



Easter | Shawn Johnson | 04.05.2026

Weekly Study

SHARE

As group members settle in, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how their lives are going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

- Share a high, a low, and something interesting from this week.**

GROW

Three... Two... One...

Three.

"Let there be..."

With three words, He spoke, and all of creation into existence.

"It is finished."

With three words, He breathed his last, opening the door to redemption for all of humanity.

For three days, death thought it had won, the earth fell silent, and all lost hope.

Two.

Two men. Two brides. Two trees.

Through the first tree, a man and his bride were deceived, destroyed, and divided.

Through the second, a man (Jesus) sanctified, purified, and justified His bride (the body of Christ).

One.

One God. One foe. One final sacrifice. One empty tomb.

An unfolding story of redemption, perfectly orchestrated across space and time for generations. Sin, shame, and death were nailed to the cross once and for all, that we may find life and life to the full in Him.

A debt, paid in full, an eternity freely offered. For you. For me. For us.

This Easter story invites us to see what God has been doing all along—through two trees. In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, humanity reached for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, choosing independence over trust. Sin entered, and with it came shame, separation, and death. What was once open and unbroken became hidden and fractured. But God did not leave the story there. At another tree—the cross—Jesus stepped in where Adam fell short. He did not take; He gave. He bore our sin, carried our shame, and broke the power of death through His sacrifice. Now the invitation stands before each of us: to remain under the weight of what was lost, or to receive what has been restored. The resurrection is not just something to remember—it is the doorway into a new life, where shame no longer defines you, and grace has the final word.

Read Genesis 2:8-9,16-17 NIV, 1 Peter 2:24-25 ESV

- How did this year's Easter message speak to you?**

- When you hear "It is finished," what do you believe Jesus actually finished—for you personally?**

- Which part of this story stands out to you most right now—the first tree (the fall) or the second tree (the cross)? Why**

- How would your daily life change if you truly believed that nothing is left for you to earn?**

MOVE

As Shawn mentioned, there's a third tree in the story that we often overlook—the Tree of Life. When we read Genesis, it's easy to blur it together with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they are not the same. That distinction matters. One represented intimacy with God for life; the other was a temptation towards independence and control.

When Adam and Eve reached for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, sin entered the world—and everything broke. But what many people don't notice is what God did next. In His love, He led them away from the Tree of Life. Not out of anger, but out of mercy. Because if they had taken from it in their brokenness, humanity would have lived forever in that state—forever separated from God, forever carrying the weight of sin.

So God closed the way—not to keep us from life, but to keep us from being stuck without it.

What felt like loss was actually protection. A pause in the story to make room for redemption.

And now, because of Jesus, that path is no longer closed—it's being restored. The cross didn't just deal with sin; it reopened the way to the life we were always created for. Scripture gives us

a steady, unshakable hope: that one day, we will return—not striving, not hiding, but whole. Back to the presence we lost, back to life that doesn't fade, back to Him.

Read Revelation 22:1-4 NIV, Hebrews 2:14-15, Luke 24:5-8

- Before today, had you ever thought about the Tree of Life as separate from the other tree? What stands out to you about that distinction?**
- How would you describe the difference between “intimacy with God” and “independence from God” in your own life?**
- Which area of your life are you most tempted to choose control over trust right now? Is there an area of your life where you feel “stuck” in brokenness?**
- Have you ever experienced something that felt like a loss at the time, but later revealed itself as protection? What was that like?**
- Where have you been looking for life among things that only offer death, and what promise of God calls you back to Him? What truth has God already spoken that you need to remember as you wait for real life and freedom?**

P R A Y

This week, take some time to pray over these things:

- Gratitude — Thank Jesus for the cross, the empty grave, and what He has finished on your behalf.
- Receiving, not striving — Ask God to help you live from what's already been done, not what you feel you still have to earn.
- Freedom from shame — Invite Him to reveal and remove any shame you're still carrying.
- Trust over control — Surrender areas where you've been holding on instead of trusting Him.
- New life — Ask God to help you walk in the “newness of life” He's given you, not your old patterns.

- Awareness of His presence — Pray to recognize where Jesus is alive and at work in your everyday life.
- Hope in hard places — Bring any area that feels “dead” and ask Him to breathe life into it.
- Identity — Ask God to root you more deeply in who you are in Christ, not who you used to be.