

When a Child of God Suffers – August 11 & 12, 2018
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

- What does Solomon see “taking place under the sun” (1)? Notice he begins with the word “again.” Is oppression ubiquitous and unavoidable, or are there times of respite? Speak to God about the oppression you experience and witness.
- When he looks at the oppressed, what does Solomon see (1)? What are they lacking (1)? Who holds power (1)? Bring to mind an injustice of our time that fits Solomon’s description. Ask the Lord how he wants you to respond. What do you sense him speaking?
- What is *Solomon’s* response to meaningless suffering (2-3)? Consider whether he was simply in a bad mood when he wrote these words; or is something more profound happening? What can God do with a pessimistic declaration – an utterance akin to a groan? Getting through meaningless suffering often looks and sounds ugly. Pray for freedom and strength to endure it as such.

Day Two: Isaiah 35

- When God fully restores everything, how will the land be transformed (1-2, 6-7)? Blossom, burst and gush: how might these words apply to the transformation God’s people will experience?
- What thoughts and hopes can we sow in God’s people as we await the age to come (3-4)? What are some ways you’re in the camp of “those with fearful hearts”? Ask the Lord to meet you where you are and reassure you that something better is coming.
- What physical healing awaits us (5-6)? Take a moment to pray for those experiencing bodily suffering. May the age of glory break into their lives now. If that doesn’t happen, be the body of Christ by journeying with them in their waiting.
- Describe Isaiah’s picture of holiness (8-9). How hopeful this is for those who suffer at the hands of others; they will be safe! What will the experience be like for the rescued (10)? Spend a few minutes picturing yourself there; get excited about what’s to come!

Day Three: Lamentations 2:11-22

- Describe the writer’s emotional state (11). He is thought to be Jeremiah, “the weeping prophet.” His tears are God’s tears. In every way, the Lord is with us in our suffering. Respond to him.
- Describe the people’s plight (12, 21-22). What rhetorical questions does Jeremiah pose about it (13)? How can we offset the unanswerable questions that often accompany suffering? In such seasons, ask the Lord to help you think through it not as someone flailing in hopelessness, but as a child of God.
- How did the prophets fail the people (14)? What perspective do onlookers and enemies hold (15-16)? What role does the Lord play (17, 20, 22)? Compared to God’s grief in verse 11, this presents a paradox. Speak to the Lord about this.
- How do the people respond to their suffering (18-19)? Take a moment now to “pour out your heart” to the Lord and fiercely lament your own suffering. What is his response?

Day Four: Matthew 19:16-30

- Summarize the exchange the man had with Jesus (16-22). Which parts jump out at you? Why? Re-read verse 22. Play the movie of his decision to forsake Jesus. “He went away sad,” but what else do you think happened to him?

- What did Jesus say to his disciples about the rich and the Kingdom of God (23-24)? Why do you think it's next to impossible for the rich to inherit the Kingdom? We love riches because they often protect us from suffering. However, suffering often ushers us into the Kingdom. Today, if you are resisting suffering, turn to the Lord. He wants to surprise you with hope. Allow him to do so.
- How did the disciples feel about Jesus' words, and what did they ask him (25)? What reassurance did he offer (26)? Describe Peter's retort (27). What did Jesus say about the age to come (28-30)? In light of these verses, juxtapose the suffering you've endured with what awaits you. Pray for greater patience and hope.

Day Five: John 16:16-33

- Describe the confusing initial conversation Jesus had with his disciples (16-18). In response to noticing the disciples' confusion, what clarification did Jesus offer (19-22)?
- In what ways do you "weep and mourn while the world rejoices"? How do you think God responds? In what ways are you like a woman in labor? Look to the future and visualize receiving joy that can never be taken from you. What does this mean for you today?
- Summarize Jesus' remarks about asking "in his name" (23-28). What role does this play regarding joy (24)? What do you think it means to petition God in Jesus' name? Try praying this way now.
- How did the disciples respond to all of Jesus' remarks (29-30)? What causes *you* to believe Jesus? Thank him for revealing himself to you in this way. What did Jesus prophesy (32)? How did he conclude this teaching (33)? Make a list of your troubles. Then, picture Jesus as your overcomer. Receive his peace.