

ESCAPE ROOM



Introduction to the *Escape Room* Sermon Series

Beginning the month of April and going through June, we will begin a new sermon series called “Escape Room.” Whether you believe in Jesus or not, everyone feels trapped, has felt trapped, or is in a relationship with someone who is trapped. The traps of past failures, anxiety, or comparison confine us, like being caught in a dark room. Jesus is with us in the room, has a purpose for us in the struggle, and the power to help us escape. Through this series, we will look at each of these traps – and more! – to see how the work and Person of Jesus speaks to us in the struggles.

Each week, we’ll look at a passage from the Bible related to the weekend sermon. Our goal in reading the Bible is not only to know more about the Bible and God, but also to have a relationship with God and do what He teaches in His Word. Each of these discussion guides will take you through a passage and help you to know what God is revealing through His Word.

How to Use This Discussion Guide

- Use the summary statement for each week to quickly understand the text’s theme. You can use that as a reference point to help guide your discussion or bring it back if your group begins to get off topic.
- Use the prayer prompt at the end of each guide to help you close in prayer.

Additionally, here are some tips and guidelines to help you lead these discussions:

1. **Choose the questions that best fit your group and your time constraints.** There are a lot of questions in this guide and your group may not be able to discuss them all. That’s okay! You don’t have to ask all of them. Before your group begins, choose the questions that are most likely to help your group understand what God is saying in the text and how to apply it to their lives.
2. **Begin every group meeting with prayer.** We can only understand and apply God’s Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, invite the Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He says to His people.
3. **Keep the conversation focused on Scripture as much as possible.** Some people may want to bring in their opinions or continually refer to what David said during his message. This is helpful in small doses, but the goal of this discussion guide is to help you determine what God is saying in His Word. Encourage the group to continue to return to the Scripture. One way to do that is by saying, “That’s a great insight! Where do you see that in the Scripture we’re studying?”
4. **Encourage participation, but don’t let anyone dominate.** Encourage everyone to share insights, ask questions, and read aloud. But don’t allow any one person – even yourself, the leader – to monopolize the time. Some people are just unaware of themselves and how much they speak, so gently encourage them to listen and make space for others to talk.
5. **Help your group members to be specific in the application of Scripture.** It is easy to generalize when we talk about the Bible and how to apply it. So ask your group members specific questions – for example, “What part of the world do you sense God wants you to pray for? How will you do that? How will you make that a habit?”

We pray that you will hear God speak through His Word and that His Spirit will move you to obey Him. The Word of God – the Bible – lets us know the God who loves us and saves us. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more immersed in His story.

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Topic: Condemnation and Past Failures

Sermon Date: April 27-28, 2019

Theme: Despite our failures, we are met with the grace of Jesus in the gospel.

- **Think of a time in your life when you have experienced failure. How did this affect your posture toward God? How did this affect your relationship with others?**
- **When you make a bad choice or fail at something, what is your emotional reaction? What do your thoughts tell you at that time?**

Ask a volunteer to read Romans 8:1-4.

- **How would you define condemnation, and what does it have to do with a person's relationship with God?**
- **Why is there no condemnation for people in Christ Jesus? What does that mean?**

Leader's Note: A person under condemnation is one who has been pronounced guilty and sentenced to punishment. Because of the fallen state of humanity, we all enter this world as those guilty of sin and deserving of death. We do not have the ability in and of ourselves to have a relationship with God and receive the eternal life and grace He offers. When we fail or make a bad choice, we can experience this condemnation more profoundly. We sense we are bad, or at least make bad choices. That sense of guilt can either lead us to seek Christ and His forgiveness or can lead us to hide ourselves from Him and from others.

- **How does the truth of Romans 8:1-2—in Christ we have no condemnation—impact your life both today and for eternity?**

Leader's Note: In the Book of Romans, Paul sought to answer a basic question: How can people be righteous before God? Here he answered that in Christ we have no condemnation. We do not need to fear rejection from God. The focus here is not solely on the end of life. No condemnation means we have no reason to live with guilt in the present. To be in Christ means to be alive through Him. As Christians our lives are determined in Christ.

- **Verse 2 compares “the law of the Spirit of life” with the “law of sin and death.” What characterizes each of these ways of living?**
- **As a Christian, your life is defined by the law of the Spirit. In what ways are we tempted to live under the law of sin and death even after we become Christians?**

Leader's Note: Paul added a new dimension to the definition of life in Christ Jesus with the Spirit's law. The law of the Spirit is responsible for breaking the hold of the law of sin and of death. This law enslaved and led to death. The Spirit is freeing and life-giving. The former life relied on rules. Life in Christ relies on relationship.

- **What makes Jesus' work on the cross so significant?**

Leader's Note: God condemned sin in that He broke its power by sending His own Son. Having perfectly fulfilled the law, Jesus was uniquely qualified to serve as a sin offering. He could voluntarily take on Himself the penalty for sin and offer forgiveness to us. Christ's accomplishment is even more impressive because He submitted to sin's domain. Jesus took on Himself the same weakness we have in the flesh. He

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was subject to the full reality of temptation. He knows what we face. To be in flesh like ours underscores this truth and means the divine Jesus Christ took on a body that was like ours in every way, yet He remained sinless.

- **Read verse 4 again. Jesus' death on the cross makes us righteous in God's eyes. What part do we play in securing that righteousness?**

Leader's Note: To be righteous means to live in obedience to God and His law. Verse 4 underscores the purpose of God's condemning sin, or breaking its power. Jesus' death fulfilled the law's requirement that we be righteous, that we live in obedience to the law. We couldn't do that, but Jesus did it for us. Having fulfilled perfectly the overarching requirement, Jesus imparts His righteousness to believers. In this way the requirement of the law is accomplished in us. We now fulfill the law by having faith in Christ. We accept His gracious gift and rely on Him rather than our own strength to try to please God. That is the basic difference between living according to the flesh and living according to the Spirit.

- **From verses 1-4, how would you explain the gospel to someone who feels they are not "good enough" for God?**
- **Is there a sin in your life that causes you to question if God sees you as righteous? How can you incorporate the truth of this lesson into your life to help combat those feelings this week?**
- **Do you have current or past failures that you need to submit to God? How does this passage encourage you to admit your failures before Him? What does today's text tell you about how He will respond?**
- **The gospel is the ultimate response of grace to the failure of mankind. Who do you know that has faced failure and needs to hear the response of the gospel? How will you pursue that person this week?**

Close in prayer, asking that the reality of God's gift of grace through faith in Christ will reach the depths of praise and gratitude in our hearts.