



Things to Talk About and Reflect Upon

"Rejected or Restored?"

Points from Sunday's Message

Point 1 - Jesus is in the business of redeeming and restoring the most wrecked and broken lives.

Point 2 - Peter's failure surprised Peter; it did not surprise Jesus.

Point 3 - Our failures are often the most defining features of our self-perception.

Point 4 - Christ takes us back to the scene of our failure, not to condemn us, but to redeem it.

Key Verse:

"He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'"

—John 21:17

Discussion Questions:

1. The Restoration Project

Pastor Miles opened with the difference between people who want a turnkey house and people who see potential in a wreck — and said, "Do you know who loves restoration projects? Jesus." His first point was that Jesus is in the business of redeeming and restoring the most wrecked and broken lives.

Why do you think we find it so hard to believe that God actually wants the broken pieces rather than merely tolerating them? What would change about how you approach God this week if you were fully convinced of it?

Further Reading: Isaiah 61:1–3 · 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 · 1 Corinthians 1:26–31

2. Peter Overestimated Peter

Peter said, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" — and meant it. Pastor Miles put it this way: "Peter's failure surprised Peter. It did not surprise Jesus." Peter

overestimated Peter; Jesus never did. "Peter's conviction was genuine, but his capacity was not enough."

Miles described four versions of a person: the one we say we are, the one we think we are, the one we hope we are, and the one we actually are under pressure. Where have you seen that gap in your own life? And why is it good news — not bad news — that Jesus was never under any illusions about you in the first place?

Further Reading: Matthew 26:31–35 and 26:69–75 (the promise and the collapse, side by side) · Psalm 139:1–6, 23–24 · Romans 7:15–25

3. The Fire of Coals

The Greek phrase for "fire of coals" appears only twice in John's Gospel: in the courtyard of Caiaphas where Peter denied Jesus (John 18:18), and on the beach where Jesus restored him (John 21:9). Same smell, same cool morning air — and Miles argued Jesus chose that setting on purpose: Christ takes us back to the scene of our failure not to condemn us, but to redeem it.

Read John 18:15–18, 25–27 and then John 21:9–17 back to back as a group. What do you notice when you put them next to each other? Have you ever experienced God "reattaching a better memory" to a painful place in your story?

Further Reading: John 18:15–27 with John 21:9–17 · Genesis 50:15–21 · Joel 2:25–27

4. Agape and Phileo

In the original Greek, Jesus first asks Peter twice, "Do you agape Me?" — total, self-sacrificial devotion. Peter can only answer, "Lord, You know that I phileo You" — brotherly affection. The third time, Jesus comes down to Peter's word and asks, "Do you phileo Me?"

Miles said we assume Jesus will respond, "That's not good enough. You're going to have to work on you before I can work with you." Instead, Jesus gives Peter the same commission all three times: feed My sheep. What does it tell us about Christ that He met Peter at the level Peter could honestly offer, rather than demanding more first? Where are you waiting to "get fixed" before you'll let God use you?

Further Reading: Romans 5:6–8 · Philippians 1:6 · Isaiah 42:1–3 · Mark 9:23–24

5. What Story Do You Tell?

Miles said he likes to ask people, "So what's your story?" — and that failure dominates the story most people tell about themselves. His third point: our failures are often the most defining features of our self-perception. He went further: "Most people in church are quietly convinced that one particular failure has permanently benched them from any meaningful service to God."

Take a minute of quiet before answering. What's the failure you'd name if that sentence were about you? You don't have to share the specifics — but name the effect it's had. What has it stopped you from stepping into?

Then read 1 Peter 5:1–4 together. Peter wrote those words about the chief Shepherd and the flock roughly thirty years after this breakfast. What does it say about God's patience and purpose that the man who denied Christ three times became the one teaching the church how to shepherd?

Further Reading: 1 Peter 5:1–11 · Proverbs 24:16 · Luke 22:31–34 · Acts 2:14–41 (Peter preaching, weeks later)

6. "Strengthen Your Brethren"

Jesus told Peter in advance: "I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:32). Notice He didn't pray Peter wouldn't fail — He prayed Peter's faith wouldn't fail. And the restoration came with a job attached: feed My sheep.

Miles described the person who comes to church, bolts for the door, and doesn't come back for three weeks, convinced that if people knew who they really were they wouldn't be wanted. Two questions, and try to leave with an actual name attached to each:

- Who is one person in your life who is currently living in Peter's courtyard — convinced their failure has disqualified them? What is one specific thing you could do this week to be part of taking them to the beach?
- What is one place of service you have been avoiding because of something in your past? What would obedience to "follow Me" look like in the next thirty days?

Further Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:3–7 · Galatians 6:1–2 · Luke 15:3–7 · John 21:15–19

Use these blended questions for deeper personal reflection, prayer, or small group discussion.