

Service is not done to earn forgiveness, but rather it is our joyful response to being forgiven. Because Jesus loves us, we love Him. And because we love Him, we want to serve Him. And because He loves others, we love them too. Our service to others is the demonstration of our love for God.

3. Feed My Sheep

Galatians 6:10 NLT - 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone--especially to those in the family of faith.

1 Timothy 6:18 NLT - 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.

The call to service is not limited to pastors. Paul was writing to the whole church in Galatia and the wealthy of Ephesus in the above verses. Do these verses apply to us? If so, what kind of opportunities for good work do you have?

WRAP-UP

We have forgiveness from our sins because of Jesus' death and resurrection; because of His love for us. That love and the power of the Holy Spirit can change our hearts. We can love others because we are loved. And we are called to serve all those Jesus died for. We don't serve to earn or prove love, our service is a result of God's love poured out on us and overflowing to the world around us.

MEMORY VERSE

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Acts 1:8 NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – Do a word study in the encounter between Jesus and Peter to see the subtle differences in Jesus' questions and Peter's replies.

Called to Be a Beautiful Disruption

Beautiful Disruption #1

INTRODUCTION

There were 40 days between Christ's resurrection and ascension, during which Jesus appeared to many. At each appearance he imparted important truths that would be passed on to the emerging church which we see described in the book of Acts. One of those foundational truths is the need for forgiveness. Jesus spent time with Peter confirming his forgiveness and Peter's calling as a leader of Christ's followers and the church they would form. We not only need to receive forgiveness but through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to forgive others, to love them and to serve them. We are called to be a beautiful disruption and to transform world around us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ice Breaker

Do you remember an occasion when you were forgiven of something that you thought could never be forgiven?

Key Passage

John 20:20-23 NLT - 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. First Receive

John 20:22-23 NLT - 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

When Jesus first appeared to His gathered disciples, He made certain they knew it was really Him, and He also began to open their eyes to the

existence and coming of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of God's Holy Spirit in them would bring them the power they needed to do the work of the Kingdom. So, the first direction Jesus gave His disciples was to receive the Holy Spirit, and the next was to forgive.

Luke 24:46-48 NLT - 46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' 48 You are witnesses of all these things.

In Luke's account of this occasion, we see that Jesus also tells the disciples that there will be a proclamation that, following His resurrection, there is forgiveness for all who repent, and they would bear witness to this. In fact, the disciples needed to experience that forgiveness themselves.

The good news of forgiveness was predicated on Jesus' death and resurrection. The disciples needed to personally experience that forgiveness. So, they were probably the first to repent and receive forgiveness. Forgiveness requires two things- first we must recognize our need to be forgiven. Secondly – we must be willing to accept that we are forgiven. Which do you personally find most difficult- admitting to yourself that you need to be forgiven, or accepting that God can forgive you? What is the problem of one without the other- either admitting your sin, but not accepting forgiveness, or believing that God forgives sinners, without admitting that you have sin that needs forgiveness?

John 21:15-17 NLT - 15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you." "Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him. 16 Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you." "Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said. 17 A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep.

In this encounter, Jesus had cooked and served the disciples breakfast and now sits with Peter. But he doesn't call him Peter, the rock. He calls him Simon. Because he was acting again like the old Simon, he wasn't really being "the rock" Jesus had called him to be. At least not yet.

In this series of questions and responses, what is Jesus asking Simon and what is He telling him to do? It may be significant the Jesus questions Peter three times and gives him an opportunity to declare his love as many times as he had denied Jesus. What does this reveal about God's willingness to forgive us when we repeat an offense? Is there anything you've ever struggled with that you thought God might no longer forgive?

The complexity of this exchange between Peter and Jesus is seen more clearly in the Greek in which it was written. Jesus is asking for Peter's total affection at the highest level, and all Peter can offer in return is the level of brotherly love. But Jesus still sees the rock that Peter will become. When he accepts the forgiveness Jesus offers, Peter will be transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the Good News of forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus. Then he will realize his true potential, and Peter will pour out his life in service, by selflessly shepherding the flock of followers in the church.

2. How Love changes us

*Matthew 18:21-22 NLT - 21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" 22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!
1 Peter 4:8 NLT - 8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.*

There is a marked difference in Peter's attitude toward forgiveness before receiving it himself and after. Peter was proud that he was willing to forgive someone seven times. But Peter's offer to forgive seems to be a thinly veiled attempt to earn Jesus' favor. That would be the wrong motivation for forgiveness.

In his first epistle, what does Peter say is most important and why is it important? In His encounter with the risen Christ, Peter himself experienced love that covered a multitude of sin. As a result, He was changed. How does Luke 7:47 shed light on why Peter was changed?

Luke 7:47 NLT - 47 "I tell you, her sins--and they are many--have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."