

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 35

CONVERSATION STARTER

When was the last time you felt really loved or cared for by someone?

DO YOU LOVE ME?

Three times Jesus asks Peter whether or not he loves him. And three times, Peter replies, “Yes, Lord, you know I do.” All while the smoke and smell of a charcoal fire lingers nearby. The last time John tells us Peter was near a charcoal fire was during his three-fold denial of Jesus. Now that moment is undone with a three-fold affirmation of love.

But Jesus doesn’t stop there. With each affirmation, Jesus gives Peter a command to care for the flock. He tells him to feed his lambs, take care of his sheep, and feed his sheep. Jesus isn’t just restoring Peter to relationship with him; Jesus restores Peter back to the work of ministry. Jesus gives Peter a resurrected purpose, a reason for living that involves caring for the family of God. He invites Peter to participate in the very same work Jesus had been about on earth as the Good Shepherd (John 10).

When Peter walked onto that beach, he did so unsure of where he stood. But he walked off with Jesus knowing that he was deeply loved and invited to partner with Jesus in the resurrection of others. Peter would indeed grow to become the rock upon which the church was built (Matt. 16:18).

Like Peter, each of us has a flock we are responsible for, whether it’s our family, friends, the people we work with, or our circle of influence. How are you caring for your people? Following the Way of Jesus means, like Peter, we are called to love others the way Jesus loves us.

We won’t always get it right, but like Peter, Jesus always waits for us on the beach, ready to forgive and restore and to invite us anew to take up the mantle and continue the good work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Who is your flock? Who are the people God has placed under your care or influence?
3. What does it look like to tend to or shepherd your flock? What are the practical ways you care for them?
4. Do you find it easy or difficult to trust in the Bible? Why do you think that's the case, and what do you think is the best way to build trust in the Word of God?
5. Now that we've reached the end of John's Gospel, spend a few moments discussing with your group the ideas or themes that have been most impactful to you.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Shepherding the flock and feeding the sheep is what we're called to do as followers of Jesus. Out of our deep love for Jesus, we respond by stewarding our community. There are an innumerable number of ways we could do this, but the point is that we do it. For this week's practice, I want to encourage you, if you're not already, to find a way you can serve within the church or the community.

Whether it's with our Kids Ministry, Belong Disability Ministry, serving as a Greeter, or becoming a member of HPUMC's Production team, there's a spot for you. Visit hpumc.org/serve to learn more about the different opportunities to give back. If you want to talk with someone about how you can best use your gifts in this community, reach out to our Serving Coordinator, Arang Cistulli (cistullia@hpumc.org).