



Making Sense of Suffering

1 Peter 4:12-19

Week of May 19, 2019

Objective of this study: To understand more about how God meets us in our suffering, how to respond to suffering, and how God brings good out of it.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us.]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for hearing his word. After the silence, have someone read **Jude verses 24-25** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything "jump out at you"?**

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

Word/Work (60-90 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. What did you learn about Christians currently being persecuted for their faith? What stories of Christians suffering around the world moved your heart?
3. Read Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 5:40-42; and 1 Peter 4:12-19. What is going on in each of these passages? How has Peter's attitude towards suffering changed over time? Why and how is he thinking differently by the time he writes 1 Peter?
4. Read 1 Peter 4:12-19; Romans 8:15-18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, and Hebrews 12:1-3. Look for everything the writers say about how to think about suffering, and how to respond to it.
5. What are reasons for joy when we experience suffering for Jesus? Consider the passages from #4 plus as well as the sermon quotes below.
6. How has Jesus met you in your suffering?
7. How can we stand with and support Christians who are being persecuted for their faith?

Sermon quotes: "If God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus, if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good." (China Partnership) Letter From a Chengdu Jail by Wang Yi.

"Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer" (C. H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1865), April 5, p. 96).

"There is a sweet joy that comes to us through sorrow" (Charles Spurgeon).

"None of us can come to the highest maturity without enduring the summer heat of trials" (Charles Spurgeon).

"We will be frustrated until we realize why we're here and begin living as such" (Jeff Germo).

"Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong..." (Romans 16:25a).

PRAY FOR THE CHRISTIANS BEING PERSECUTED AROUND THE WORLD, IN SRI LANKA AND ELSEWHERE, TO RESPOND WELL, TO BE COMFORTED, AND TO REFLECT JESUS.

1. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other. **Praise God together for how he works, and how he allows us to partner with him to accomplish things in his kingdom.**
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:

A. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.

B. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus.

C. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.

D. **Our missionary of the week:** Jim and Kristy Miller with NAIM. (Check out the church [website](#) for how to pray for them.)

E. **Local CR church:** Radiant Life Outreach.

Radiant Life May Drive - Men's and women's new socks and underwear, and new or gently used shoes.