



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Afterlife / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Because of the resurrection, Peter knew he was forgiven.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students change how they react to guilt, and experience God's grace in small group through a community where they can be fully known.

SCRIPTURE

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." (John 21:15-17 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- The resurrection proved that our guilt is no match for God's grace. We don't have to let guilt change our faith anymore. Instead, we get to let grace change our guilt.
- Talking about God's grace is one thing, but experiencing it is something else entirely. And that's why we have small groups.
- Small Group is the safest place for you to discover this alongside of your friends and small group leaders.
- Your SGLs have encountered grace, and they will pass that same grace on to you.
- That's what the resurrected Jesus demonstrated in Peter's life. And that's why Peter's afterlife was so powerful—while he was still alive on Earth.
- Because of the resurrection, Peter realized that grace is greater than guilt. And because of Easter, you can realize it as well!

TENSION

- Let me ask you a question: do you remember the last time you felt guilty?
- When we feel guilty, we get really good at hiding.
- If we believe in God, chances are good that our guilt causes us to hide from Him, too. We know God knows what we did is wrong, so we back away from our relationship with Him.
- We can't *actually* run away from God, so we just start to make Him less and less a part of our lives.

- No matter what it looks like for you, we all tend to let our guilt get in the way of our faith.

TRUTH

- Thankfully, we're not the first people to have these kinds of experiences with guilt. The Bible provides plenty of examples that we can learn from.
- We've been in a series called *Afterlife*. We've looked at people who physically saw Jesus AFTER the resurrection. That includes a guy named Peter.
- Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends, and a key leader during the early days of the Christian movement. But Peter had some run-ins with guilt and shame like we sometimes do.
- When Jesus was arrested, Peter literally cut off a guy's ear to defend Jesus.
- Then, just hours later, when Jesus was given a sketchy, bogus trial, Peter stood nearby and lied *three separate times* about his connection to Jesus. He denied even *knowing* the guy!
- Even worse, before *any* of this happened, Jesus told Peter that he would do exactly that—that he would deny being connected to Jesus.
- Jesus was arrested, tried, and nailed to a Roman cross. And the last thing Peter did was deny even knowing Jesus.
- But like we've talked about in this series, Jesus' death wasn't the end of the story. Easter happens. The tomb is empty, and Jesus is *alive*.
- To Peter, it's possible that the resurrection was a reminder of the guilt he felt.
- A few days later, Jesus was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Peter was on the boat with the other disciples and saw Jesus. They went to the shore, Jesus made breakfast, and He brought up the thing that no doubt was weighing on Peter's mind (*John 21:15-17 NIV*).
- In other words, for every time that Peter denied knowing Jesus, Jesus gives Peter another chance. And in giving him a chance, Peter knows he is loved and forgiven.
- As humiliating and terrible as it was for Peter to deny Jesus, here was a chance to make it right. Even though Peter may have given up on himself, Jesus hadn't given up on him.
- Peter could've given into his guilt and gone into hiding. But that isn't what Jesus wanted for Peter.
- Peter knew Jesus had been killed, and he saw Jesus after He came back to life. This proved to Peter that Jesus was capable of offering him the grace he needed to forgive himself.
- The resurrection proved that guilt didn't have to destroy Peter's faith. Instead, grace could destroy his guilt and fuel his faith.
- Because of the resurrection, Peter realized that grace is greater than guilt.

APPLICATION

- If you're ready for something new, I want to give you a couple of steps that you can start taking now:
 - Get real about where you feel guilt.
 - Remember that guilt is no match for God's grace.
 - Keep showing up and speaking up.

LANDING

- The resurrection proved that our guilt is no match for God's grace. We don't have to let guilt change our faith anymore. Instead, we get to let grace change our guilt.
- Talking about God's grace is one thing, but experiencing it is something else entirely. And that's why we have small groups.
- Small Group is the safest place for you to discover this alongside of your friends and small group leaders.
- Your SGLs have encountered grace, and they will pass that same grace on to you.
- That's what the resurrected Jesus demonstrated in Peter's life. And that's why Peter's afterlife was so powerful—while he was still alive on Earth.
- Because of the resurrection, Peter realized that grace is greater than guilt. And because of Easter, you can realize it as well!



TEACHING SCRIPT

Afterlife / Week 3

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BOTTOM LINE

Because of the resurrection, Peter knew he was forgiven.

INTRODUCTION

1.5 MINUTES

Raise your hand if you have a sibling. For those of you who don't, let me explain some basic sibling dynamics...

One of the best parts about having a brother or sister is that you can blame them for stuff. You can point at them when something breaks in the kitchen. You can shovel off your green beans on their plate so you can get dessert. Brothers and sisters are why phrases like, "They did it first" or, "It wasn't my fault" were invented.

Even if you don't have a sibling, you probably had someone in your childhood who put the blame on you for something they did—a cousin, classmate, or friend. Or maybe you had someone YOU blamed for your mess-ups!

Our impulses as kids don't really change as adults. We remain pretty skilled at avoiding responsibility and putting the blame on someone else.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

Let me ask you a question: **do you remember the last time you felt guilty?**

- **Maybe you "copied" a little too much of your friend's homework.**
- **Maybe you didn't tell your girlfriend the *whole* story of what happened at the party.**
- **Maybe you lingered a little too long on *that* website.**
- **Maybe you told your stepmom that you were going one place – and you did – but with a different crowd than you told her would be there.**
- **Or maybe you said you were studying the whole time, but you really were just binging a new show with your textbook open.**

There are all sorts of things to feel guilty about. And no matter how old we get, it seems like our reaction is a lot like a five-year-old. We hide, stretch the truth, make up excuses, or try to cover it up all together.

When we feel guilty, we get really good at hiding.

And we have all sorts of hiding tricks. We avoid our Small Ggroup Leader, or the coaches in our lives. We try to not make eye contact with our teacher. We ghost our friends. We play it cool around the people in charge. We may even turn off our location services or hide our location. We do everything we can to act as though nothing happened, even though—on the inside—we know what we did was wrong, and it's eating us up.

And this isn't just what we do with other people. If we believe in God, chances are good that our guilt causes us to hide from Him, too. **We know God knows what we did is wrong, so we back away from our relationship with Him.** It's easy to hide something we did from the people around us, but it's much more complicated to hide from God. We can't *actually* run away from Him, so we just start to make Him less and less a part of our lives.

- Maybe you still go to Small Group, but when the conversation gets real, you don't speak up anymore.
- Maybe you still show up to church, but you're not really feeling it in worship anymore, and don't even know if you want to.
- Maybe you tell everyone that you have too much going on with school and sports, but really you just don't want to participate in this faith stuff anymore.

No matter what it looks like for you, we all tend to let our guilt get in the way of our faith.

TRUTH

7.5 MINUTES

Thankfully, we're not the first people to have these kinds of experiences with guilt. The Bible provides plenty of examples that we can learn from. We're going to talk about one of them today.

For the last few weeks—as part of the Easter season—we've been in a series called *Afterlife*. We've looked at people who physically saw Jesus AFTER the resurrection. See, when you see a friend who died now walking around alive, it changes you. For *many* people, their lives were radically different *after* they saw a resurrected Jesus; their "life after" or their "afterlife" was dramatically changed. And that includes a guy named Peter.

Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends, and a key leader during the early days of the Christian movement. But Peter had some run-ins with guilt and shame like we sometimes do. Peter was known as being Jesus' "loud" friend. We all have them...or maybe you ARE the loud friend! This got Peter in trouble from time to time. And the worst example of this happened when Jesus was sentenced to die on a cross.

When Jesus was arrested, Peter literally cut off a guy's ear to defend Jesus. It's not a recommended strategy to prove your loyalty to a friend, but hey, at least he was there for Jesus. But then, just hours later, when Jesus was given a sketchy, bogus trial, Peter stood nearby and lied *three separate times* about his connection to Jesus. He denied even *knowing* the guy!

Even worse, before *any* of this happened, Jesus told Peter that he would do exactly that—that he would deny being connected to Jesus. Jesus basically told Peter, "I've experienced your loyalty so far. But when it comes down to the end, you won't be loyal to me." Peter defends himself, assuring Jesus that he would never do that. And then, at Jesus' lowest moment, that's exactly

what Peter did. Jesus was arrested, tried, and nailed to a Roman cross. And the last thing Peter did was deny even knowing Jesus.

I mean, I almost feel guilty *for* him. What a brutal end to his story, right?

But like we've talked about in this series, Jesus' death wasn't the end of the story. Easter happens. The tomb is empty, and Jesus is *alive*. The whole direction of the story changes, which is awesome...unless you're Peter. He probably had some mixed feelings. He probably thought, "I'm so glad Jesus is back! But does that mean I have to face Him after what I did to Him?"

To Peter, it's possible that the resurrection was a reminder of the guilt he felt. And if he felt guilt, I sometimes wonder if he ran through all of the same phases of guilt that we do. I wonder if he wanted to lie, exaggerate, defend himself, or even hide from Jesus altogether.

A few days later, Jesus was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Peter was on the boat with the other disciples and saw Jesus. They went to the shore, Jesus made breakfast, and He brought up the thing that no doubt was weighing on Peter's mind...

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." (John 21:15-17 NIV).

Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. And then Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" three times. In other words, for every time that Peter denied knowing Jesus, Jesus gives Peter another chance. And in giving him a chance, Peter knows he is loved and forgiven. Jesus wants Peter to know that he has a second chance. He even tells Peter that He wants him to continue to lead, which is why He said, "Feed my sheep".

This exchange is so interesting. Jesus asks Peter if he still loves Him. As humiliating and terrible as it was for Peter to deny Jesus, here was a chance to make it right. Even though Peter may have given up on himself, Jesus hadn't given up on him.

Peter could've given into his guilt and gone into hiding. But that isn't what Jesus wanted for Peter. Jesus didn't want Peter's life to be defined by guilt. He wanted Peter to experience grace. Peter knew Jesus had been killed, and he saw Jesus after He came back to life. This proved to Peter that Jesus was capable of offering him the grace he needed to forgive himself. The resurrection showed Peter the power Jesus had, and Peter's encounter with Jesus on the beach showed that Jesus chose to offer him powerful grace.

The resurrection proved that guilt didn't have to destroy Peter's faith. Instead, grace could destroy his guilt and fuel his faith.

**Because of grace, Peter was no longer controlled by his guilt.
Because of grace, Peter accepted the love Jesus offered him.
Because of grace, Peter traveled around the world preaching about that same grace that changed his life.**

Think of it this way...

Because of the resurrection, Peter knew he was forgiven.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

I don't know what's been causing you to feel guilt, but chances are that the entire time we've discussed this topic, you've had something on your mind. If you're ready for something new, I want to give you a couple of steps that you can start taking now...

- 1. Get real about where you feel guilt.** This can be really tough, especially if you've hidden something so deep that you feel numb to it. But think about where you feel lingering guilt right now. Be honest with yourself about it. Acknowledge it, journal about it, or even put it down in a note on your phone. Just get honest.
- 2. Remember that guilt is no match for God's grace.** Ask God to remind you that He is with you and for you, even on *those* days. Ask Him to cover your guilt with the overwhelming reality of His grace. Listen, Easter matters for a lot of reasons. It shows us how big God's love is, what exactly God is like, and how God is more powerful than anything—including death. But Easter also shows us that Jesus is bigger than our guilt. And if Jesus gives us grace, it's ours for the taking. So when you feel those old guilt feelings kick in, ask God to give you a new reaction.
- 3. Keep showing up and speaking up.** Do the opposite of what guilt may have guided you to do in the past. Instead of hiding, show up in your small group's text thread. Show up at church gatherings. Show up to hang out with your friends. Show up to meet-ups with your small group leaders. After the resurrection, Peter didn't hide from Jesus. It would've been easier to, but he didn't do it. Like Peter, let's keep showing up.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

The resurrection proved that our guilt is no match for God's grace. We don't have to let guilt change our faith anymore. Instead, we get to let grace change our guilt.

We know that talking about God's grace is one thing, but experiencing it is something else entirely. And that's why we have small groups. We want you to have a safe place to fight for that grace when your guilt feels too heavy. Small Group is the safest place for you to discover this alongside of your friends and Small Group Leaders. Your Small Group Leaders have gone through training on how to handle some pretty tough conversations. And they have people that they can get real with about their guilt as well. They have encountered grace, and they will pass that same grace on to you. Why? Because that's what the resurrected Jesus demonstrated in Peter's life. And that's why Peter's afterlife was so powerful—while he was still alive on Earth. Because of the resurrection, Peter realized that grace is greater than guilt. And because of Easter, you can realize it as well!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS