

Jesus Brings Restoration

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So What: Why the Resurrection Matters | April 26, 2026 | John 1:42; Luke 5:9-11; John 16:5-7; John 18:18-27; John 21:15-19; Matthew 26:33-35; Isaiah 53:6

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

Hey, if you've got a copy of God's Word with you this morning, and I hope you do, turn with me to John chapter 21. We're continuing today with our series called So What as we're going through the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

If you have a notebook, go ahead and start taking notes now. The title of our message this morning is "Jesus Brings Restoration." Jesus brings restoration. This morning we're going to look at the forgiveness, the restoration, and the second chance that Jesus brings Peter. But before we do that, it's probably going to be a good thing if we know what Peter is being forgiven for and restored to.

Have you ever done anything that you wish you could undo? Anybody? Maybe you wish you could get it back. Maybe it had some consequences to it.

My first year in ministry, right out of college, I got to serve on a student ministry staff, and every year we would go to New York City. One of the things that somehow I got tasked with doing was driving our box truck, full of all the stuff that we took from place to place doing ministry that week, from point A to point B.

I was driving the box truck through New York City, which is just as stressful as it sounds, by the way. We were getting ready for our last deal for the week, our last stop, which happened to be in Central Park. I was kind of the lead box truck driver, and my buddy Peyton was in the box truck behind me.

We're driving to Central Park, and we pull up and see all the entrances have cones in front of them. We did what we thought we should do at the time, and that was to move the cones and drive into Central Park. So we did that, and we went a little farther.

We were about halfway to where we were supposed to go, and we saw this little bridge. "Bridge" is a generous term, but there was a bridge in front of us. We did what you've probably done before, or maybe you've seen somebody else do: We looked at the bridge and kind of squinted, like, "Are we going to make it through there or not? This box truck is pretty big."

I decided there's only one way to find out. So I pulled up to where the bridge was, and I started moving forward. I made it through to the other side. I may have taken a little paint off the top, but no harm, no foul, and we got to the other side.

My buddy Peyton was in the truck behind me. Peyton saw me make it through, so he thought, "If Emory can do it, I can do it. Let's go." But what we forgot was that we had a lot more gear in my truck, so it sat just a little

bit lower. He forgot about that, and I forgot about that. Peyton took off very confidently and proceeded to run smack into the bridge.

Then he thought, "Well, sometimes the only way out is through." So he continued to drive, and he made it through to the other side. Let me tell you, the roof of the box truck was like a tuna can lid that had come totally off.

Not a great trip for us. We wish we could have that one back. On a morning when we're talking about forgiveness and restoration, there was none for us when we got back to our church, and we never drove a box truck again.

Peter's Denial

Peter had a moment that was similar to this. He had a moment that he wished he could get back.

Maybe you know Peter from your time studying God's Word, but maybe you're new to the faith, new to church, or new to a service environment like this. Jesus calls Peter to be one of His disciples. In fact, Jesus not only calls him, but He gives him a new name.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

— John 1:42

Peter means "rock," and Jesus uses Peter to spread the church and the gospel in some incredible ways in the future. He gives him a new name. He gives him a new calling.

When Jesus found Peter, Peter was a fisherman. Jesus called him to follow Him one day after Peter and some others had been out all night and caught nothing. Jesus gets in the boat with him and says, "Go back out and cast your nets again." They did, and they loaded the boat.

Peter saw this happen, and he said a Scripture that you may know or remember:

"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

— Luke 5:8

In this moment, Peter knows that something is different about Jesus, that this might be God.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

— Luke 5:9-11

Jesus gets ahold of Peter, gives him a new name and a new calling, and it seems like Peter is all in with it.

But do you know somebody who's often wrong and never in doubt? Do you know somebody like that? This was Peter. He's passionate, he's quick to respond, and he's wrong a lot of the time. Peter is the one who cuts off the ear of Malchus when the people are trying to come and capture Jesus. Sometimes it's a great thing, but sometimes Peter puts himself in a tough position.

Before Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, Peter makes some bold claims. He tells Jesus, "I'll never leave You. I'll never deny You. I'll die for You." Jesus says quite the opposite.

Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."

Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"

— Matthew 26:33-35

Then in John 13:

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."

Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."

— John 13:36-38

Sure enough, if you look at John chapter 18, that's exactly what happens. Jesus is taken to be unfairly tried, and He's being beaten, whipped, and mocked. Just a few steps over, Peter is standing there, and someone recognizes him. They look at him and say, "Aren't you that guy? Aren't you one of the disciples?"

He goes, "No, that's not me. I don't know Him," and he denies Him once.

Right after that, Peter is with the same people who came to arrest Jesus, beat Him, and mock Him. He's standing next to a fire, and they're all warming themselves because it's a little cold outside. While Jesus is being beaten and mocked, Peter is denying Him and warming himself by the fire.

Then he goes on to do it two more times. On the third time, when Peter denies Jesus, you hear the rooster crow.

Peter has seen everything that Jesus has done. He's seen Jesus save, heal, and teach. He's seen Him do so many incredible things. But when his comfort and security are threatened, he denies ever knowing Jesus. He strays from his calling and from his God for the sake of his own comfort and safety.

You and I can do the same thing this morning. We're all guilty of straying from God's call on our lives to love Him, follow Him, and make much of His name. Just like Peter, we can find ourselves in a broken situation or relationship because of our own actions.

Maybe you've walked in here today a little frustrated because of the traffic from the marathon. But maybe you've walked in here today and you're living right in the middle of brokenness that you've caused.

I've got good news for us: The story doesn't end in John 18. In John 21, we see that Jesus brings forgiveness. He brings restoration to Peter. Jesus redeems an awful situation, and He gives Peter a second chance. He can do the same thing for you and for me this morning.

Look at John 21:15-19 with me this morning.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."

This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God. And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

— John 21:15-19

Jesus Forgives and Restores Peter

If you're taking notes this morning, we've already seen that Peter denies Jesus, but write this down: Jesus forgives and restores Peter.

I hope you're paying attention to the text that we just read. There's a lot going on here.

Notice first the name that Jesus chooses to use for Peter. He is called Simon, not once, not twice, but three times, versus his usual nickname or name given to him of Peter. It would equate to Jesus calling him "pebble" instead of "rock." Jesus called him to be Peter, but when he reverted to his old ways, Jesus would call him by his old name.

If you're a student of God's Word, you would know that in Luke chapter 5, the Sea of Tiberias is where Jesus calls Peter to follow Him. That's exactly where our text is today. This is where Jesus restores Peter. He calls him yet again to live a life pointing people to their need for Jesus in the exact same place.

What would have been a place that Peter dreaded going to because of the memories and because of what happened there, Jesus redeems and restores even that.

In verse 15, it says, "When they had finished breakfast." They had breakfast together, which is just a good habit to be in in general. But they had breakfast together.

The last time Peter and Jesus ate together was when? The Last Supper, where Jesus predicted Peter's denial of Him. At the very next meal they have, Jesus has beaten death, and He offers a meal to Peter. With that, He offers forgiveness, a clean slate, and a restored situation.

A meal together in first-century Mediterranean culture was a tradition of a covenantal act. I read this week that to eat with someone was to extend peace, pledge loyalty, and accept them into your circle of obligation.

The Pharisees had such a problem with Jesus when He would eat with sinners in that day and age. It wasn't so much that the Pharisees were afraid of getting dirty if they hung out with those people, but they didn't want it to seem like the covenant of God was for them as well.

When Jesus invites Peter to eat together, He's restoring him into this covenant. Peter denies Jesus three times, but then he affirms Jesus three times: "You know that I love You." Jesus commands him three times, "Feed My sheep." This addresses each denial and points Peter back to his original calling.

What do we see in this text? We see a name, a location, a meal, and a calling. Jesus restores all of these things that Peter messed up.

Don't you see the power of Jesus over sin and brokenness? Jesus has the authority to forgive. He has the ability to restore.

How do we know that Jesus and Peter were made right? Yes, Jesus confirms that Peter loves Him. Yes, Jesus calls Peter to feed His sheep. But the main reason we know that Jesus and Peter were restored is found in the two words at the end of our passage. Jesus calls Peter, "Follow Me."

Remember, this is a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. What does that mean? It means that at this very point we've read about today, the Son of God has already beaten death, hell, and the grave. He has the power and the authority to forgive and restore, and He's done all of that for us.

He's looking at Peter and saying, "I've forgiven you. I've restored you. Now go and do something with it."

The forgiveness Jesus offers us is full of power. The forgiveness Jesus shows us changes our lives. If Jesus has forgiven us, who are we not to forgive? You may struggle with that. If Jesus has forgiven us, who are we not to forgive ourselves?

Many of us in this room, myself included, have the tendency to beat ourselves up when we sin. I'm not talking about conviction. That is a good and godly thing. That is a gift from the Holy Spirit. If you've been sinning and you feel conviction, that is a blessing from God.

What I'm talking about is that so often we go to God and ask Him for forgiveness, and He forgives us and

restores us, but we continue to hold on to our sin instead of our Savior. We hold on to what we've done in the past instead of the restoration God gives us. He points us to do something new with the life and the second chance He's given us.

We are forgiven for a purpose. We're restored for a reason. We don't experience this forgiveness and restoration just for our lives to stay the same. We don't need to look like the rest of the world that doesn't know Jesus. If we've been forgiven and restored, our lives should be made new.

Restoration Brings a New Motive

If you're taking notes this morning, I'd encourage you to write this down: Restoration brings some new things. Restoration brings a new motive for us.

If you're reading the same text I'm reading, Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" He doesn't ask, "What have you done? How are you going to earn your way back into My favor?" He asks, "Do you love Me?"

The first time He asks him this question, He says, "Do you love Me more than these?"

Remember the context. Jesus has appeared to Peter and a few others, and they've gone fishing. Jesus could be asking Peter any of three things.

First, He could be asking, "Do you love Me more than you love the other disciples?" That's a pretty easy yes.

He could be asking him, and a lot of people think this, "Do you love Me more than the fish?" What does that mean? The fish represent his livelihood. The fish represent what he's used to. The fish represent a way that he can provide for himself. So He's potentially asking him, "Do you love Me more than what you're used to doing on your own?"

But what I think, and what many scholars think, is that Jesus is asking Peter, "Do you love Me more than the other disciples here love Me?" Jesus knows that Peter was the one who made the claim, "If everybody else falls away, I'll follow You." Peter said, "If everybody else runs away, I'll never deny You. I'll die with You."

Not only does he deny Him, but he does it three times and walks away from Jesus at one of the hardest points in Jesus' life.

The third time Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, did you catch this? It says that Peter is grieved.

I don't know if you're like me, but oftentimes a smell brings back a memory. Do you have anything like that? There are all sorts of studies that have been done on it, and we don't have the time to talk about it all today, but there's some kind of science behind a smell bringing you back to a place.

I know when I prepare for a message like this, I'll go and use the old commentaries that my grandpa gave me. When you open an old book like that, that smell brings me right back to the library during finals week when I'm cramming at about 1:00 a.m. I know y'all are probably better students than I was, but that's where I was. I go right back to the library when I open an old book like that.

When I smell fresh-cut grass, I go right back to high school two-a-days. Thank God we're past that, right?

You might have something like that. One of the things I love to do the most is grill. I know there are probably some people in here who take this very seriously. I'm a fake. I'll admit that to you. I use a pellet grill, a pellet smoker, so I cheat every time I turn my grill on instead of starting a fire like whatever you do.

Maybe your neighbor starts up their grill, and you smell that smoke and the food being cooked on it. It brings you right back to your family cookout on Saturday afternoons.

All I know is that the best people who grill will often use charcoal, and there's a distinct smell to it.

Isn't this fascinating? There are only two times in the New Testament where the word for a charcoal fire is used. The first is in John 18:18, where Peter was standing with the people who came to arrest Jesus. After Peter had already denied Jesus once, you see that he's warming himself by a charcoal fire with the same people who came to crucify Jesus.

The second time it's used is in John 21:9, when Jesus, Peter, and some others are standing around a charcoal fire. It's the same scenario. Jesus looks at him and, for the third time, asks, "Do you love Me?" It grieved Peter.

Don't you know that smell brought him right back to when he denied Jesus? When Jesus asked him the third time, standing by a charcoal fire, don't you know that he heard that rooster crow again? It says that it grieved him.

Let me ask you this morning: Does your sin grieve you? Do you love your comfort? Do you love your sin? Or do you love Jesus? Because He's called us to love Him.

Jesus died for your sin. He died so that you could have life in Jesus. His desire is restoration for you - that forgiveness would lead to you being made whole when you and I have broken things and messed them up.

If we've been restored to a right relationship with Jesus, the motive of our lives should be loving Him. Everything else follows.

The first thing Jesus addresses is a heart issue: "Do you love Me?" Peter is first restored in relationship with Jesus before his calling is restored. His heart is addressed before his actions. Who he is means more to Jesus than what he does.

You and I can't rightly serve Jesus. We can't rightly live in Jesus' name if we're not in right relationship with Him. We have to love Him.

Restoration Brings a New Mission

Restoration brings a new motive, but secondly, restoration brings a new mission.

Today is my daughter's fourth birthday. It's a big day in the Cothen house. There's a lot going on this weekend, and I am so proud of her. It is a joy in my life to watch her grow up, see how she's learning, and see how she's

growing.

One of the coolest things for me to see is how she's growing in her understanding of who God is. She's starting to understand the Bible, the stories we read to her, and the stories she's learning.

I would like to think that Macy and I have had a small part in her discipleship, but I also know that a huge part of that is thanks to our kids ministry. They meet every week, and they disciple our kids. It is not daycare. Let me be super clear on that. It's not daycare. It is kids ministry, and they're being disciplined like you and I are in here and in our life groups.

Last week, their lesson was on this very same passage. They talked about what happened a little bit before Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, where Jesus tells the disciples, "Cast your nets on the other side of the boat."

They hadn't caught any fish all night, but when they did what Jesus said, they loaded the boat and caught so many fish that the nets were about to break. They caught 153 fish. For what it's worth, that's how you know they were real fishermen - they counted every fish they caught.

My daughter brought this home last week. This is a rod and reel. I did not make this. She did, but it's pretty great, isn't it?

We got to talk about the story, about how Jesus tells them to throw their nets on the other side of the boat, and then they caught all of these fish. I thought, "Man, this is a great opportunity to be a great dad, to be a great disciple-maker, and to follow up the work the kids ministry is already doing."

I just teed my daughter up. I set her up to give such a great answer. I said, "Hey, Parker, if they didn't catch any fish before Jesus got there, and then they caught all the fish after Jesus got there, why do you think that is?"

I'm expecting her to say, "The sovereignty of God." I'm expecting her to say, "Jesus can make a way where there is no way."

She looks at me dead in the face and says, "It's probably because they were really hungry."

Still got some work to do.

But isn't it interesting that before Peter is restored to his calling, it looks like he went back to his old life? He went back to what he knew, to fishing. He went back to what was comfortable and what he could do. But he stinks at it. He's going, trying, and doing these things, but he doesn't catch any fish. The only reason they load the boat is because of what Jesus does.

Isn't that a beautiful reminder that when Jesus has called you to something, there's nothing better you can do? Even if it's daunting, even if it takes faith, if Jesus has called you to follow Him, share the gospel, and live a life of bold faith, it is worth it.

Jesus originally told Peter that he would be a fisher of men. Here, Jesus restores and reinforces that initial calling by commanding him to be a shepherd. He tells him three times, "Feed My sheep."

What does it mean to be a shepherd? It means that you serve sacrificially. It means that even if it costs you something, you serve other people. Peter is given authority from Jesus to lead the sheep after Peter himself needed to be forgiven and restored to the flock.

Check this out: Peter was a shepherd who was first a sheep.

I talked with someone this week who's a lot smarter than me, and he told me, "A pastor who hasn't known failure and grace can't shepherd sheep who have." A pastor who hasn't known failure and grace cannot shepherd sheep who have.

Peter was a shepherd who had experienced failure, but he had also experienced grace. Peter knew the truth of Isaiah 53:6:

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned - every one - to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

— Isaiah 53:6

Peter had gone astray. His iniquity had been laid on Jesus. Now Jesus is calling Peter to show the same love, grace, and forgiveness to others.

If we're called to feed sheep, what do we feed them? The Word of God. We point them to the Good Shepherd. We point people to the Jesus who never messed up and who offers us forgiveness and restoration.

Jesus first addresses Peter's heart, the motive: "Do you love Me?" Then He addresses the mission: "Feed My sheep." The motive has to be right before the mission can be done correctly.

But notice, some of us feel like we have to have this long-standing, perfect faith for about 20 years as a prerequisite to shepherding. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus first calls us to go feed the sheep, and then after that He says, "Follow Me."

So often, we come up with excuses about why we don't obey the command to feed the sheep. It's not a suggestion. Feeding sheep is not a backup plan that you resort to when your dream job doesn't work out or your plans fail.

There's some discussion in this text among scholars about the variations of what Jesus commands Peter to do. He says, "Feed My lambs," "Tend My sheep," and, "Feed My sheep." They're slightly different.

Notice that He says, "Feed My lambs." A lamb is like a baby sheep, for those of you who didn't grow up on a farm. Some people think this is Jesus reinforcing His previous command to love the children just like the adults.

But what is certain is that the call for the Christ follower is to serve others, even at our own expense. Not out of duty, not out of obligation, and not because someone told you to, but out of an overflow of the love and gratitude of knowing Christ and the restoration He brings us.

This morning, just to be honest, if you're not serving or shepherding, I would encourage you to get in the

game with us. Vacation Bible School is just a few weeks away. For many of you, your life was changed at Vacation Bible School. I grew up going every year.

We are just a few weeks away, and we still need 168 leaders to make it happen. We need people to take seriously the command of Jesus to feed the sheep, point people to Him, give them the Word of God, and point them to life everlasting.

When we've been restored, our mission is no longer about our preferences, our comfort, or our desires. It's about loving others and serving them like Christ has loved us.

I am grateful, grateful, grateful to be at a church that takes it so seriously to feed the sheep. Every time I walk by the coffee shop during the week, I see people opening God's Word, discipling younger believers and older believers together. It is a joy to be a part of that.

If you're not serving, if you're not shepherding, and if you're not plugged in, I would encourage you: Don't leave here today before you take that first step.

Restoration Brings a New Model

The restoration Jesus brings us gives us a new motive, a new mission, and lastly, it gives us a new model.

Yes, I know all three of those points start with the same letter. I just figured it might be easier to remember that way, okay?

He gives us a new model. He commands us to follow Him in life, in death, and in everything. We are called to follow Jesus.

In life, Peter followed Jesus. In the opening chapters of the book of Acts, Peter leads the early church to follow Jesus. He preaches. He leads. He performs miracles that he uses as a platform to point people to the good news of Jesus.

In 1 and 2 Peter, he tells people how to follow Jesus even in the midst of difficulty. Peter followed Jesus in his life, and Peter followed Jesus in his death.

Look at John 21:18-19. Jesus says to him:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."

This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.

— John 21:18-19

When Peter was young, he did his own thing. He often didn't listen to what Jesus called him to do. But as he got older, after this situation we've read about where Jesus restores him, he lives an entirely different life. He goes and dies a martyr's death.

That's what it means that his hands will be stretched out. He's going to do something he doesn't want to do. He will lay down his life for his faith.

John sees this happen. The author of this book sees it happen, and he writes this after Peter has already been killed.

Christian tradition - it's not explicitly in Scripture - says Peter was crucified for his faith. But as he was going to be crucified, he stopped the authorities and said, "Wait, wait, wait. Don't crucify me like Jesus, because I'm not worthy to die the same way He did."

The tradition is that Peter was crucified upside down because he didn't count himself worthy to die the same way Jesus did.

What a change. What a different man compared to the Peter who denied even knowing Jesus three times over. When this man was restored, forgiven, and given a second chance, he lived a different life.

Because you and I can know forgiveness, we can follow a different example. We can follow Jesus in everything. We're called to follow Jesus in everything - not the world, not your feelings, not the emotions of today, or what culture says about where we are.

In death, in life, in decisions, and in doubt, we look to Jesus, the One who forgives us, the author and perfecter of our faith, the One who bridged the gap between us and God and gave us a second chance that we did not deserve. When He's given us that, we live our lives in gratitude for it.

We have the model. We are commanded to follow Him. But isn't it such a sweet thing that Jesus commands us and invites us to follow Him? Jesus invites us. He loves us - broken, sinful people in need of forgiveness and restoration - and Jesus invites us to follow Him.

Responding to Restoration

As we close our time this morning, let me ask you something: Do you need forgiveness?

Right where you are, without moving around, be honest and answer this for yourself. Do you need forgiveness? Is there something in your life that needs to be restored?

Whether it's hitting a bridge with a box truck or denying the Son of God three times over, the truth is that we all need Him. We can't restore the situation that we broke in the first place.

We say this frequently: Our brokenness only leads to more brokenness. The only way we can be forgiven and restored is through the work of Jesus - what He did in His death, burial, and resurrection. He has the power and authority to give us forgiveness and thus restore us to right standing with Him. He restores us to the calling He's given us to feed sheep and follow Him. We can do that because He offers restoration to us.

This morning, there are two points of application. They're quick and easy, but profound if you live them out.

First, this is largely for the nonbeliever in the room: Come to Jesus for restoration. Stop trying to fix what you

broke on your own, and look to the sovereign God of the universe who sent His Son to live a perfect life, forgive you, and restore your brokenness.

It starts with acknowledging your sin and acknowledging your need for a Savior. But He will give you a new life, a life restored and marked by forgiveness.

For the believer this morning, it's simple, but it's difficult: Live like you've been restored.

So many of us in this room can point back to a time and a place where we asked Jesus to forgive us, where God restored us and made us right with Him. But maybe lately we haven't been living like that's the truth.

In just a moment, when we go into this time of invitation, there are going to be ministers here at the front who would love to talk to you about how you can surrender your life to Jesus and be restored.

There are people who would love to pray with you about the fact that maybe you haven't been living like God has called you to live as a born-again believer. They want to pray with you. They want to pray over you. They want to encourage you and point you back to Jesus.

Whatever is going on in your life, if you are a believer, live like you've been restored. It boils down to two very simple things: If you love Jesus, you will lead other people, and you'll follow Him.

Share the gospel as you go this week. Share the hope you have and the restoration you've experienced. Serve the local church, and follow Jesus in everything - in life, in death, and in everything.

This morning, we know Jesus has the power to forgive and restore. He has the power to give you a second chance. How will you respond?

Let's pray together.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're going to go into a time of invitation here in just a second. I want to encourage you: Maybe the Lord has been working on your heart this morning. Maybe He's been speaking to you this week, and you've been feeling like God's trying to get your attention.

Maybe you've never surrendered your life to Jesus. Maybe you've never been forgiven and restored. I would encourage you today, this morning, before you leave, to walk down the aisle, grab someone by the hand, and say, "I need Jesus."

The "so what" is that Jesus' resurrection changed everything, and Jesus brings restoration.

I know many of us in the room may feel like we're distant from the life God's called us to live. If you just need someone to pray over you, this altar is for you, this aisle is for you, and the people here at the front are here for you. The Connection Room will be open after the service.

Don't miss an opportunity to speak to someone about what God is doing in your life.

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we love You. God, we thank You for this day. God, we thank You for forgiveness and

restoration and the power and authority You have to give that to us.

God, I pray that we would live lives that are different from the world. God, I pray that we would live lives marked by feeding Your sheep and following You.

God, I pray that as we go this week, we would know that You are a God who loves us and cares for us. God, I pray that You would get the glory and the honor that You're due.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.