

Mountains and Lakes

Week 11: Breakfast by the Beach

John 21

Serve Finder Promotion

- Currently takes:
 - 212 volunteers to gather for worship on Sundays.
 - Sherwood Kids
 - Greeters, Safety/Security
 - Coffee – Volunteers, show grace!
 - 252 volunteers who serve through the week.
 - Group leaders
 - Outreach and missions
 - Events
 - 464 ways to serve each week at Sherwood Oaks. People stepping into those roles, using their gifts to serve Jesus.
- Asked our staff (developers of ministries, not doers), how many volunteer roles would it take to do what you feel the Lord is calling you to do?
 - 298 volunteers who serve on Sundays.
 - 349 volunteers who serve each week.
 - 647 volunteer spots to do the work of ministry at Sherwood Oaks.
 - And that's just spots. We want our volunteers to serve in healthy rhythms, so if it takes 100 volunteers to offer a safe, fun environment for Sherwood Kids on Sunday mornings, and each volunteer serves on average once a month, then April and her team need about 400 volunteers to serve in their ministry.
 - They currently have about 75% of that, **so they're looking for 100 people TODAY** who are willing to say, "Yeah, I'll give an hour of my week to serve the Lord in our Kids Ministry."
 - Josh Randal, our Facilities Director, **is looking for 10 guys** who will say, "I'll spend a few hours on a mower each week to serve the Lord by keeping our grounds looking nice."
 - Shawna needs **about 120 people** who would be willing to serve the Lord by opening a door and being a friendly face as people come to church.

- All that to say! If you attend Sherwood Oaks and have just kinda been sitting on the sidelines...it's time to get into the game. It's time to get off the bench and find a place to serve!
 - "Big church." "I'm not needed." "I'm too old." "I'm too young."
 - Blah, blah, blah!
 - You're never too _____ to find a place to serve.
- You can do that today at ServeFinder. Even if you didn't RSVP, you're still invited. We'll just pray for Jesus to multiply our food like he did the fish and loaves that we talked about a few weeks ago!
- Meet us in the Fellowship Hall around noon!

Pray over ServeFinder.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've found myself incredibly grateful for people who have given me space to grow. Who've stuck by my side and haven't given up on me, even when I wasn't at my best. I think of my wife, Amber. My girls. You all! You've given me the grace to find my footing, to sometimes had hard conversations with me. It's all made me a better man, minister, and follower of Jesus today than I was 5, 10, 15 years ago.

I think all of us desire people like that in our lives. People who give us space to grow and learn. Who give us grace to make mistakes. We know what it's like to have people abandon us, or give up on us, which makes those who stand by us mean that much more.

We are wrapping up our series called Mountains and Lakes today and over the last 11 weeks, we've been looking at those times in Jesus' life and ministry when a mountain or lake served as the backdrop. And we haven't just been following Jesus during this series, we've been following the disciples, too.

We've seen them learn how to walk by faith as they follow Jesus. We've also seen Jesus give them a lot of space and encouragement to grow. Despite all of their failings and mishaps, Jesus has never given up on them. He's never abandoned them or written them off as a lost cause.

But nowhere in Scripture do we see the faithfulness of Jesus tested more than in our text today. And if Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, then how we see Jesus meet Peter in this moment gives me a lot of hope in those times when I feel like I've blown it. When I feel like I've reached the end of God's grace and there's no way He'd take me back after where I've been and what I've done.

But, before we get to that good news, let's set the scene for our text. In Luke 22, Jesus is in the Upper Room with his disciples. They've just shared the Passover meal together and Jesus has told them he's about to give his body and shed his blood and that one of them was going to betray him and hand him over to authorities.

So naturally, the disciples are arguing about who amongst them is the greatest. After Jesus tells them that true greatness is about laying down your rights and wants and desires for others, Peter boldly proclaims in verse 33...(READ Lk. 22:33)

All Peter can think about is power and position, but Jesus knows the cross is looming and he says...(READ Lk. 22:34)

Fast-forward to later that night. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane praying for God to rescue him for the cross if there's any other way for salvation to come. A mob meets him there and they arrest Jesus. Peter sees this as a chance to be true to his word, so he pulls out a little sword and tries to put up a fight, but Jesus tells him to put it away. They lead him off and the disciples desert Jesus. (READ Lk. 22:54-59)

"A little later..." "An hour later..." A lot of time has passed for Peter to think about how he was doing the very thing Jesus said he would do, and Peter swore he'd never do. He's not having to make quick decisions. He has time to think about it. And now he has an opportunity to make it right and not deny him the third time. (READ Lk. 22:60-62)

Jesus looked at Peter. And this is not just some passing glance. They locked eyes. The word used here literally means to "discern to the soul." Jesus stares Peter down. He sees into his soul. It would be like Jesus locking eyes with you in the moment you hope no one ever finds out about.

Jesus locking eyes with you when you flirted with that person who's not your spouse. Jesus locking eyes with you when you went back to that thing you'd sworn off. Jesus locking eyes with you when you were at your lowest, most shame-filled moment.

That's where Peter is. He is in the height of shame, and we can probably all think about a time when we've been there, too. Can I ask you an uncomfortable question...

Have you ever been confronted with the fact that you are not who you thought you were?

Or, more uncomfortable, have you ever been confronted with the fact that you are **exactly** who you **feared** you were?

That's where Peter is. He's feeling something in this moment that many of us are all too familiar with: **Shame**. And I imagine he's thinking some of the very same thoughts you and I have had when we've been at the height of our shame. "I can't believe what I've done." "I can't believe who I've become."

We know what the sting of shame feels like. And Satan uses shame in our lives to twist truth and use it as a weapon against us. Follow me here:

There is knowing and feeling like I'm not worthy. That's true. None of us are worthy and God's love and grace. That's why it's grace. But, Satan is a master at distorting this truth from "I'm not worthy," to "I'm worthless." That's what shame does. Shame makes us feel and believe, "I am worthless."

And this feeling of worthlessness that we feel in our shame can leave us feeling absolutely hopeless. It leaves us feeling unloved and unlovable. And so the question for us is, what do you do with that kind of shame? Well, for most of us, that pattern was set in the opening pages of Scripture. What we see in Genesis 3 is that, when we sin against God and feel shame, we run, hide, and cover up.

When Adam and Eve sinned for the first time, they ran from God when they heard him walking in the garden. They hid in the bushes and covered themselves with fig leaves. And this is the exact pattern we've been following ever since. We run, we hide, and we cover up.

We hide from Jesus and try to avoid eye contact so he doesn't see us in our sin. So, we avoid His people and we don't go to church. We avoid His Word and don't read our Bibles. We avoid His work and we don't serve others.

Or, we work really hard to cover ourselves up. We hope that through our own efforts, we can hide our shame. So, we go to church more, we read more, we serve more. We work hard to provide for our families and be a good person in other places of our life, hoping it will be enough to make up for the things we feel ashamed of.

But that's just the other side of the same coin. We're still avoiding our shame, not by running from it, but by trying to cover it up. Neither is helpful and neither gets to the root of our sin and what we truly need.

And while Peter is weeping bitterly and running away in shame, Jesus moves faithfully to the cross. He moves through the mock trial. He moves through the betrayal and beatings. He moves through the pain of crucifixion and death. And in doing so, he provides what we actually need to deal with our shame.

On the cross, Jesus bore the weight of our sin. By his wounds, the wrath of God was satisfied, and when we put our faith in Jesus, we are no longer enemies of God, we are His friends. We are adopted into His family and called children of God. We are redeemed, restored, and made new.

The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21...(READ)

The beautiful message of the Gospel is that Jesus did not just pay for your sin. He did not just take the punishment for us. He became our sin and our guilt and our shame. He carried the full weight of it to the cross so that we could fully and finally be released from the burden of it!

Which means, because of Jesus, we don't have to hide from God, from ourselves, from others. We don't have to pretend to be better than we are. We don't have to run from our past mistakes or try to cover them up on our own. Jesus became sin and shame for us so that we could be set free from them.

But...as Peter ran away from Jesus, weeping bitterly, he didn't know all of this yet. So, in his shame, he hides. But, he hides like a kid playing hide and go seek, who hides under a blanket in the most obvious place.

In John 21, the resurrected Jesus finds Peter where he'd found him before...he was fishing. He was hiding from Jesus in plain sight, convinced that there was no recovering from that night he betrayed him. But after Jesus provides a boat load of fish that would have reminded Peter of the first time Jesus invited him to follow, the two of them are having a little breakfast on the beach. (READ John 21:15-19)

Three restorations for three denials. It's like Jesus is asking him, "Peter, what are you doing out here, running from your shame, trying to catch fish? I'm not done with you." And by the lake that morning, Jesus teaches Peter, and us, an incredible lesson about his faithfulness and willingness to give us space to grow. A lesson some of you have heard me share before, but it's worth repeating: Your failure doesn't have the final word. Grace does!

That moment that brings you guilt and shame every time you think about it, that moment you can't forget and hope no one else remembers. That does not speak a final word of judgement over you. Satan wants to use shame as a weapon to make you feel and believe that you are worthless, but your Heavenly Father points to the cross and says, "Look, let me show you how much you are worth!"

Jesus speaks grace over you and then, like Peter, he invites you to help others find and experience that grace, too. In Christ, we are living, breathing, walking testimonies of the grace of God and the freedom and joy of a life lived in Him.

Your failure does not have the final word because Jesus speaks a better word over you. It's a word of grace, and love, and forgiveness. So, the good news for us today is that our sin and shame no longer defines us. It no longer binds us. We have been forgiven and set free by the blood of the Lamb, and so the only place we need to run is into the arms of our Heavenly Father who loves us.