

## Small Group Discussion Guide — April 19, 2026

- Series: The Basics
  - Sermon: Forgiveness as the First Move
  - Scripture: Romans 5:1-8
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### CONNECT

It's not summer yet! What are some of your favorite signs of spring and/or notable ones that stand out to you?

### FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

Last week, Pete kicked off a new series on Romans, focusing on how we understand and deal with sin; individually and culturally. One question stood out: "How do we diminish our sins?" How did that resonate with you? Did it lead to any shifts in your thinking or behavior?

### ENGAGE

**Read Romans 5:1-8 as we move into the understanding of the "Doctrine of Justification."**

1. In vv. 5:1-2, Paul says we are "justified by faith" and have "peace with God."
  1. What does it mean to be *justified*?
  2. What was important about this for the people listening to Paul at this time?
  3. How does he connect justification to "peace with God?"
2. In vv. 5:3-5, Paul says to "rejoice in our sufferings."
  1. What progression does Paul describe in these verses (what leads to what)?
  2. Do you think he is describing what *always* happens in suffering, or what *can* happen? What makes the difference?
3. According to vv. 5:6-8, how is God's love demonstrated?
  1. What does Paul highlight about *when* Christ died and *for whom*?
  2. What comparison does Paul make between how people might give their lives for others and how Christ gave His life?
  3. What point is Paul trying to make about God's love through this comparison?

### APPLY

1. Catherine described our role in forgiveness as simply saying "yes and thank you." What parts of your life are you holding onto that are in need of forgiveness? If forgiveness is truly something you receive from God, not achieve, what do you think would change in how you see yourself or live day to day?
2. For many believers, there is a tension between what we know to be true (God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ), and actualizing it. Catherine points squarely

to our *insecurity* as human beings saying, “Insecurity is our serpent.” Where do you see this tension playing out in your own life right now? What is keeping you hidden from God? And, what would it feel like to flip that script and live fully in His love and grace?

3. To “rejoice in our sufferings” can be challenging in practice, to say the least. What kinds of suffering or challenges come to mind as you hear that? (Share only what you’re comfortable with.) Given our teaching this week, how, if at all, does this perspective shape the way you think about, and perhaps experience, suffering?

### **GOING DEEPER**

Catherine suggested three ways to process suffering: set your sights, shift your focus, and share your story. This week, take some time to reflect on your own experiences. What part of your story might God be inviting you to put into words, whether just for yourself or to share with someone you trust?

### **PRAYER**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for today, and for this time to come together in Your name. Thank you for sending Your only son, Jesus, who died for us as a sacrifice for our sins. May we know deeply, deeply, dear Father, that You love us; you chose to love us first. And, as we commit our lives to You, may we abide in the peace and comfort that only You can provide. Amen.

### **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE**

Philippians 4:4-7

Zephaniah 1:14-18

### **QUOTES**

“For our sake, because he loved us, God sent his Son Christ Jesus, who never did anything wrong, never failed his heavenly Father in the slightest way, to be counted as sin, so that we who have nothing to offer God but our sin might be counted as righteous as Christ.” Kevin DeYoung

“Reconciliation was made by Christ’s death, but it is not possessed till it is received. And it is received by faith; not by working and earning it, but by believing and taking it; not by resting in a theory of atonement, but by receiving a living Savior.”

J.I. Packer

“Once believers receive God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we have ‘peace with God’ (5:1-2). Therefore, we may rest in the knowledge that no circumstance is the result of punishment. Bad things do not happen because we have been bad. No event is an expression of God’s ill will against us. On the contrary, He has promised to use every circumstance, whether pleasant or painful, to guide His own toward maturity (5:3-5).” Charles Swindoll