

6/29/25
Peter and Paul, Apostles
For Group Meetings from June 22nd – June 28th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, we praise you that your blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you by their martyrdoms. Grant that your church throughout the world may always be instructed by their teaching and example, be knit together in unity by your Spirit, and ever stand firm upon the one foundation who is Jesus Christ our Lord, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER

Share: How did last week's scripture (Luke 8:26-39) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: John 21:15-19

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. How does Peter respond each time Jesus questions him?
2. What prediction does Jesus make about Peter's future in verses 18 and 19?
3. What emotion does Peter feel the third time Jesus questions him? Why?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. How is Jesus calling you to care for his sheep?
2. What might it mean for you to follow Jesus even when it leads somewhere you don't want to go?
3. What kind of love do you think Jesus is inviting you into—a love of affection, commitment, action? How are you growing in that love?

Memorize this verse: "(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'" (John 21:19) What does following Jesus look like in your life right now?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 87:1-3, 5-7. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

June 29th is the day when the church celebrates, Peter and Paul, who represent the spread of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. And, according to tradition, it was on this date they were martyred. So, we hear a story where the resurrected Jesus appears to Peter. And what strikes me in this week's text is how Jesus offers Peter what many modern psychologists contend every one of us needs: a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. First, a sense of belonging. We all need to feel accepted by a larger group in order to have a stable identity and sense of self. This goes against what may seem like common sense – after all, our culture regularly tells us that identity is an individual affair, something we carve out for ourselves and by ourselves. But it turns out that the gift of identity is given to us by those around us, as we see ourselves through the eyes of those closest to us. And, just so we're not confused, belonging is different than fitting in. Indeed, it is the exact opposite. Fitting in is changing yourself to be acceptable to the group, whereas belonging is being found acceptable by your group just as you are. We all need to belong. In this scene, Jesus asks Peter three times whether he loves him. Three times. Imagine if someone you care about asked whether you really love him/her not once, not twice, but three times. Painful. And Peter is, indeed, hurt by this repetition. I suspect that only later did it sink in that Jesus is not testing Peter but reinstating him to the community of believers by allowing him to confess faith the same number of times he denied faith earlier. Jesus is drawing Peter back into a community to which he belongs and accepts him for whom he is.

Second, we all need a sense of purpose, the belief that what we do matters, that if we did not show up people would notice. Purpose, as it turns out, is one of the great motivators in the world. More powerful than money or fame or power, believing that you have something of value to contribute draws us again and again into challenging circumstances with joy. And so in response to each of Peter's confessions, Jesus responds by giving him good work to do: feed my sheep. Be a leader. Look out for these others. Devote yourself to this community. Peter is reinstated into the community of the faithful and given a sense of belonging, and then he is given good work to do and given a purpose.

Belonging and purpose. The resurrected Jesus gives Peter these two things. And then invite us to see and feel that Jesus is giving us the same – an invitation into a community where we belong and a lifetime of work worth doing with a sense of purpose. I love the last line of the gospel: "But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." Because, indeed, this story is not yet finished. There are so many other things that Jesus did that John couldn't imagine writing them all. And there are so many things Jesus is still doing through us that the tale of them would fill all the books of the world.

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen