

Faith Bible Study Guide
For the Week of June 21, 2026
4th Sunday in Pentecost
“Choose Your Own Adventure: Origin Stories”
Ordinary People, Extraordinary God



Be still [2 Minutes]: As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

CENTERING WORDS/ WORDS TO PONDER:

As we gather on this Father’s Day “week,” we remember our relationship with our Heavenly Father - May this be a space where we open our hearts so we are touched, healed and transformed.

OPENING PRAYER:

Through dreams and visions, O God, you broaden the horizon and hope of your people, that they may discover the meaning of your covenant, even in the midst of trial and exile. Increase the number of those who believe in your word so that all people may joyfully respond to your call and share in your promises. Amen.

Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]

1. Take a breath. Feel your body in the chair. How is it with your soul today? *Feel free to answer several questions (or briefly all or some)*
2. Where have you experienced a fresh start recently? What is something in your life that you wish could be made new?
3. When have you received kindness or grace that you didn’t feel you deserved? How did that experience affect you?
4. Fill in the blank: “This week, I have felt most alive when _____.”
5. Fill in the blank: “This week, I have felt weighed down by _____.”
6. Is it easier for you to believe that God forgives you, or that God can actually change you? Why?

Be the Word: Scripture Lesson: Romans 6:1b-11 & Matthew 10:24-29

As you hear the word, you are invited to listen for:

- *A word or phrase that stands out.*
- *Something surprising.*
- *A question they have.*

Our new life in Christ Romans 6:1-11

¹ So what are we going to say? Should we continue sinning so grace will multiply? ² Absolutely not! All of us died to sin. How can we still live in it? ³ Or don't you know that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life. ⁵ If we were united together in a death like his, we will also be united together in a resurrection like his. ⁶ This is what we know: the person that we used to be was crucified with him in order to get rid of the corpse that had been controlled by sin. That way we wouldn't be slaves to sin anymore, ⁷ because a person who has died has been freed from sin's power. ⁸ But if we died with Christ, we have faith that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ has been raised from the dead and he will never die again. Death no longer has power over him. ¹⁰ He died to sin once and for all with his death, but he lives for God with his life. ¹¹ In the same way, you also should consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

Matt 10:24-39

²⁴ "Disciples aren't greater than their teacher, and slaves aren't greater than their master. ²⁵ It's enough for disciples to BE LIKE their teacher and slaves like their master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, it's certain that they will call the members of his household by even worse names. ²⁶ "Therefore, don't be afraid of those people because nothing is hidden that won't be revealed, and nothing secret that won't be brought out into the open. ²⁷ What I say to you in the darkness, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, announce from the rooftops. ²⁸ Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. ²⁹ Aren't two sparrows sold for a small coin? But not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing about it already. ³⁰ Even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. ³² "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before people, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me before people, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. ³⁴ "Don't think that I've come to bring peace to the earth. I haven't come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ I've come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ People's enemies are members of their own households.^[a]

³⁷ "Those who love father or mother more than me aren't worthy of me. Those who love their son or daughter more than me aren't worthy of me. ³⁸ Those who don't pick up their crosses and follow me aren't worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives because of me will find them.

L: The Word of God for ALL People.

P: Thanks be to God.

Be rooted: [Bible Study]

Getting to know the Bible

Before we begin, it's important to remember that Romans 6 is not about earning God's love. Paul has just spent five chapters talking about God's grace. God's grace is bigger than our mistakes, stronger than our failures, and freely given through Jesus Christ.

The question Paul is wrestling with is this: If God's grace is so abundant, does it matter how we live?

One of the challenges with Romans 6 is that it can easily become a conversation about rule-following and avoiding sin, when Paul's real concern is the transformative power of grace. Romans 6 comes after Paul's long argument that we are justified by grace through faith. The

question is not, "How do we earn God's love?" but rather, "How do we live now that we have received God's love?"

With that, let's delve into Julie's Bible Study...

In Romans 5, Paul has been celebrating the abundance of God's grace. God's grace is greater than sin, stronger than death, and available to all through Jesus Christ. This leads to an important question: If God's grace is so abundant, does it matter how we live?

Paul's answer is not about earning salvation or becoming perfect. Instead, he reminds believers that grace changes us. Through baptism, we are united with Christ and invited into a new way of living. Baptism symbolizes that our old identity no longer defines us. We are beloved children of God, continually being transformed by grace.

1. Read Romans 6:1-11 again.

"Should we continue sinning so grace will multiply?" (v.1)

- What do you think Paul means by this question?
- Why might someone think that abundant grace means our actions no longer matter?

Paul responds, "Absolutely not!"

- Why do you think he answers so strongly? How would you explain the difference between God's forgiveness and taking God's grace for granted?

2. Understanding Sin

- When you hear the word "sin," what comes to mind?

Many people think of sin as individual bad actions.

- What if sin is also anything that separates us from God, ourselves, others, or creation?
- Where do you see the power of sin at work in our world today?
- How have you experienced God's grace helping you overcome something that kept you from living fully?

3. Baptized into Christ (vv. 3-5)

³ Or don't you know that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life. ⁵ If we were united together in a death like his, we will also be united together in a resurrection like his.

Paul says we are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection.

- What images or feelings come to mind when you hear this?
- What do you think it means to be "buried with Christ" and "raised with Christ"?
- How is baptism more than a ritual or ceremony?
- What new life might God be inviting you into right now?

4. No Longer Slaves to Sin (vv. 6-7)

⁶ This is what we know: the person that we used to be was crucified with him in order to get rid of the corpse that had been controlled by sin. That way we wouldn't be slaves to sin anymore...

Paul writes that our old self was crucified with Christ so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

- What does it mean to you to be free from something that once controlled your life?
- How is freedom in Christ different from simply doing whatever we want?
- What habits, fears, or beliefs can keep people from experiencing the freedom God desires for them?

5. Living for God (vv. 8-11)

Paul reminds us that Christ died once for all and now lives for God.

- What does this tell us about God's victory over sin and death?
- Verse 11 says, "Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
- What do you think it means to be alive to God?
- How might your daily life look different if you truly believed that God's grace was transforming you?

Grace Reflection

Paul does not say that Christians never struggle, fail, or sin. Instead, he reminds us that our identity is no longer rooted in sin, shame, or failure.

According to this passage, who does God say you are? How does God's grace help you begin again when you fall short? Where do you need to receive God's grace today?

MORE QUESTIONS!

6. What promises does God make?

- To those who are baptized into Christ?
- For those who are buried with Jesus through baptism of death?
- If we are united together in a death like his?
- If we died with Christ?
- If Christ has been raised from the dead?

7. Which promise speaks most powerfully to you today? Why?

8. What does it mean to walk in the newness of life to you?

9. Why do you think Scripture simply says: "¹¹ *In the same way, you also should consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.*"? What does that teach us about faith?

10. What Does God's Newness of Life look Like?

- How do you understand God's newness of life to be?
- Do you believe everyone receives this newness of life?
- What are some ways "newness of life" can be to a person?

Be transformed: [Faith in Action Challenge]

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus reminds his disciples that following him is not always easy. There will be moments of fear, opposition, and difficult choices. Yet Jesus also offers reassurance: God knows us, values us, and walks with us every step of the journey.

1. Called to Be Disciples

- How would you define a disciple?
- What do you think is the difference between believing in Jesus and following Jesus?
- Who has modeled discipleship for you in your life?
- What qualities do you admire in that person?

2. Living Courageously (Matthew 10:26-31)

Jesus repeatedly says, "Do not be afraid."

- What fears keep people from living out their faith openly?

Jesus says that even the sparrows are known by God and that every hair on our heads is counted.

- How does knowing you are deeply loved by God help you face fear?

Where might God be calling you to greater courage right now?

Faith in Action:

- This week, identify one fear that has been holding you back from doing what you believe

God is calling you to do. Take one small step of faith despite that fear.

3. Living Our Faith Publicly (Matthew 10:32-33)

Jesus speaks about acknowledging him before others.

- What are some ways we acknowledge Christ with our words?
- What are some ways we acknowledge Christ through our actions?

How can acts of compassion, justice, generosity, and mercy reflect Christ to others?

Faith in Action:

- Choose one intentional act this week that reflects the love of Christ to someone else.

4. When Following Jesus Creates Tension (Matthew 10:34-36)

Jesus acknowledges that discipleship can create conflict and discomfort.

- Why do you think standing up for what is right sometimes creates tension in relationships?
- Have you ever experienced disagreement because of your faith, values, or commitment to justice?

How can Christians remain loving and compassionate even when they disagree with others?

Faith in Action:

- Reflect on a difficult relationship or disagreement in your life. Pray for the courage to speak truth with love and listen with humility.

5. Choosing What Matters Most (Matthew 10:37-39)

Jesus challenges his followers to place their commitment to God above everything else.

- What competes for our attention, loyalty, and devotion today?
- What does "taking up your cross" look like in everyday life?
- When have you had to sacrifice comfort, convenience, popularity, or certainty in order to follow your values?

Jesus says that those who lose their life for his sake will find it.

- Have there been times when letting go of something opened the door to something deeper or more meaningful?

Faith in Action:

What is one thing God may be asking you to release in order to experience new life, deeper faith, or greater freedom?

Closing Reflection

Romans 6 reminds us that we are made new through God's grace. Matthew 10 reminds us that discipleship is how we live out that new life.

As you leave today, consider:

- Where is God inviting me to live more courageously?
- How can I reflect Christ's love this week?
- What step of faith is God calling me to take next?

"Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."

That's not a command to be brave through willpower. It's an invitation to courage because we already know whose we are. For a progressive, grace-centered study, that's the bridge: Romans 6 tells us our identity is rooted in grace; Matthew 10 invites us to live from that identity, even when discipleship is costly.

Prayers & Concerns / Announcements:



*We lift up prayers for all of God's
Creation. Lord Hear our Prayers.*

continued prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Rev. Alan Mark	Frankie Montoya	Kaitlyn Sabedra	Patty Kobayashi
Alice Kajiya	Rev. Gary Williams	Karlynn Fernandez	Priscilla Kandel
Ally Kubo	Geri Shiraki	Kay Saxton	Rachel Delgado
Alvena & Tom Fukuhara	Glenn & Millie	Kian Tehrani	Raquel M. Martinez
Amy Higa	Shimizu	Kiki Hashimoto	Rose Ellison
Anthony Anderson, Sr.	Gordon Mark	Rev. Kim Montenegro	Ron Hamaguchi
Apolosi Lakotui	Grace Tochihara	Kelsey DeGracia	Rick Katsuki
Austin Maeda	Grant Hanada	Kenny Medeiros	Ruth Hirata
Barbara Tamura	Harriet Tateyama	Kyle Ichikawa	Ruth Taira
Betty Kobata	Haru Yasunaga	Larry Takumi	Sandra Minjarez-Grange
Bill Morris	Harry Manaka,	Layne Nakasone	Stan Miyasato
Brian Okumura	Sansei Rocker	Linda Jung	Steph Matsunaga
Cami Bruns	Harry & Ruth	Liz Harner	Sue Hamada
Chic Miyake	Takaki	Lucas Yniguez	Sue Hasegawa
Christine Keim	Hisako Shohara	Marion Antoku	Susan Mizuki
Claretta Foster	Ingrid Peterson	Maddie Sakurai-Lopez	Susan Slade
Cory Williams	Irene Munesato	Mae Nakakihara	Takai Finau
Dan Segawa	Jack Honda	Mary Jung	Tina Arguello
Dan Yamashita	Jacqueline Wong	Mary & Bob Keily (siblings)	Tommy Sakaguchi
Deron Tokishi	Jan Tanabe	Mary Marchand	Tseyli Mantooth
Debbie Uyeshima Dillard	Jayne Watanabe	Mary Tamura	V'hraniku & Shaun Haynes
Diane & Destiny	Jehiel Vinluan	Maxine Butcher	Victoria DelaTorre
Ueda-Banda	Jennie Shitakubo	Rev. Mike Hiranuma	Vincent Gomez
Dr. DaAnn Tsunoo	Joanne Sato	Miyoko Ahn	Wailana Bulkley
Kareko	Joelle Peelgreen	Mutsuko Nishi	Walker Wilkerson
Elaine Yoshida	Jordan Sasaki	Nancy Matsushima	Whitney Nakayama
Eleanor Nagai	Joyce Matsubara	Noah Miyagawa-Sue	Winnie Osaki
Ernie Santiago	Joye Barker	Oscar Phillip Bland Jr.	Yukio Inouye
Faith Tanaka	Julie Inouye	Pam Fink	
Florence Nakakura	Juliet Koyanagi		
Frank Sato			

those in Community Living & Homecare

Chic Miyake
Doris Kato
Emma Hariuchi
Faith Tanaka
Rev. Harry Fujimoto
Irene & Tak Ryono
Jane Kiyohara
Marion Antoku
Mary Jung
Nobie Shiokari
Ruth Hirata
Sets Asano
Sue Hasegawa
Jennie Shitakubo
Fred Oshiro
Audrey Goto

for our Worldwide Community

for the Leadership of our Country and our Churches

for the immigrants: migrants, refugees, asylees

for our siblings in Christ who struggle and in need of God's care

for those who live in through wars, unrest, and violence

for those suffering and rebuilding after national disasters and man-made catastrophes

for All Our Saints

The Miyake family, on the passing of Chieko "Chic" Miyake (June 15, 2026)

Dave & Helen Wada and family, on the passing of Helen's mother, Kazuko Maruyama (4/10/26)

The Yasunaga family, on the passing of Harue Yasunaga (5/29/26)

The Shimizu family, on the passing of Wayne Shimizu

UPDATED 6.5.2026

Prayers & Concerns / Announcements:

- Mary Tamura turned 102 (June 22)
- Graduations & Milestones
- V'hraniku & Shaun Haynes - Maliyah Joi born, (6/21)

For healing and recovery

Church Members:

- Vincent Gomez (Klinger family friend)
- Wailana Bulkley (Rhonda's friend)
- Cory Williams (Karen Matsuyama's friend)
- Eleanor Ngai (Julie's cousin)
- Joyce Matsubara
- Julie Inouye (surgery pending)
- Jennie Shitakubo
- Ally Kubo (4/17 - surgery)
- Jan Tanabe
- Christine Bone
- Audrey Goto
- Alice Kajiya

- **Larry Takumi**
- Harriet Tateyama
- Chic Miyake
- Pam Fink (recovery)
- **Destiny & Diane Ueda-Banda**
- **Victoria DelaTorre**
- **Alvena Fukuhara & Tom**
- **Harry & Ruth Takaki**
- Mae Nakakihara
- Mary Tamura
- Jan Tanabe
- Dan Yamashita

- Kenny Medeiros
- Frank Sato
- The Shimizus
- **Winnie Osaki**
- Nancy Matsushima
- Mary Tamura
- Ruth Hirata
- Faith Tanaka
- Irene & Tak Ryono
- Nobie Shiokari

Community:

- **Hisako Shohara (Jane Matsumoto's mother)**
- Patti (spinal cord surgery; Patty's sister-in-law)
- **Debbie Uyeshima Dillard (Susan's friend; thyroid cancer)**
- Lyle (Alan's friend)
- Beatrix & Daniel (Julie's friend)
- Kaitlyn Sabedra
- First Lady Racelder Grandberry Trimble
- Rev. Gary Bernard Williams
- Jeanette Davis (Rhonda Benware's mother)
- Dave Delgado's family (mom, aunts, sister)
- Andie Montoya's Mom
- Mary & Bob Kiely (siblings of Ann Kiely)
- Tseyli Mantooth

- Kim Foster & **Claretta Foster**
- Walker Wilkerson
- Kiki Hashimoto (Sue Kunisaki -friend)
- Rev's friends: Stan Miyasato, Mari'a Cleverly, (Norma, Ashley)
- Raquel Martinez (Julie's goddaughter)
- Mrs. Davis (friend of Kim Foster)
- Douglas Higa (Lynne Vinluan's dad)
- Jehiel Vinluan
- Apolosi Lokotui
- Rev. Alan Mark
- Gordon Mark
- Jackie Wong
 - Those who are HOMEBOUND

Traveling Mercies:

- Donna & Darrell Iki

World Concerns:

- All who struggle, suffer, experience pain and grief...
- US government and leadership (all of them); restoration of benefits, medical, food stamps, social security...
- War-torn countries, THE MIDDLE EAST, PALESTINE, SYRIA, IRAN, LEBANON, UKRAINE, SUDAN, MEXICO, VENEZUELA around the world...
- Natural disasters around the world...
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylees losing rights and protections...
- Health Care system
- The homeless and impoverished
- Leadership (including clergy)
- Tom Hoang (free! MAY 17th at Faith)
- Mass Shootings (Shreveport)
- The U.S. Military
- All of God's children
- May - Mental Health Month; AANHPI Month
 - Care for families (impact)
 - Food insecurity
- **Ebola Virus outbreak (continent of Africa)**

- 7.8 Earthquake in the Philippines
- Annual Conference
- Graduates

Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord

- Chieko “Chic” Miyake (6/15)
- Harue Yasunaga (5/22)
- Kazuko Maruyama (4/10); Kyle Wada’s Grandmother, Helen Wada’s mother
- Jeff Corey

And Know that He is God: Closing Prayer & Blessing

Heavenly Creator & Almighty God, thank you for delivering us from death through our acceptance of Christ and baptism in Christ. We have experienced the victory of Jesus’ resurrection. Now send us forth, as your laity, to proclaim that glorious redemption, so people will know who you are and may claim the freedom of forgiveness, be transformed, and experience new life in you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.