

2020 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

May 31st - Surprised by Suffering's Significance

World Gone Wild – “Surprised by Suffering's Significance”

Pastor Aaron's Sermon this week was on “Surprised by Suffering's Significance”. He shared a story of Chet Bitterman, a Wycliffe Bible Translator who was killed by Columbian Terrorists. His death, surprisingly enough, inspired over 100 translators to move to different areas of the country instead of leaving the country, as the terrorists had hoped. In addition, over 200 volunteers joined Wycliffe to continue the work that Chet Bitterman gave his life for. We all have moments of suffering in our lives that seem to take our breath away; but God has sustained us through them, by proving how good He is, even though life is hard.

Community Prayer:

Father, we come before you today to say Thank You; thank you for your mercy and your grace, for your faithfulness in our lives, and being a very present help in our time of trouble. We don't know what the future holds, but we know you hold our future. Bless the time we spend in your Word; open our eyes to see things we need to see, and our hearts to trust You completely as the keeper of our souls; in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Opening Questions

1. Many of us have Surprise moments of suffering that have taken our breath away; share one of those moments you have experienced? How did God show up in this experience?

EXPLORATION

Read the passages below...what can you learn about what it means to follow Jesus from these passages? (Have someone read from their bible)

1 Peter 4: 12

2. Why do you think we are surprised when things like this pandemic shows up, when Peter tells us not to be surprised? We were never "promised a rose garden" but we always expect life to be a bed of roses (hold the thorns). Talk about a time when you handled the surprise well (or not so well).
3. What type of test has this pandemic been for you? How have you responded?



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Malcolm Gladwell talks about The 'advantage of disadvantage', the surprise that suffering can have significance in its DNA...

1 Peter 4: 13

4. How reassuring is it to know that you can rejoice in your suffering when you participate in some small way with the sufferings of Christ? Talk about how it feels to know your suffering has a place in the same sentence as Christ's suffering? (As for me...I'm humbled and overwhelmed by the thought)

James 1: 2-3

5. Suffering produces benefits in our lives; share an experience that resulted in you having more perseverance after a season of suffering?
6. How do you see trials as a test of your faith? Share a time when you were able to draw closer to God during a trial. What did you do?

1 Peter 3: 18-22

Remembering what Christ did for us is so significant to our relationship with Him. He suffered, died, and conquered the grave for US...the righteous and unrighteous.

7. How is this passage significant in what Christ did for you? What Christ is doing for you right now?
8. What are you doing to remember/love the significance of what Christ did?

1 Peter 4: 1

9. How do you arm yourself with Christ's attitude during suffering?

Answer Key:

- Do not fear (1 Peter 3: 14)
- Revere Christ as Lord (1 Peter 3: 15)
- Always be prepared to give an answer for your hope (1 Peter 3: 15)
- Keep your conscience clear (1 Peter 3: 16)
- Do not be ashamed (1 Peter 4: 16)

****Challenge - Pick on passage and read through It...memorize It...and watch how God will use It In your life.**

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THE TAKEAWAY

We should keep on rejoicing because the suffering is not a surprise but a plan... John Piper

We are often surprised when suffering comes our way in 2020, because we are not prepared.

As we participate and allow Jesus to do His work of transformation; we can experience the joy and the glory of God in the midst of the grittiness of life.

What would it mean for you to:

- Embrace the suffering
- Be vulnerable with your grief
- Pray, God transform me
- Empathize with others

Peter is helping us to view our present circumstances, even our suffering, in light of all that God has done and will do in the future. This can and should fill us with hope, fill us with confidence, and fill us with faith.

PRAYER REQUESTS

