

“Tailgating: All In”

Week 3 – The Suffering Church

warm-up

Group Ice Breaker: *PERSPECTIVE*

1. Hold up one simple, common household item (electric mixer, shoe horn, clothes iron, wire hanger, etc.) Ask each member of the group to spend 5 minutes listing as many non-common uses they can for the item. Ask them to put themselves in different imaginary scenarios and describe how they will use the item. For instance: if you were in a survival situation? If you were 3 feet tall? If you lived in a different time? After 5 minutes, ask each group member to share some of their creative ideas.

word & application

Revelation 2:8-11

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive: I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life. Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.”

John 16:32-33

“But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

John 10:10

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Discussion & Application: *Explore these questions through in-depth conversation.*

- According to these scriptures, where does suffering come from? Where does victory come from?
- How do we sometimes get these confused? For instance, do we often ask God why He brings situations that are actually brought by our enemies or by this world? Do we look to ourselves for solutions instead of seeking God’s path through the challenge?
- How can God use what the enemy means for harm to accomplish His loving purpose in our lives?
- As we experience victory over trials by following the Holy Spirit, how can we use what we learn to help others? (**James 1:2-5**)
- Do you have any examples of this to share?

prayer

Share recent “God moments.” Pray over requests. Pray that as we experience trials in our lives, we look to Jesus for peace and listen to the Holy Spirit as He directs us toward victory. Pray that as we experience victory we are strengthened and able to help others. Pray for opportunities to help others know victory.