



SONGS: "We Praise You", "All That I'm After", "Graves into Gardens"

TITLE: "Falling UP"

ICE BREAKER: When was a time you repaired or restored something of value?
(Or had it repaired or restored by someone else?)

BIG IDEA: When we fall, we have a choice to fall "down" or fall "up". Jesus redeems our failures.

MAIN SCRIPTURE: John 21:15-25

Jesus Reinstates Peter

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" ²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." ²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" ²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. ²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

OPENING THOUGHTS:

Judas and Peter both "fell". They both denied Jesus. Judas fell down. Peter fell "up". In this scripture Jesus comes to lovingly restore Peter's failure and we learn some very valuable lessons. In life we will all fall down. "Falling" can represent sin, disappointments, pain, betrayals, losses, tragedies. All of these can be occasions to "fall up". Our falls create these in-between times - between our failure and our future, between our fears and our faith, between our feelings and our commitments. Jesus loves us when we fall and wants to use our failures to move us UP in life.

MAIN POINTS IN TEACHING:

We can "fall up" by...

1. Receiving Jesus' unfailing personal and powerful love. (21:12)
2. Asking Jesus - What do you want to teach me from this? (21:15)
3. Hearing Jesus' call to the mission he still has for us. (21:15-17)
4. Refusing comparison with other people's stories. (21:21)
5. Recommitting ourselves to simply, "Follow Jesus", no matter what. (21:22)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How many times did Jesus ask Peter - "Do you love me?". Why do you think Jesus did it this way? (Hint: Mark 14:72)
2. Read Matthew 4:19. This was the first thing Jesus said to Peter. Read John 21:22. These are the last two words Jesus says personally to Peter. What is the simple invitation and command that Jesus gives to every person?
3. Jesus asks Peter the same question 3 times and it is the most important question we can ask ourselves daily - Do YOU love Jesus? How would your life changed if that became the guiding question for everyday?
4. Have you allowed any of your failures (sins, pains, disappointments) to hold you back from God's call on your life?
5. Has comparison with others ever held you back from God's call on your life?

FURTHER STUDY (IF APPLICABLE)

CHALLENGE: Every time you fall down, determine that you will receive God's love and grace; then recommit yourself to God's good plan for your life. This is "falling UP". Determine to live daily in the freedom of "Jesus loves me, this I know"!

CLOSING PRAYER:

Jesus thank you that you love me so much and that when I fall down your love for me does not go down. Thank you that come to me in my failures and invite me to be with you. Forgive me for my sins. Restore me from my failures. Teach me from my pain, whether it is inflicted by bad decisions on my part or inflicted by the choices of others. Forgive me when I compare my life's journey to others. Thank you for your plan for my life and for your desire to use me on your mission. I recommit myself to simply follow you until I see you face to face. In Jesus name. Amen