



Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

"The Outcast, the Doubter, and the Failure"

Preached by Pastor Brady Boyd
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"For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him."

R O M A N S 6 : 9 N I V

Summary

Have someone from your group read the following summary aloud.

On Easter Sunday, we turned our eyes to three unforgettable figures in the resurrection story—Mary, Thomas, and Peter. Each of them came face to face with the risen Jesus, not in moments of strength, but in seasons of deep brokenness.

Mary was an outcast, overlooked and misunderstood. But Jesus met her with tenderness, calling her by name and restoring her identity.

Thomas was a doubter, stuck in questions and hesitation. Jesus didn't shame him—he showed up, inviting Thomas to see and believe.

And Peter? Peter had failed in the worst way, denying Jesus when it mattered most. But even then, Jesus came looking for him—not to condemn, but to restore.

This message is a reminder that (thankfully!) Jesus doesn't avoid messy, complicated people but instead moves toward them. Toward *us*. No matter your story—whether you carry grief, questions, or regret—the resurrection is proof that your past doesn't disqualify you.

Jesus is alive! And he's still pursuing hearts with love, forgiveness, and resurrection power.

Opening Prayer

Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own.

"Heavenly Father, thank you for bringing us here today. As we talk about your resurrection power, would you help us slow down enough to really hear from you? Open our hearts to see ourselves in the stories of Scripture—not as bystanders, but as people you're still pursuing with kindness and grace.

"Remind us that you meet us right in the middle of our brokenness. You don't flinch. You don't leave. Speak to each of us today in a way that feels personal, clear, and full of hope. We're listening, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen. "

Getting Going

Share a time when someone came looking for you or overtly included you when you felt lost or alone. What were the circumstances, and how did his or her pursuit make you feel?

Discussion Questions

Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.

1. Which of the three figures (Mary, Thomas, or Peter) do you most relate to, and why?
2. How does Jesus's response to Thomas's doubt challenge our view of questioning faith?
3. What does it mean that Jesus calls Mary by name? How does this detail impact our understanding of God's personal nature?
4. Why do you think Peter returned to fishing after denying Jesus?
5. How does Jesus's pursuit of these three individuals challenge our understanding of his character?
6. What hope does the resurrection story offer to those who feel like outcasts, doubters, or failures?

Making It Personal

Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.

This week, identify an area where you've been retreating from God due to feeling like an outcast, experiencing doubt, or dealing with failure.

Take a step toward God by sharing this struggle with a trusted friend or fellow group member, remembering that Jesus actively pursues us in our brokenness.

Key Takeaways

Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.

Which of these points will you carry with you this week?

- Jesus actively pursues people in their brokenness rather than running from them.
- Doubt is not the opposite of faith but can be a stepping stone to deeper belief.
- Our failures are not final! God offers grace and new beginnings.
- Jesus meets us personally and knows us by name.

Closing Prayer

Have someone from your group close your time in prayer.

“Thank you for being the kind of God who comes after us—not just when we get it right, but especially when we don’t. When we feel like outcasts... or doubters... or total failures, you don’t turn away. No, you run toward us with open arms.

“Would you help us believe that today? Help us take even one small step in your direction instead of slipping back into the same old patterns. Remind us that your resurrection power is real—and that in your kingdom, no failure gets the final word. We trust you. We need you. We love you. In your Son’s holy name we pray, Amen.”

Key Passage | John 20:27-28

These verses were highlighted during this week’s sermon and appear here for your reference.

Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Verses for Further Study

- John 20:16
- John 21:7

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