



LETTER FROM THE PASTOR



ENCOUNTERING JESUS

A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

We now come to the climactic conclusion to the book of John. In this section, Jesus is betrayed by his friend with a kiss. He is falsely accused, brutally tortured and crucified on a criminal's cross. Jesus' ministry seems to come to a tragic end, but then three days later, Jesus defeats death and walks out of his tomb alive. What happens after Jesus' resurrection sets the tone for your life and for our life together as a church. As a risen Savior, Jesus intentionally seeks out his fearful and fallen followers to restore them to himself and to invite them back into a life of helping people find life in him.

The cross and the empty tomb are the crux of the Christian faith. They lay the foundation for our reconciliation with God, and they give us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

In this final leg of our journey through John, we are going to slowly study the suffering, crucifixion and victorious resurrection of Jesus. We recognize that this section of John is very familiar. So our prayer is that God's Spirit would work to give you fresh encounters with Jesus.

Remember, there is always more to see in what you see.

Every blessing,
Pastor Charlie for the Preaching Team



SMALL GROUPS AT FAITH



WHAT IS A SMALL GROUP?

Small groups at Faith are small gatherings of people from Faith that meet regularly for friendship, Bible study and prayer.

Each small group is unique because it is shaped by the people who attend. However, at the heart of each small group is a desire to see tight-knit community form that is marked by a growing love for Jesus and for the other people in the small group.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN A SMALL GROUP?

We are made for friendship with God and others. When we are not known and loved by others, we suffer because we are not experiencing all that God created us to experience. Additionally, life is too difficult to journey alone. Therefore, small groups are a place where we can connect in friendship with other people through the ups and downs of life.

HOW DO I GET CONNECTED TO A SMALL GROUP?

The easiest way to get connected to a small group is to click on “Small Groups” in the Faith app or go to faithchurchfortcollins.org/smallgroups. You can also sign up on Sunday by filling out the Connect Card or stopping by the Connection Center. Finally, if you would like to join a small group, you can call the church at **970-226-2095**.

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WEEK ONE

THE ARREST OF JESUS

Title: The Arrest of Jesus

Main Passage: John 18:1-14

Overview: These verses begin John's account of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. In these verses Jesus is betrayed by Judas with a kiss and arrested by a band of soldiers and religious leaders. He is then taken to the high priest where he is falsely accused of blasphemy and scornfully mocked.

It is important to notice that Jesus is clearly in control. We see his control when he overwhelms his captors with his presence (v.6), restrains his disciples from violence (v.11), and willingly subjects himself to the Jewish authorities who want to kill him (v.8). These moments help us to see that Jesus is fully surrendered to his Father. He isn't reluctantly heading to the cross. Jesus has embraced his Father's plan, and in obedience to the Father, Jesus is prepared to drink the cup of God's wrath so that we might experience God's blessing.

What Jesus does in John 18:1 - 14 is a clear fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7. ***He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.***

In other words, Jesus makes no attempt to flee. He does not allow his disciples to fight and although he has the power to overthrow his captors, he restrains his power and allows himself to be bound and led to the cross. Seeing this should bring us to a place of worship.

There is also a huge warning for us in this passage. Judas and the religious leaders help us to see that religious knowledge and religious practice don't save anyone. We may have close access to Jesus because we spend time with his followers, and we may have true doctrine because we have studied the Scriptures, but our hearts can still be rotten. Because of this, the right response to this passage is both worship and repentance.

OPENING QUESTION

- What are different ways that people respond to injustice?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 18:1 - 14. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think the disciples feel as they see Jesus willingly surrendering himself to his captors?
- How does Jesus respond to the injustice he is facing? What does this reveal about him?
- How does this passage reveal that Jesus is clearly in control of his arrest?
- How does this passage reveal Jesus' concern for his disciples?
- How does this passage fulfill Isaiah 53:7?
- What is the cup that the Father gave Jesus to drink?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Jesus willingly surrendered himself to his Father's plan. How is this an encouragement to you?
- Jesus was concerned for his disciples' safety. How is this an encouragement to you?
- Judas spent time with Jesus, and the Pharisees knew the Old Testament promises about Jesus, and yet they had Jesus arrested and crucified. How is this a warning to you?
- What does Jesus do in this passage that inspires you to love, trust and worship him?
- Is there some plan for your life that God the Father is asking you to willingly embrace? What is it? How can your small group support you?

NOTES & PRAYER



WEEK TWO

PETER'S DENIAL

Title: Peter's Denial

Main Passage: John 18:15-27

Overview: In this section of John's account of Jesus' suffering, two things stand out. First, we see the amazing bravery of Jesus. He is taken in the middle of the night to the high priest and questioned about his teaching. After saying that he said nothing in secret, Jesus is slapped in the face, mocked and sent off for another degrading examination before Caiaphas. In all of this, Jesus stands brave and consistent.

In juxtaposition to Jesus is Peter. In this section of John, Peter is cowardly and inconsistent. He hides in the darkness and lingers outside the high priest's house instead of being inside for Jesus' trial. Additionally, Peter gives into fear and denies Jesus three times.

The fall of Peter and the bravery of Jesus are meant to be read together. They reveal that Jesus is saving Peter by living the life he was meant to live. Jesus was brave to save his cowardly disciple. Peter felt shame after he failed, but he did rise again after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus did not leave him to reap the consequence of his sin. The same hand that reached out to Peter when he was sinking in the sea was also stretching out to him when he fell by denying he knew Jesus.

Peter's weakness also helps us to see our own weakness and our own need for Jesus. Like Peter, we need a strong, courageous Savior who will live the life we were meant to live and who will reach out to us when we fail.

OPENING QUESTION

- What things do people fear?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 18:15-27. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Peter feels as he stands outside? What do you think Jesus feels as he stands inside?
- What similarities and differences do you see between Jesus and Peter?
- What do these verses reveal about Jesus?
- What do these verses reveal about Peter?
- Why do you think Peter denied Jesus?
- How do you think Jesus felt after his first trial before the high priest?
- Read Matthew 14:22 - 33. How is this moment in Peter's life a metaphor for his entire life with Jesus? What does Matthew 14:22 - 33 reveal about our life with Jesus?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What motivates your desire to hide your relationship with Jesus from other people?
- When fear comes your way, what is your go-to coping mechanism?
- What courageous steps have you taken to stand with Jesus?
- Think of one way that you could take a courageous step to stand with Jesus. It could be engaging a friend at the gym or inviting a classmate to church or really anything that helps someone else experience Jesus. What step is Jesus asking you to take?
- Jesus endured things on our behalf. He lived the life we were meant to live. As you consider this part of Jesus' suffering, give thanks to Jesus for all that he endured on your behalf. Thank him for living the life you were meant to live and for being a Savior who reaches out to you in your weakness.

NOTES & PRAYER

WEEK THREE

JESUS AND PILATE



Title: Jesus and Pilate

Main Passage: John 18:28-40

Overview: In this section of John's account of Jesus' suffering, Jesus is brought before Pilate. John tells us very little about Pilate other than his role in the trial of Jesus. What we know clearly is that Pilate found no guilt in Jesus, yet he gave into the political and social pressure to torture and crucify a man he had declared to be without fault.

In this section, Jesus remains resolute in his purpose. He came to bear witness to truth, and his truth is establishing a new kingdom that is very different from the kingdoms of this world.

Had Pilate cared about truth, he and Jesus could have had a very interesting and lifechanging interaction, but sadly, Pilate cared about holding onto power and appeasing the will of the people. So Pilate handed an innocent man over to death on a cross.

Pilate is a reminder to seek and embrace truth regardless of what it costs.

OPENING QUESTION

- What do people do when they face an inconvenient truth?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 18:28-40. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Pilate feels as he interacts with Jesus? What do you think Jesus feels as he interacts with Pilate?
- What truth does Jesus reveal in this passage?
- How does Pilate respond to the truth that Jesus shares?
- What do you think keeps Pilate from responding to truth?
- Read Psalm 25:5 and Proverbs 2:4 - 5. What should be our attitude toward truth?
- Jesus says that his kingdom is not of this world. How is Jesus' kingdom different from the kingdoms of this world?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- In what ways do you identify with Pilate? When have you cared more about holding onto your power or social standing than about honoring Jesus?
- Talk about a time in your life when you were confronted by truth?
- In what ways are you tempted to cave into political or social pressure?
- What helps you to stay strong and consistent with your faith in Jesus?

NOTES & PRAYER

A sepia-toned photograph of a dirt road winding through a grassy field under a cloudy sky. The road starts in the foreground and curves into the distance. The field is covered in tall grass, and there are some trees on the right side. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

WEEK FOUR

JESUS AND THE CROWD

Title: Jesus and the Crowd

Main Passage: John 19:1-15

Overview: These verses capture the torture Jesus endured and the cruel crowd who cried out for his crucifixion.

In this passage Jesus is beaten, crowned with thorns, mocked, rejected and delivered up to a painful and humiliating death. To say that Jesus was treated shamefully is a massive understatement. He experienced horrific abuse that is painful to consider. And yet it is important to slow down and observe Jesus' suffering because he suffered for us. We are set free from sin, shame and condemnation because Jesus was condemned, humiliated and shamed.

In this passage, the crowd of people are cruel. They unceasingly demand Jesus' death. They see a man suffering and bleeding, and they cry out louder for more violence and blood. This captures the pinnacle of human depravity. This is the end of sin. This is what all of us must be set free from.

OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a moment when you were humiliated. What was that moment like and how did you feel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 19:1-15. What stands out to you from these verses?
- In what ways is Jesus mistreated in this passage?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Jesus feels as he is beaten and humiliated? What do you think Pilate, the crowd and the soldiers feel as they mistreat Jesus?
- It is important for our redemption that Jesus was treated as he was. What does this reveal about what sin does to us? How does sin condemn, torture and mock us?
- In John 18:38 - 40, Barabbas is released and Jesus is condemned to torture, humiliation and death. How is this a beautiful picture of the reality that Jesus was condemned so that we could be set free from sin?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Talk about a time in your life when you didn't want Jesus to be your King. What was that season of your life like? How did your sin in this season lead to shame, humiliation and condemnation?
- In what ways has Jesus set you free from shame, humiliation and condemnation?
- Reflect on this truth: Your identity must rest in what Jesus has done for you instead of what has been done by and to you. How can your small group help you to walk in the light of this truth instead of walking in the darkness of shame?
- What response do you have to the truth that Jesus dealt with your shame?
- Have you embraced the freedom from shame that Jesus gives you? If so, please share what this freedom has meant to you. If not, please share what keeps you from embracing this freedom.

NOTES & PRAYER

WEEK FIVE

JESUS AND THE CROSS



Title: Jesus and the Cross

Main Passage: John 19:16-42

Overview: We now come to perhaps the hardest section in the Bible to read. The death of Jesus is hard to look at, but it is too significant to ignore because of all that it accomplished.

So let's consider what took place that fateful day. After being wrongfully condemned by Pilate, Jesus was forcefully taken by Roman soldiers and painfully tortured. A rough purple cloak was placed on his bleeding back. Then the soldiers twisted a cruel crown of thorns and pressed it on his head. Next, they beat the thorns into his skull by hitting his head repeatedly with a wooden rod. Sadly, the torture didn't stop at that point. After all of this, they spat on him, mocked him, and then forced Jesus to carry his cross to the place of execution.

When they arrived at the place of execution, the soldiers stripped Jesus of his clothes. Then they stretched out his hands and feet on a rough piece of wood and drove massive spikes through his tender flesh. On the cross, Jesus' exposed body began to be burnt by the hot sun. Birds started to circle to feast on flesh, and the Son of God struggled to gather air into his lungs. The humiliation continued as people walked by and hurled insults at their Creator. And then the greatest pain of all: the Father turned his face away, and Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Crucifixion was a terrible way to die. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia describes death by crucifixion like this: "The wounds would swell about the rough nails, and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves would cause excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach would surcharge with blood and cause a terrific throbbing headache ... The suffering was so frightful that even among the raging passion of war pity

was sometimes excited.”¹

Perhaps the most staggering part of Jesus’ crucifixion is that it was planned by God the Father and embraced by God the Son. *It was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief.*² No one took Jesus’ life. He laid it down.³ Herod, Pilate, the soldiers and the Jews did to Jesus *whatever [God’s] hand and...plan had predestined to take place.*⁴

And what was the goal of this horrific suffering? Two things: Jesus’ glorification and our salvation. *For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.*⁵ *For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*⁶ *And now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*⁷

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|---|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> |
| 2 | Isaiah 53:10 |
| 3 | John 10:18 |
| 4 | Acts 4:28 |
| 5 | 1 Peter 3:18 |
| 6 | Hebrews 12:2 |
| 7 | John 13:31 |

OPENING QUESTION

- What evidence do you see in our world that things are not the way they should be?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 19:16-42. What stands out to you from these verses?
- In what ways does Jesus suffer in this passage?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Jesus feels as he is hanging on the cross? What do you think the various people feel as they watch Jesus suffer?
- When Jesus says, “It is finished,” what does he mean?
- Why is it imperative for our salvation that Jesus die?
- In what ways is God glorified through the death of Jesus?
- What glimpses do you see in this passage that even in great evil God is working?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What character in the story of Jesus' death do you most identify with? Why that character?
- Nicodemus was a Pharisee at the start of Jesus' ministry, and he was a follower of Jesus at the end. In what ways has Jesus' life and death changed you?
- Jesus died on the cross so that we could be saved from Satan, sin and death. In what ways do you need Jesus to save you?
- What have you personally learned about God from reflecting on Jesus' death on the cross?

NOTES & PRAYER

WEEK SIX

JESUS AND THE GRAVE

Title: Jesus and the Grave**Main Passage:** John 20:1-18

Overview: Jesus was dead. There was no doubt whatsoever about it. Everyone knew he was dead, from the centurion who oversaw the crucifixion to the people who placed Jesus' lifeless body in the tomb. The people who put Jesus to death may have had different opinions about him, but one thing was certain: they all agreed he was dead.

And yet in John 20 we read that when Mary came to anoint Jesus' body for burial, she found an empty tomb.

Mary responded to the empty tomb with concern, confusion and desperation.

This seems to be an honest response. After all, Mary expected a tomb filled with death, and yet she came face to face with something she didn't expect. God had been at work while she had been mourning. Good news was coming from the grave. Jesus was alive. After seeing Jesus, Mary raced back to the disciples and announced, "I have seen the Lord." This is the perfect response when you come face to face with the one thing that changes everything.

Jesus' resurrection does change everything. It gave the disciples courage to live and love like Jesus. It offered them hope for today and confidence for tomorrow. The resurrection of Jesus continues to change lives today. It assures us of Jesus' future work on our behalf. It empowers us for a life of obedience. It secures all the blessings he has promised us. And it means we can have hope and peace, regardless of what we face, because we know one day we will be united with him in a resurrection like his.¹

In short, the resurrection of Jesus changes everything for those who believe.

¹ Romans 6:5

OPENING QUESTION

- Growing up, what was Easter like for you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 20:1-18. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Mary felt as she was making her way to Jesus' tomb? What do you think Jesus felt when he saw Mary crying in the garden?
- What happens in this passage that is totally unexpected?
- What do you think Mary experiences when she hears Jesus say her name?
- In what ways is Mary changed when she experiences her risen Savior?
- Why is the resurrection of Jesus central to Christianity?
- The first person to experience Jesus' resurrection was someone who didn't have social standing. What does this reveal about the reliability of this story, and what does it reveal about God?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- When is the last time you were surprised by something that was completely unexpected?
- How has your life changed because of Jesus?
- In Romans 8:11, we are told that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in Jesus' followers. In what ways has Jesus' resurrection changed you? In what ways do you see the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead at work in your life?
- What would you like to see God supernaturally do in and through you in this next season of life?
- What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you?

NOTES & PRAYER

WEEK SEVEN

JESUS AND DOUBT



Title: Jesus and Doubt**Main Passage:** John 20:24-31

Overview: In these verses we see the story of Thomas' unbelief and Jesus' kindness to him.

Thomas wasn't there when Jesus revealed himself to the rest of the disciples, so Thomas didn't believe in the resurrection. As a matter of fact, Thomas went so far as to say that he would not believe unless Jesus personally revealed himself to him. In other words, Thomas needed more evidence. He had doubts.

Jesus didn't rebuke Thomas for his doubt. Instead, Jesus met Thomas in his doubt, and he gave Thomas the evidence that he needed to believe. Jesus allowed Thomas to touch his nail-scarred hands. This helps us see that Jesus isn't threatened by doubt. He isn't put off by our questions. He is a risen and living Savior who wants to reveal himself to us. The invitation from this passage is to take our doubts straight to Jesus and trust that he will give us what we need to overcome our doubt. After all, Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."¹

This was Thomas' story. He asked for more evidence, and Jesus gave him more of himself.

1 Matthew 7:7

OPENING QUESTION

- What doubts or questions do people today have about Jesus?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 20:24-31. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Thomas felt when he missed out on seeing Jesus? What do you think Thomas felt when Jesus revealed himself to him?
- What does this passage reveal about Jesus?
- What does this passage reveal about doubt?
- What does Thomas say about Jesus in verse 28? What does it mean that Jesus is Lord and God?
- What does John say about the purpose of his book in verses 30 - 31?

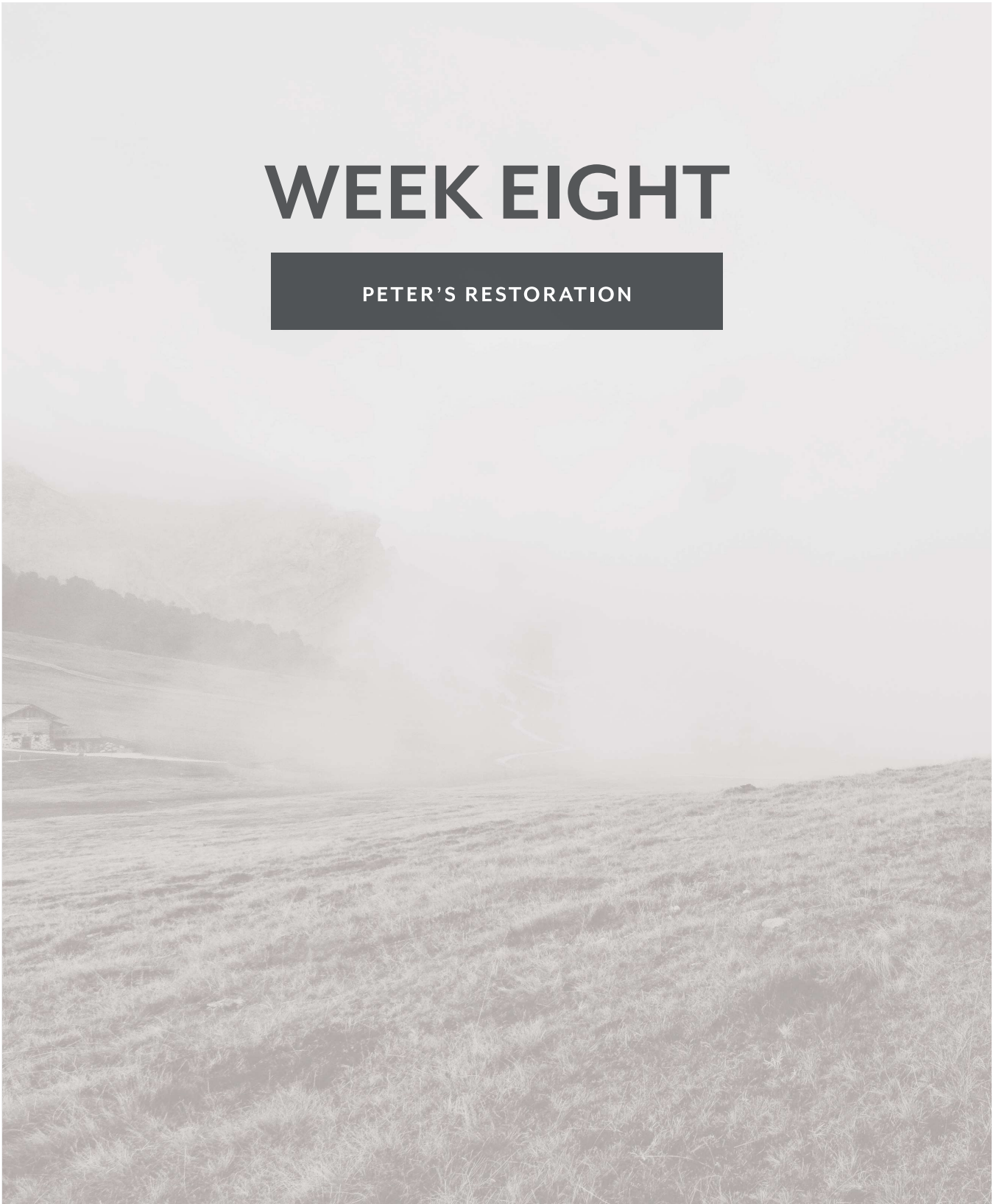
APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What doubts or objections do people have about Jesus' resurrection?
- How has this series through the book of John helped you to believe more fully in Jesus?
- What new things have you learned about Jesus from studying the book of John?
- Are there any doubts that you have about Jesus that keep you from believing in him?
- Is there someone in your life who has doubts about Jesus? How could God use you in that person's life to help them believe?

NOTES & PRAYER

WEEK EIGHT

PETER'S RESTORATION



Title: Peter's Restoration

Main Passage: John 21:1-25

Overview: For Peter, the joy of Jesus' resurrection was overshadowed by shame. After boldly proclaiming that he would never forsake Jesus, he denied knowing Jesus three times. Although Jesus met and forgave Peter, Peter didn't allow the forgiveness to sink into his soul. So instead of following the mission Jesus gave him to be a fisher of men, Peter went back to his old life of catching fish.

Eventually, Jesus drew Peter aside for a heart-to-heart talk over breakfast, and during this breakfast he restored Peter and called him back into the mission. John 21:1 - 25 is a beautiful picture of Jesus' restoring grace.

OPENING QUESTION

- Have you ever met anyone who couldn't move past a failure?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read John 21:1-25. What stands out to you from these verses?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the mood and the feeling of this passage? What do you think Peter felt when went back to the life he lived before Jesus? What do you think Peter felt when Jesus restored him to the mission of leading Jesus' people?
- What do these verses reveal about Jesus?
- How did Jesus choose to restore his relationship with Peter?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus' kindness to him?
- Peter went on to have a very fruitful life in service to Jesus. What do you think he learned in this moment with Jesus that led to such a fruitful ministry?
- What does this passage reveal about what Jesus wants to do after we fail?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- How can failure destroy a person from a life of fruitful ministry to others?
- What tends to hinder you from accepting and enjoying Jesus' grace?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced God's forgiveness in a meaningful way?
- What hope does this story offer to you?
- Who do you know who needs to hear about and experience the hope that is found in this passage?
- What could you do to share that hope with that person?
- How does experiencing the kindness, forgiveness and grace of Jesus impact the way you interact with other people?

NOTES & PRAYER

ADDITIONAL NOTES

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