

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

DATE: April 20, 2025

Sermon Title

“Opening the Door”

Introduction

This week, we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through His death and resurrection that we are offered a new life, a life of freedom and love and forgiveness. This is an open invitation to us, yet sometimes we think that this offer is on the other side of some locked door. We see this door that gets in our way, and think God is holding His presence back from us, but we have to realize that these doors are closed because of us. Whether it is because of assumptions we have made, doubts we have, or failures that we think disqualify us, we keep the door closed. But when we decide to open the door for Jesus, and allow His love and mercy and forgiveness enter our lives, things change forever. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- Have you ever had a door open for you that changed everything? Share that memory and experience with the group.

Seek the Word

Read John 20:1-18 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How did Mary Magdalene's assumptions about Jesus change after she encountered Him at the tomb?
- What does this teach us about making assumptions in our own faith journey?

Read John 20:24-29 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How did Jesus respond to Thomas' doubts, and what does this reveal about His characters and approach to our doubts?
- When was a time in your life where God provided answers to your doubts?

Read John 21:15-19 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- Compare Peter's denial of Jesus to this moment: Why do you think Jesus chose to restore Peter in the manner that He did?
- What does this interaction tell us about forgiveness and restoration in our relationships with Jesus?

Go Deeper

Oftentimes we attribute “closed doors” in our lives to God, and blame Him for those being present. However, we are often guilty of closing those doors in the first place, setting up barriers between us and God. What have some of those “closed doors” been in your life, put there due to doubts, assumptions, or past failures? How has Jesus invited you before, or might be inviting you now, to open those doors and draw closer together again?

Talk About It

- When you think about your day to day, do you have moments where you actively “open the door” to Jesus? What are some practical steps you can take to invite Him into areas that you may have kept closed off?
- How can you support others in your life who may be struggling with doubts or assumptions about Jesus? What role can you play in helping them see the truth of His love and grace?
- What does it mean for you personally to “follow Jesus” as Peter was invited to do? How can you commit to this path in a tangible way this week?

Wrap Up

Reminder: This time of Easter is an opportunity for us to focus heavily on the impact that the resurrection of Jesus has on us. It is not just some historical event, but a powerful spiritual moment that provides us redemption and forgiveness. The hard work is done, done on the cross, but that doesn't mean that we do not have a role to play in our relationship with God. We have to be ready and willing to open the doors of our lives and let God in. Let Him into the areas where we have doubt, or shame, or guilt, and allow the love and power of Jesus to continually shape and change your life.

Challenge for the Week: This week, identify one area of your life where you have been hesitant to let Jesus in. Spend time in prayer, asking for the courage to open that door and invite Him into that space. Share your experience with a friend, mentor, or someone else in the group for accountability.

Prayer: Close your group time by praying together, asking God to help each person open the doors of their hearts to Jesus. Pray for courage to overcome doubts, assumptions, and past failures, and for the strength to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Thank God for His forgiveness, love, and the new life he offers through the resurrection.