



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Fall Quarter - Lesson 6 - Week of October 16, 2022

Lesson: CAN SUFFERING BE A BLESSING?

Bible Verses: Acts 5:40-41; Acts 5:17-42; I Peter 3:14

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- What is your favorite thing to do during the summer months?
- Are you a person who gets angry very often?

DISCUSSION

Sometimes we find ourselves bound by the struggles of life. These struggles can develop strength of character that we will need for tomorrow.

Read: Acts 5:40-41 (ESV). The Jewish leaders called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

The apostles had been told to stop teaching the people about Jesus.

1. Have you ever been told to stop teaching about Jesus?
2. What reactions would such an order provoke from you?
3. Would fear of punishment win out or would the love God so consume you that it would be impossible to stop teaching?

The apostles kept teaching and were put into jail. Then during the night an angel opened the jail door and told them to go and stand in the temple courts and tell the people the full message of this new life.

1. What would your reaction be if an angel told you to go teach?
2. Give an example in your life when a painful experience later produced a blessing?

Even though the judge told them to stop teaching, the apostles did just as the angel told them. Early the next morning they entered the temple courts and began teaching out in the open where everyone was going to see and hear them. After all, the temple had been built so that the people could know God and it represented His presence. That was one of the reasons the apostles went there and told the people the full message of this new way.

When the Sanhedrin found the missing prisoners, they questioned the apostles about their disobedience. The response of the apostles made the Sanhedrin so angry that they wanted to kill them on the spot. But one in the Sanhedrin calmed them down and they decided just to flog them.

Read Acts 5:17-40. To truly understand what occurred to the disciples when the decision to flog them was made, we must place ourselves in their shoes during this time. Two major concerns from a severe beating like this would be the loss of blood, infection, and even death. But notice what the apostles did in the following scriptures.

Read Acts 5:41-42. We know that the apostles were not happy to be in this much pain, but there is a golden nugget of why they rejoiced. Their rejoicing was the result of having been found enough like Christ to suffer for Him. They did not let the physical pain deter them from teaching. The joy of being considered worthy was worth more than the fear of the pain. Jesus makes rejoicing possible. Read Hebrews 11:32-40 (NLT) and Philippians 3:12-14.

Have you ever wished that God could teach us the biggest lessons without the biggest heartaches? But we usually find that it is in seasons of grief and suffering when we learn the most. Sometimes when we lose a loved one, it shakes us to the core. Remember, God does not change your tragedy; He changes you through the tragedy. Have you ever been changed through the experience of a tragedy?

5 Steps to Turn Suffering Into Blessing

1. Practice acceptance (where we are is where we are).
2. Change your focus (focus on God).
3. Become humble.
4. Learn to forgive (free yourself).
5. Be willing to heal (allow God to help).

Pain and suffering cannot always be avoided in our lives. In fact, pain can be a blessing because it can warn us that something is wrong with our bodies, and suffering can cause us to seek and cry out to God.

Prayer Focus: God, help me to identify the blessings in my life that I receive as a result of suffering.