

INTRO

- What has this pandemic gifted you?

READ

John 19:28–30 | The Word of Suffering: “I thirst.”

REFLECT & RESPOND

Qu: when you hear ‘suffering’ what comes to mind?

Suffering is “the state of undergoing pain, distress, hardship or loss”. Therefore, suffering is deeply personal so we shouldn’t be quick to invalidate another’s suffering however big or small. Right now our world and the people within your group are suffering in different ways.

Jesus’ immense suffering on the Cross is encapsulated by his words, “I thirst”. Today, we want to connect his suffering to ours and be reminded of these 4 truths in light of the Cross.

PRESENCE: God is *with me*

Sometimes we can think God is distant or indifferent to our personal or global suffering. The life & death of Jesus emphatically refutes that.

Qu: In times of suffering, what difference does it make to you to see God in Christ suffer like he did on the Cross for the world?

PERSPECTIVE: God is *for me*

One of the gifts a crisis like ours offers is a chance to gain needed perspective. My sin, your sin, our world’s sin put Jesus on the cross; God’s love for our world, you, and me kept Jesus on the cross. The Cross means God is intensely for us, but sometimes the darkness of our suffering clouds this from our view.

Qu: how can your perspective of the Cross push back the darkness in times of personal struggle?

PATTERN: God is *trustworthy*

God’s pattern of working in our world is redemptive. This pattern finds its fullest expression in Jesus through his work on the Cross. Because of Jesus, we can confidently trust that no trial—virus, job loss, economic downturn—is beyond the reach of God’s transforming power.

Qu: how does the Cross remind you God is trustworthy despite your circumstances?

PURPOSE: God is *working*

One of the challenges to anyone who suffers is restoring a sense of purpose to the experience. We don’t rejoice *for* our sufferings, but we are to rejoice *in* our sufferings (Rom 5:3-4). One reason is that God meets us in new and profound ways because disruption to our security and comfort forces us to draw upon him in new ways.

Qu: how might God be working or wanting to work in and through your life during this time?

Jesus’ thirst on the Cross was so that you would never thirst again (read John 4:14; Rev 22:17).

Qu: in what way/s does this pandemic reveal a thirst (e.g. deep need/desire) in you that you’ve tried to quench through other things beside Christ?

PRAY

- Using our UP-IN-OUT framework, spend time praying for:
 - a greater personal trust in Jesus (UP), f
 - or one another’s needs (IN),
 - and then take a moment to pray for our church and city (OUT) — frontline health workers, government leaders, those suffering job loss, sickness etc.

Book Recommendation:

Where is God When It Hurts? — Philip Yancey