



# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 7 April 2, 2023

“The End of the Beginning”

## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your grace and forgiveness. This week, help us to prepare our hearts to rightly commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. And help us forgive others like you have forgiven us. Lord let us be your hands, your feet and your voice in this world and share the message of love and forgiveness. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

### 1 Peter 2:24 (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

### Mark 14:66-72 (NIV)

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

<sup>68</sup> But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

<sup>69</sup> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

<sup>71</sup> He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

<sup>72</sup> Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

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## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES (cont.)

### Mark 15:29-31 (NIV)

*<sup>29</sup> Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> come down from the cross and save yourself!” <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself!”*

## INTRODUCTION

Many times, our faith deteriorates as our circumstances deteriorate. When that happens, our faith is quickly overcome by fear, and the future looks dark. The apostle Peter experienced this, and he temporarily fled his faith in Jesus.

It’s human nature to assume the worst about God when circumstances are at their worst. It can seem as if God is far away or not there at all. In the darkest hours, even Peter believed this for a time. But God was near to Peter, and he is near to us as well.

## QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any favorite Easter traditions with your family or when you were growing up?
2. What are some characteristics of someone who knows they are forgiven?
3. Read Mark 14:66-72 (on page 1).
  - What stands out to you?
  - Do you ever wonder if God could really forgive you for everything?
4. Read 1 Peter 2:24 (on page 1). In his letter to first-century Christians, most of whom he never met, Peter writes: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross...” Peter was convinced that Jesus’s death paid for your sin. What convinced him? Are you convinced?
5. Read Mark 15:29-31 (on page 1). During the sermon, Pastor Eric said “If Jesus had saved Himself, He would have been unable to save others.” Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why or why not?

## FINAL APPLICATION

Who is someone you can extend mercy to this week?