

# WEEK 2: SERVICE RESOURCES

## THEME: JESUS RESTORES PETER

### MAIN READING: John 21.1-19

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.

He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

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."

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."

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. 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." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

## SECOND READING (if needed) REVELATION 5.11-14

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

## INVOCATION

Dear Loving God, We are deeply grateful for the boundless love you have showered upon us through Christ Jesus. We gather in your presence as your devoted servants, as a resurrection community, and as Easter people. We humbly invite your holy and transformative presence to be with us in this moment. Bless us, O God, that we may grow into the people you desire us to be, bringing honor, glory, and praise to your name and to the name of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. We ask this in His name, **Amen**

## PENITENCE

Almighty God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.

**People: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: Restore us, O God of our salvation, and show us your steadfast love.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God, who in Christ Jesus has given us a kingdom that cannot be shaken, pour out upon you the Spirit of truth and peace, that you may grow in grace and knowledge, and walk in the way of our Lord, now and always.

**People: Amen.**

## COLLECT

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:  
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life  
and fill us with your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Amen**

## INTERCESSIONS

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the many paths that lead to you. For those whose faith has always been strong, and for those who found their way after being lost, we are grateful.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

We remember and honor all who have fed your sheep and followed your command. Help us to be like them, even as you make us more perfectly ourselves.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Loving God, you continually draw near and challenge us, just as you did Peter. Help us to answer, "Do you love me?" not just with words, but by caring for one another. Make us and your whole church a light to the world.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Loving Father, hear our prayers for those who oppose you and your church. Bring them to a deep love for your Son, as you did Peter

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Tender and Merciful Savior, we lift up those in need of your healing and redeeming love. We pray for those whose faith is strong and for those who have found their way after being lost. We remember all who feed your sheep and follow your command. We ask for your guidance to care for one another and to be a light in the world.

**Amen**

## SENDING PRAYER

Go love and care for one another in the name of Christ Jesus  
and may the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer,  
be with you now and abide in you forevermore.

**Amen**

# WEEK 2: HYMNS AND SONGS

STF 20	Be still, for the presence of the Lord
STF 153	Break thou the bread of life
STF 250	Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
STF 313	Thine be the glory
STF 416	There's a wideness in God's mercy
STF 426	Hark my soul it is the Lord
STF 427	I'm accepted, I'm forgiven
STF 440	Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
STF 462	Come with me, come wander
STF 673	Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

# WEEK 2: REFLECTION

We stand in a crowd, the air thick with tension as voices rise, *"Crucify Him!"*

Peter is somewhere in that sea of faces, watching Jesus' trial unfold. Just days earlier, Peter had declared with bold confidence, *"Though they all fall away because of you, I shall never fall away"* (Matthew 26:33).

But now, fear grips his heart. When confronted, not once, not twice, but three times, Peter denies knowing Jesus.

And then—the rooster crows.

The sound must have pierced Peter's soul, a chilling reminder of Jesus' prediction.

Did he lower his head in shame? Did tears blur his vision as he followed the crowd to Golgotha, witnessing his beloved Teacher and friend endure unimaginable suffering?

Alongside the heartbreak of observing Jesus crucified, Peter bore the crushing weight of his betrayal. This was no ordinary failure; this was the denial of the very One who had loved him unconditionally.

But Peter's story doesn't end there. And neither does ours.

## The Weight of Regret and the Hope of Restoration

We've all had our "rooster crow" moments—times when we've betrayed our values, hurt those we love, or turned away from our faith. Those memories can be burdensome, weighing us down with guilt and regret.

But here's the beautiful truth: God doesn't want to leave us in that place. As Psalm 3:3 says, *"But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, the lifter of my head."*

Consider the story of John Newton, the author of *"Amazing Grace."* He was once a slave trader, leading a life far from the grace he would later sing about. His "rooster crow" moment occurred amidst a violent storm at sea, a moment of fear and realisation that prompted him to cry out mercy.

Newton's life was transformed, not because he was perfect, but because he was willing to start afresh with Jesus. His testimony reminds us that no sin is too great, no failure too deep, for God's grace to reach.

After His resurrection, Jesus sought out Peter—not to reprimand him, but to restore him. Imagine this: a tranquil morning on the beach, the scent of breakfast cooking over a fire, the soft sound of waves. Jesus turns to Peter and poses a simple yet profound question: *"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"* (John 21:15).

## Back to the Beginning

Peter had returned to fishing, going back to what he had known before meeting Jesus. It was familiar and safe—a refuge from the burden of his failure. But Jesus had called Peter for more than just catching fish. *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,"* He had said years ago (Matthew 4:19).

Jesus was calling Peter back, not to shame him, but to remind him of his true purpose. *"Feed my lambs,"* Jesus says. Not once, not twice, but thrice He asks, *"Do you love me?"*—mirroring Peter's three denials. Each affirmation of love was a step towards healing, a way to move Peter's knowledge of Jesus' love from his head to his heart.

Maybe you've found yourself retreating to old habits, old comforts, feeling disqualified by your mistakes. That's exactly where the enemy wants you—believing you're beyond redemption, that God can't use someone like you anymore.

But Jesus comes to us, just as He came to Peter, to lift the weight of guilt. He asks, *"Do you love me?"* not, *"Did you get everything right?"* or *"Why did you fail?"* simply, *"Do you love me?"*

Think about the prodigal son in Luke 15. After squandering his inheritance and hitting rock bottom, he returns home, rehearsing an apology, expecting rejection.

But the father runs to him, embraces him, and restores him to his place in the family. That's the heart of our Heavenly Father. He's not waiting to punish us but to restore us.

And when we say yes, even through tears of regret, He responds, *"Then let's get back to what I created you to do."*

## Finishing Well

Jesus didn't just restore Peter; He gave him a glimpse of the future. *"When you are old, you will stretch out your hands..."* (John 21:18), signifying the kind of death Peter would face—one that would glorify God. Despite Peter's failures, Jesus promised he would finish well.

That promise isn't just for Peter. Philippians 1:6 assures us, *"He who began a good work in you will complete it at the day of Jesus Christ."*

Consider the words of Corrie ten Boom, a woman who survived the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp: *"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still."* Her life, marked by unimaginable suffering and loss, became a testament to the restorative power of God's love. She forgave her captors, shared the Gospel worldwide, and lived a life that glorified God despite her past wounds.

So, if you're bearing the weight of past mistakes, consider this: Jesus is calling you back. He isn't asking for perfection; He's asking for your heart. *"Follow me,"* He says. Let's begin anew. His grace is fresh every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23).

*Thank You for Your unfailing love and endless grace. Like Peter, I have had my moments of failure and regret, times when I have denied You through my words, actions, or fears. Yet, even in my brokenness, You seek me out, not to condemn but to restore. Lord, I hear Your question echoing in my heart: "Do you love me?" Yes, Jesus, I love You. Though my love is imperfect, Your love is perfect, steadfast, and true. Lift my head from the weight of guilt and shame. Help me to see myself through Your eyes—redeemed, forgiven, and called.*

*Thank You for calling me back and reminding me that my story doesn't end with failure. Renew my heart, and guide me to the purpose You created me for. Let me walk in the freedom of Your grace, confident not in my own strength but in Your faithfulness.*

*I surrender my past, regrets, and fears into Your hands. Fill me with the courage to follow You wholeheartedly, trusting that the good work You began in me, You will bring to completion. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Sermons in Art #2



El Greco, The Tears of Peter

When I visit a city for the first time, the local Art Gallery is the first place I want to schedule into my diary.

My favourite is the National Gallery in London. I can easily spend a whole day there and never get bored.

I enjoy looking at paintings because they allow me to hold a mirror to my everyday life. They give me a space to think and reflect on my experiences. They also provide me with an opportunity to explore spiritual ideas prayerfully.

Let's have a look at an example. Here is El Greco's *"The Tears of St Peter"*

This evocative painting dates from 1585 by Domenikos Theotokopoulos, a Greek artist who would affectionately be known as "El Greco" (meaning, The Greek). It is now in the Toledo Museum in Spain.

El Greco was a Spanish painter, sculptor, and architect of the Renaissance. He is best known for his religious paintings, which include *The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Disrobing of Christ*.

El Greco was born in Fodele, Crete, in 1541. After studying in Venice and Rome, he moved to Toledo, Spain, in 1577. He died there in 1614.

*"The Tears of Saint Peter"* is a masterpiece that has sparked much debate and speculation. According to most art historians, the picture captures the exact moment when Peter realises he has betrayed Jesus.

El Greco's use of colour and light creates a powerful sense of emotion unparalleled in most other paintings of the time.

The eyes, the windows to the soul, are the most crucial of the painting's features and express deep remorse and regret. Peter feels shame and profound guilt for the events of the encounter with a servant girl on the eve of Jesus' passion.

A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, *"This man was with him."* But he denied it. *"Woman, I don't know him," he said*". (Luke 22:56-57, NIV)

Peter, whose eyes well with tears because of his guilt in denying Christ during the Passion, turns to Heaven to beg for divine forgiveness

It's a painting that symbolises betrayal, regret, and regret. It's about a disciple betraying his master and, more importantly, a friend betraying his closest friends.

El Greco shows St. Peter isolated, half-length, his eyes welling up with tears, close to the believer to encourage him to enter this moment. It's his way of linking the viewer to the disciple's pain, and it's meant to evoke comparable repentance on our side of the canvas.

El Greco returned to this motif several times. There are at least a half-dozen examples of this same scene.



This is regarded as the best example, and it displays many of the painter's signature characteristics: loose and energetic brushstrokes, clear, bright, and very vivid colours, an elongated figure, and strong contrasts of light and shadow that give the figure a sense of drama.

This work depicts Peter as older than the other disciples, as he was frequently. His grey hair shows he is intelligent and mature, while his physical attributes indicate he is strong and confident.

On his left arm, El Greco paints an enormous bunch of keys. This is Peter's most common attribute (the sign by which we identify him in religious art) and refers to this passage from Matthew's Gospel.

*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:18-19, NIV)

It is rare to see Peter portrayed in the History of Art without a bunch of keys!

In the distance, to the left, is a stylised tableau of the resurrection. We see Mary and the angel at the open tomb. The events of Good Friday are now set in stone, but there is hope for Easter Sunday.

A woman in the background to the right of Peter is carrying an alabaster jar, Mary Magdalene's attribute. She has just received the angel's message that Christ has risen and is on her way to inform Peter.

It's a sign of hope for us and for Peter himself, even though this painting captures bitterness and deep sadness at the moment.

How does this painting speak to you? When I reflect on the piece, it's as though Peter is caught in a moment of bitter regret. I look and wonder how I would have reacted at that moment. Would I, too, have denied that I knew Jesus?

Though I confess I might have done, this painting offers profound hope. The tableau to the left reminds me of the hope of Easter. Mary has been told about the resurrection and charged with finding Peter and telling him the Good News.

Even in the darkest times of despair, there is the shining light of new life and hope.

# WEEK 2: SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Many of us associate encountering God with extraordinary experiences—powerful worship services, profound moments of prayer, or stunning natural scenery. While God undoubtedly moves in these moments, He is equally present in the simple, ordinary rhythms of daily life.

The challenge is learning to notice Him there.

What if we started seeking God in the everyday? What if we asked, "*How might God be present in this moment?*" while engaging in everyday tasks like brushing our teeth, waiting in line, or folding laundry? Cultivating this awareness can transform how we experience God—not just on Sundays or during designated quiet times but in the seemingly small moments of life.

## Why Look for God in the Ordinary?

### *God is Always Present*

Psalm 139:7 reminds us, "*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*" The answer is nowhere—He is with us in every moment, even the ones we deem unimportant.

### *Jesus Lived an Ordinary Life*

For the majority of His time on earth, Jesus led an ordinary life as a carpenter in Nazareth. He shared meals, worked with His hands, and walked along dusty roads. If God Incarnate dwelt in the commonplace, then our everyday moments are equally sacred.

### *It Deepens Our Relationship with God*

When we learn to recognise God in the small moments, we begin to cultivate an ongoing, moment-by-moment relationship with Him. Rather than compartmentalising our faith, it becomes interwoven into every aspect of our lives.

## How to Notice God in the Everyday

Here are a few simple ways to start practicing awareness of God in the ordinary moments of life:

### *1. Brushing Your Teeth: A Reminder of Renewal*

Each morning and evening, as you brush your teeth, take a moment to reflect on how God renews you daily.

Pray, "*Lord, cleanse my heart as I cleanse my teeth. Renew my mind and spirit for the day ahead.*" This simple act can transform into a moment of gratitude and surrender.

## 2. Doing Laundry: Reflecting on God's Grace

As you wash and fold clothes, consider how God washes away sin and clothes us in righteousness. You can pray, *"Thank You, Lord, for making me new each day. Help me to wear Your grace and kindness as I go about my day."*

## 3. Waiting in Line: Practicing Patience and Presence

Rather than reaching for your phone, view waiting as an opportunity to pause and recognise God's presence. Pray, *"God, thank You for this moment to slow down. Help me to be present and notice You here."* Waiting serves as an invitation to be still and trust in God's timing.

## 4. Cooking or Eating: Savouring God's Provision

As you prepare a meal or eat, take a moment to reflect on God as the provider of both physical and spiritual nourishment. Pray, *"God, You sustain me in ways I don't even recognise. Thank You for this meal and for nourishing my soul."*

## 5. Walking or Driving: Recognising God's Guidance

Whether taking a stroll or commuting to work, use the journey as a metaphor for your walk with God. Pray, *"Lord, guide my steps today. Help me to walk in Your ways and be mindful of Your presence."*

# Making It a Daily Practice

The key to recognising God in the ordinary is intentionality. Here's a straightforward challenge to incorporate this practice into your life:

Each morning, choose one mundane task you'll use as a reminder of God's presence. As you go through that activity, pause and ask, *"God, how are You present in this moment?"*

Take a deep breath and offer a short prayer of gratitude. At the end of the day, reflect on how this awareness shifted your perspective.

# Final Encouragement

God isn't just waiting for us in grand, spectacular moments—He is present in the sink full of dishes, the drive to work, and the morning cup of coffee.

The more we train ourselves to notice Him in the ordinary, the more we come to realise that every moment is sacred.

As you go about your day today, take a moment to pause and consider: how might God be present in this moment?

You may be surprised by what you discover.

# WEEK 2: WRITING PROMPTS

1. **"From Denial to Restoration: The Power of Jesus' Forgiveness"**

Reflect on Peter's journey from betrayal to restoration. How does Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" challenge us to confront our failures and find healing in His grace?

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2. **"Starting Over with Jesus: How Do We Find Our True Purpose After Failure?"**

Peter returned to fishing, a familiar refuge, after his denial of Jesus. What are the "old comforts" we return to when we feel disqualified by our mistakes? How can Jesus restore us to our original purpose?

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3. **"The Weight of Regret: How to Move Beyond Guilt and Find New Hope"**

Write about a time when guilt and regret weighed heavily on you. How did you experience God's grace in that moment? What did you learn about His desire to restore and call us back to His purpose?

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4. **"Jesus Restores: The Parable of the Prodigal Son and Peter's Redemption"**

Consider the similarities between Peter's story and the prodigal son. Both characters experience failure and regret, yet both are met with mercy and restoration. How does this story reflect the heart of God toward us?

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**5. "Finishing Well: What It Means to Trust God With Our Future"**

Jesus promised Peter he would finish well, despite his past mistakes. How can we hold onto the hope that God will complete the good work He began in us, even when our past feels full of failures?

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# WEEK 2: SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. In verses 1-6, the disciples fail to catch fish until Jesus appears. What might this suggest about the importance of Jesus' presence in our daily work and endeavors?
2. When Jesus tells Peter to cast the net on the right side of the boat, they catch a large number of fish. How can we apply the principle of obedience to Jesus' guidance in our own lives?
3. In verses 7-9, Peter's immediate reaction to jump into the water and swim to Jesus is quite dramatic. How do we respond to recognizing Jesus' presence in our lives?
4. Why do you think Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him in verses 15-17? What significance might this have for Peter and for us?
5. Each time Peter affirms his love, Jesus gives him a command to care for His sheep. How do these commands (feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep) relate to our responsibilities as followers of Christ?
6. In what ways does the restoration of Peter in this passage demonstrate Jesus' forgiveness and grace? How can we reflect this forgiveness in our own relationships?
7. The miraculous catch of fish and the breakfast on the beach have symbolic meanings. What do these events teach us about Jesus' provision and fellowship with His disciples?
8. How does Peter's experience in this passage prepare him for his future role in the early Church?
9. In verse 18-19, Jesus predicts Peter's martyrdom. How does knowing this change our understanding of discipleship and the costs of following Jesus?
10. How can we apply the lessons learned from Peter's journey in John 21:1-19 to our own spiritual growth and community life?

*On the following page, there is a fun activity which you might use to kick off your small group session. Make enough copies for everyone (and give out pens). Ask people to pick one (or more) answers that seem to best reflect what happened in John chapter 21.*

*Then discuss people's answers. Don't worry about being "correct" this is just meant as a bit of an icebreaker.*

**1. What did Jesus ask the disciples to do when they hadn't caught any fish?**

- ☐ Go and read a book about "How to fish"
- ☐ Cast the net on the right side of the boat
- ☐ Have a picnic on the shore
- ☐ Use a fishing rod instead
- ☐ Pray about it

**2. How did the disciples recognize that it was Jesus on the shore?**

- ☐ He was juggling fish
- ☐ He called them by name
- ☐ He made them catch a large number of fish
- ☐ He walked on water
- ☐ He brought a megaphone

**3. What was Peter's immediate reaction when he realized it was Jesus?**

- ☐ He jumped into the water
- ☐ He threw a fish at Jesus
- ☐ He started dancing with joy
- ☐ He hid behind the boat
- ☐ He took a selfie

**4. How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved Him?**

- ☐ Three times
- ☐ Once
- ☐ Five times
- ☐ Seven times seventy times
- ☐ Not at all

**5. What command did Jesus give to Peter each time he affirmed his love?**

- ☐ Feed my sheep
- ☐ Write a New Testament book
- ☐ Tend my sheep
- ☐ Keep a low profile
- ☐ Lead my church