



ENTER God's presence

Psalm 103: 1-3, 8-14

- ¹ Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases...
- ⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
- ⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
- ¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Pray: Lord Jesus, we thank You that You do not move away from broken and sinful people, but toward them with mercy, grace, and forgiveness. As we gather around Your Word now, help us not only to understand Your forgiveness with our minds, but to trust it deeply in our hearts; and by your Spirit, shape us into people who live as though the Gospel is really true. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. Spend some time sharing together the ways you have seen God at work in your life since you last met.
2. Can you think of a time someone showed you unexpected grace or forgiveness? What impact did that have on you?
3. What are some of the ways you have seen others try to deal with the guilt or shame of their mistakes or failures? What have you tried yourself?

If you have seen the movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, you will know the main plot. It follows the story of a man imprisoned for murder and



VERSE for the week

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 5:32



REMEMBER this week

**No one is beyond
God's forgiveness,
and no one is
outside God's
welcome.**

his experiences in prison (there's a bit more to it than that, but I don't want to give any spoilers). During his sentence, Andy Dufresne - the main character, makes friends and enemies on the inside. Over the course of the movie, as the viewer, we see some of those secondary characters released from prison after serving long sentences. However, for some of them, they have been so shaped and conditioned by life in the prison that upon their release they no longer know how to live as free people. The prison doors have been opened, their debt to society has been paid but something still holds them back from a life of freedom. Others become so fearful of freedom that they take action to remain in the familiar safety of their prison cells.

Spiritually, many Christians can find themselves living the same way. We know the gospel message. We believe that Jesus died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins. We can explain grace, mercy, and salvation intellectually. But often we still carry guilt, shame, fear, and self-condemnation as though the prison doors are still locked.



LISTEN attentively

Read Luke 5:17-32 in your Bible or [HERE](#). In this reading, Jesus encounters people trapped in all kinds of prisons — physical brokenness, sinful identity, social rejection, and religious pride. Yet wherever Jesus goes, He speaks forgiveness, restoration, and freedom. This week, we explore not simply whether God can forgive sins, but what might change if we truly believed we were forgiven and began living like people who had been set free.

- 4. In this reading, there are many people reacting to Jesus and what he does in different ways. The paralysed man, his friends, Levi, the tax collectors and sinners, and the Pharisees. Which response stands out to you the most, and why?**
- 5. What does the paralysed man do in this story to receive healing from Jesus? What does that say to you about what you, or others, need to do to receive forgiveness and healing from Jesus?**
- 6. Compare the reaction of Levi (a sinful tax collector) to the reaction of the Pharisees (the self-proclaimed righteous religious elite). What different attitudes towards Jesus and his forgiveness do you notice?**
- 7. Look closely at verses 23-25. What reason does Jesus give for physically healing the paralytic? What does it suggest to you that Jesus sees as the most significant issue?**



GROW deeper

It can be easy to read a passage like this and focus only on the miracle itself. But Luke wants us to notice something deeper. Jesus does not simply heal bodies or improve circumstances — He restores people to life with God and invites them into a completely new way of living. The paralysed man walks home differently. Levi leaves his old life behind. Sinners gather around Jesus with joy, while the Pharisees struggle to accept the kind of freedom and grace Jesus brings.

- 8. Many Christians believe God forgives sins, yet still live carrying shame, guilt, or fear. Why do you think it can be so difficult to truly live as though we are forgiven?**
- 9. The paralysed man walked home differently, and Levi left his old life behind to follow Jesus. What kinds of changes might we expect to see in a person who genuinely believes the Gospel is true for them personally?**
- 10. Jesus was willing to move toward people that others considered too sinful, too messy, or too far gone. What might this passage challenge us to rethink about the way we see ourselves, others, and the kinds of people Jesus welcomes?**



LIVE purposefully

Forgiveness in Luke 5 is never treated as a purely private or theoretical idea. People who encounter the grace of Jesus begin to walk differently, see differently, and relate to others differently. The Gospel does more than inform people — it transforms them. Take some time to now to reflect honestly on what it might look like to live this week not as someone still trapped inside the prison cell of guilt, shame, fear, or self-righteousness, but as someone who has truly been set free and forgiven by Jesus.

11. **Is there an area of guilt, shame, regret, or failure where you know God says you are forgiven, but you still struggle to live as though that is true?**
12. **What is one practical way you could live more freely this week because of the forgiveness Jesus has already spoken over you?**
13. **Who is someone in your life that you might normally avoid, judge, or dismiss, but whom Jesus may be inviting you to move toward with grace and compassion instead?**
14. **Who is someone in your life that you might normally avoid, judge, or dismiss, but whom Jesus may be inviting you to move toward with grace and compassion instead?**



PRAY intentionally

You might like to spend some time praying for one another and the areas you shared are a struggle for you in your journey of following Jesus at the moment. Alternatively, you can pray together the following prayer or use the Lord's prayer. However, your group decides to do it, spend some time in prayer and ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit to equip you to follow wherever he leads you.

Lord Jesus, thank You that You do not leave us trapped in guilt, shame, fear, or sin, but instead speak forgiveness, freedom, and new life over us. Holy Spirit, help us to live as people who truly believe the Gospel is real. Where we still carry burdens which You have already taken away, teach us to trust Your forgiveness more deeply. Shape us into people who walk in freedom, who welcome others with grace, and who carry those around us toward Jesus with love and compassion.

In Your name we pray, Amen.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], In Christ, your sins are forgiven! Amen