

Common Ground Café

Sermon Discussion Guide

Sunday, June 28, 2020



Five Lessons from the School of Suffering

Isaiah 38:1-20

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Get to Know You

Would you like to know the exact date when you will die? What advantage or disadvantage would you have with this knowledge?

Study the Book

Read Isaiah 38:1-8

Suffering can make us bold.

What bold request did Hezekiah make?

Read Luke 18:1-8

The focus of this parable is on persistent prayer (v. 1)
How is God not like the the unjust judge?

Why did the judge answer the widow's request?

What do we learn about prayer from both the Isaiah and Luke passages?

Suffering can make us humble.

Read Isaiah 38:9-15

How would you describe the bitterness of soul that Hezekiah has written about in these verses? How might you or someone you are close to face these feelings/emotions?

Those of us who've had those life-threatening moments know exactly why the psalm sounds the way it does. When you face a real scare, any illusion that you're bullet-proof disappears, and the fragility and brevity of life is something you live under for the rest of your days. That's why you hear Hezekiah say, "My life is like a tent to be folded up, my life is like a weaver's pattern to be cut off from the loom."

Pastor Tom

Suffering can make us thankful.

Read Isaiah 38:16-20

What shift do we see take place in this passage as compared to verses 9-15?

Suffering can make us wake up.

When we face a threat to life it can make us more alive to the life we have, more determined to live it out to its fullest.

Hezekiah relates to this in verse 16 as "the things" by which he lives and his spirit finds life are his suffering and restoration.

How have you seen someone experience this in their life?

Suffering can make us influential.

Suffering gives us a certain authority when we speak about the sustaining power of God.

How would Hezekiah's experiences give him authority as he told his children about God's faithfulness (v. 19)? How would suffering give you the same authority?

Group Application and Discussion

In verse 17, Hezekiah said God had "put all my sins behind your back." In his case, he saw there was some connection between his sin and his suffering.

What are some hardships that we suffer as a direct result of specific sins?

Is it *always* true that suffering is a direct result of some specific sin in our lives? (Read John 9:1-3)

Personal Reflection and Application

Is your suffering making you bold, humble, thankful, wake up, and influential? Which one of these causes you the most struggle? How can you improve in this area?