man who denied Him three times. Jesus restores Peter from his former way of life (as Simon) to the life to which he’s been called and redeemed to live (as Peter). Jesus wasn’t asking Peter, *“Do you love me?”* because He didn’t know the answer. Peter was correct in saying, *“Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You”* (John 21:17). Jesus had this exchange to have Peter confront his sins—which had to be addressed and removed before Peter could be commissioned to tend to the Lord’s sheep. Jesus invites us to correct our pasts with Him. Nothing is beyond His capacity to forgive and restore.

- Can you recall a time when you ever misstepped, misspoke, or made a mistake—and then prayed for forgiveness and experienced restoration from Jesus?

BEING FAITHFUL IN THE FUTURE (John 21:18-19a—ending at *“...would glorify God.”*)

Jesus assures Peter He’s not done with him. Peter’s restoration is complete. Jesus never calls him Simon again, but He gives him a glimpse of what’s coming. We’re not sure Peter understood the significance of what Jesus was saying and how this prophecy would become a reality when Peter was bound and crucified upside down in the middle of the Roman Circus by the Emperor Nero. The Lord doesn’t tell us every step we’ll be asked to take in obedience to Him—but He does give us just enough to take the next, right step. And in doing so, Jesus prepares us to be faithful in the future. The Apostle Paul tells us we need to *“walk by faith and not by sight.”*

- What does it mean to you to walk by faith and not by sight?

- What do you sense the next right step is that you need to take for Jesus?

REMEMBERING—WE'RE STILL CALLED TO FOLLOW HIM (John 21:19b—beginning with "Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'")

The first time Jesus asked Simon to follow Him was while Simon was washing his nets along the sea—and Simon Peter followed Jesus for the next three years—walking on water, going up on the Mount of Transfiguration, traveling along dusty roads, and stretching his understanding of God's grace—to wait and pray in the garden. After his restoration, Jesus asks Peter to follow Him all over again. And Peter did—back to the Upper Room to wait and pray for the gift of the Spirit, preaching at Pentecost, and eventually dying a martyr's death on a cross. We're reminded no matter what we've done to disappoint Jesus, He'll forgive and restore us if we're willing—and He still calls us to follow Him right now.

- What needs to happen in order for you to experience God's forgiveness and live out His call on your life?

STOP COMPLAINING AND COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS (John 21:20-23)

In this great scene, Peter's just been restored after denying Jesus three times. As he looks around, Peter asks "What about John? What's going to happen to him? What about the times he's let you down? Why are you just talking with me—what about him?" Jesus basically responds, "What is that to you, Peter? Mind your own business!" We're to be concerned with being faithful to Jesus with what we have—to be faithful to live into the power of the resurrection in our own life—to be diligent in keeping short accounts when it comes to confessing sin and being forgiven by Jesus. To quote those in the recovery community, "Clean up your own side of the street—and let Jesus deal with those who are on the other side." Resurrection power enables us to prioritize our personal faithfulness and calling and trust Jesus with others' faithfulness and calling.

- Do you find it easy to fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others when it comes to shortcomings or what God's doing in their lives?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you concerning your identity in Jesus and living out His resurrection power?
- What next steps do you need to take in order to follow through with His leading?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help you?

WEEK THREE – APRIL 30

WAIT FOR IT...THEN GO!



READ: Acts 3:11-26

Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as you come to study. Pray: ***"What do You want to teach me/us in these moments?"***

Opening question:

"How have you followed the Spirit's lead this past week?"

Bottom Line: After Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to "Go and make disciples"—and before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus was telling them He was leaving in order for the Holy Spirit to come. Jesus—who was limited by His body, time, and space—was leaving so the Spirit of Jesus could be everywhere and in everyone who believed—giving them the POWER to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples.

They spilled out of the upper room into the streets of Jerusalem—which were crowded with Pentecost Festival pilgrims from all over the Roman world. All those gathered heard the disciples speaking about Jesus in their native languages. At first, the crowd thought the disciples were drunk at midday, but Peter calmed the crowd and preached the first sermon of the Christian Church. The result was 3,000 people were saved, filled with the Spirit, baptized, and started the process of being discipled.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with receiving resurrection power, there are some things we need to do:

WAIT AND PRAY FOR THE SPIRIT TO FILL YOU (Acts 2:1-4)

Peter and the rest of the disciples went back into Jerusalem and waited and prayed because Jesus had told them not to leave until they received the Holy Spirit. They were together in one place—asking, seeking, and knocking for what had been promised to them. As we think about their prayers, we can only imagine they included confession of sin—personal, corporate, and public. Ten days later, the Spirit fell, they were filled, and the world was changed. Each of us needs to do the same—wait and pray and earnestly seek the Holy Spirit. When we want nothing more than all God wants for us—the Spirit will come. And when the Spirit comes, we need to be prepared to move.

- What does it mean to you to wait, pray, and earnestly seek the Holy Spirit?
- How open do you think we are to allowing the Holy Spirit to truly fill us?
- How willing do you think we are to move—following the Spirit's lead?

BE READY TO SHARE WHAT GOD'S DOING WITH EVERYONE (Acts 2:5-12)

The setting was amazing. Jerusalem was packed with Jewish pilgrims—many of whom had made their once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts or festivals. They came from all over the Roman world—which means they would be headed home within the next 7 to 10 days. Many of them were hearing and responding to the Gospel—the offer of relationship with God by trusting in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—for the very first time in their own, native language. How could this happen? Only through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The original disciples—filled with the Holy Spirit—shared the Gospel with everyone!

- How open do you think we are to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and the relationship He offers with God through trusting in Him?
- How would you share the message with someone who's never heard it?

BE PREPARED FOR PEOPLE TO MISUNDERSTAND (Acts 2:13)

The scene must also have been chaotic—and the demeanor of the disciples made it seem as though they were drunk. The Holy Spirit may in fact cause us to do unexpected things those around us may not understand—like witness boldly in another language—answer a call to missions or ministry—speak a word of wisdom into a situation only the Spirit could have revealed—cause us to leave one way of life for another. Whatever the case, there'll be those who simply don't understand—and not everyone will understand.

- Have you ever been called or led by the Holy Spirit to do something a family member, friend, co-worker or another person didn't understand?
- How might this hinder us in moving forward at the Spirit's prompting?

ACT IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT (Acts 2:14 through the end of the chapter)

Peter stepped out of the shadows—fully restored by Jesus and ready to live into his role as “the rock.” He spoke with wisdom, clarity, and authority. He explained this is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and then began to preach the first sermon of the Christian church. When the crowd was convicted by their part in the crucifixion of Jesus, they cried out, “What must we do to be saved?!?!” Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord will call!”* (Acts 2:38,39) and 3,000 were saved and added to the church that day!

Peter would never have become all he became if Jesus had not risen, encountered him on the beach, restored him in relationship, commissioned him to follow Jesus, and then FILLED HIM!

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you concerning living out resurrection power?
- Are there areas in your life where you need to be restored in your relationship with Jesus?
- What might Jesus be commissioning you to do?
- What next steps do you need to take in order to follow the Spirit's lead in living out that commissioning?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help you?