

All Nations Church
Life Group Study
The Season of Suffering
Week of April 3rd, 2022
Study by Wayne Arcand

Most, if not all of us have experienced suffering at some point in our lives. We do not choose to suffer, but do so as a result of accidents, illness, someone else's actions or maybe as a result of poor choices we have made. Jesus, on the other hand, chose to suffer and die that our sins might be forgiven and our relationship with the Father restored. Those who accept the Father's offer of salvation are able to do so because of Jesus' love for us and his willingness to be the sacrificial lamb. In this study, we will explore some of the ways that Jesus suffered in order that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

John 6:⁶⁷ "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰ Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" ⁷¹ (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

1. We try to make sense out of what is happening and make judgments based on our understanding what we see and hear.
 - a. What truths do we learn from John 6:67-71?
 - b. Do you think Peter was speaking for the Twelve in verse 68?
 - i. What did he not recognize?
 - c. Does it seem strange to you that Jesus would have chosen Judas? Explain.
 - i. What can we learn from this?
2. Consider *John 13:²¹ After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."*
 - a. What do you think Jesus was troubled by? One part of the answer might be obvious and the other part less so. Can you think of a couple of reasons he would be troubled in spirit?

In the following verses, we will look at Peter's denial of Jesus and what we can learn from that.

3. *John 13:³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. ³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." ³⁷ Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!
 - a. What did Jesus do in the verses prior to this passage that demonstrated his love for his disciples?
 - i. What kind of love did Jesus demonstrate?
 - ii. In practical terms, what is the lesson for us?
 - b. What does Peter's statement, "*I will lay down my life for you*", tell us about:
 - i. His commitment to Jesus?
 - ii. His confidence in his ability?
 - c. What emotion do you think Jesus was feeling when he spoke the words of verse 38?

4. Read Matthew 26:69-75.
 - a. What prophesy was fulfilled?
 - b. What was Peter's reaction when the cock crowed? Why?

5. *1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*
 - a. What principle is Peter teaching in these verses?
 - b. Contrast Peter's words in 1 Peter 4:11 to his statement in John 13:37. Considering Peter's experience in Matthew 26:69-75, what has he learned between the time when he made the statement in John 13:37 and the time he penned 1 Peter?
 - i. Is there a principle in these verses that we can apply to our life?

When we speak about the suffering of Jesus, we tend to think in terms of the scourging and crucifixion he endured.

6. In Matthew 26, we read, ³⁷ *He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.* ³⁸ *Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."* ³⁹ *Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."* ⁴⁰ *Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.* ⁴¹ *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*
 - a. Why do you think Jesus took Peter and the sons of Zebedee with him?
 - i. Who were the sons of Zebedee?
 - b. What does verse 39 tell us about the way Jesus was feeling? Why?
 - c. Considering what Jesus was experiencing, what do you think he was feeling when he asked the question, "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?"?
 - d. Discuss the meaning and practical application of Jesus' admonition in verse 41.

7. In Matthew 26, we also read, ⁶⁷ *Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him* ⁶⁸ *and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"*
 - a. What do you think Jesus felt at this time?
 - b. What character traits did Jesus portray in this situation?
 - c. What did he stay focused on?

For Reflection:

As we continue in the season of Lent, we read of the suffering Christ who was betrayed, denied, mocked, scourged and crucified. Perhaps the most painful moment was when he called out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Matt 27:6). Taking on the sins of the world resulted in Jesus being separated from the Father. In our humanity, I don't know if we can fully appreciate the pain this caused. What I can say with confidence is, I am a child of God because Jesus was willing to endure such pain and suffering. Do you have the same confidence? If you don't, come before the Lord, acknowledge you are a sinner (that you have been doing things your way), ask God to forgive you and make a commitment to put Jesus first in your life. You will never make a more important or life-changing decision.