

Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

Luke 22:35-53

The passage that comes to mind as we consider this portion of Luke is Hebrews 4:14-16, *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

This portion of Luke (chapters 22-23) details the challenges, temptations, and trials that Jesus endured. We tend to think of Jesus’ “temptations” simply as the time in the wilderness where, after fasting for 40 days, the devil came and tempted Him. While that was a significant testing, Jesus faces many more temptations and challenges throughout His ministry.

There are three significant ordeals that we see Jesus face in this week’s passage: His praying/pleading with the Father to *“take this cup from Me”* (vs 42), the sleeping disciples (vs 46), and the betrayal of Judas (vs 48). There was a considerable relational dimension to each. Even though Jesus knew all along that Judas would betray Him, and even though Jesus knew the plan all along for saving mankind would be by way of the cross, it doesn’t make the actual experience of going through it any less daunting, hurtful, disappointing, disheartening, upsetting, and heartbreaking.

From our perspective, knowing that Jesus experienced this and endured this can give us, as the author of Hebrews points out, encouragement and an example.

- Q. What is the most significant ordeal you have ever faced? (Describe/explain)**
- Q. Describe a relational hurt/disappointment you have experienced/endured. (Or to state it another way: describe a time when a friend really let you down.) How did you deal with it? Have you been able to come to terms with it—i.e. offer forgiveness, seek reconciliation, find peace?**
- Q. What does it make you think, how does it make you feel, to know that Jesus is well acquainted with the worst things you’ve ever experienced?**

The posture we should all strive for as Christians is what Jesus prayed: *“...yet not my will, but Yours be done.”* (vs 42) We could go as far as to say that this is what it means to be a Christian, that we live submitted to the will of our heavenly Father. It is comforting to know that Jesus wrestled with submitting His will to the Father’s too. (Granted, what Jesus was being asked to do was infinitely, momentarily, more daunting than anything we are asked to do.) Nevertheless, that fact that He was able to face His biggest fear, and trust His good Father, gives us reason to be able to do the same with the lesser issues we face. And as the author of Hebrews encourages us, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence...not confident

in getting whatever we're asking for, but confident that God loves us and His will is best for us, even if it's painful.

Q. What is your current “not my will, but Yours be done” issue that you're wrestling with?

Q. What are you currently struggling to trust God with?

To love means to face and experience pain. There really is no other way. To love someone—a spouse/significant other, a child, a parent, a friend, etc.—is to set ourselves up to be hurt. We are relational creatures, we are designed to be in relationship with others, yet this is the very source of most of the pain we experience. Why do it? Well, the alternative (isolation and loneliness) has its own sort of pain (the pain of being out of relationship). But more importantly, our God is a relational being and we are created in His image. God is love, which means God knows pain...of far greater magnitude than we can possibly imagine. And He finds it worth it. He finds us worth it.

It is instructive that Jesus was not shy about letting His disciples, His friends, know when they let Him down. He didn't avoid the awkward conversation. He shared His disappointment of them with them. But He also continued in relationship with them. That's a relationship example for us to follow. When we are hurt by others, let down by others, frustrated by others, we should not avoid them. Healthy relationships share feelings with one another...even the tough ones. We often think that the “nice and loving” thing to do is to avoid the hard conversation. Nothing could be further from the truth. Part of healthy relationships is sharing expectations and letting it be known when those expectations were not met. Jesus told the disciples to pray, and when they fell asleep, He confronted them on that. “Guys, you're letting me down here. I need you...and you need this too.” (to paraphrase).

Q. Describe a relational tension you have experienced, worked through, and came out the other side relationally stronger for it.

While I suspect that we all have experienced some level of betrayal before, I think it's safe to say none of us have experienced it to the level Jesus did. What makes what Jesus experienced so extraordinary is that He knew beforehand that Judas would betray Him. I suspect, for example, that if any of us knew ahead of time, prior to getting married, that our spouse would cheat on us, we would not marry that person. Yet Jesus chose Judas and loved him, knowing all the while that Judas would betray Him. So when Jesus tells us something that seems outlandishly hard like “*love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you.*”, He's not asking us to do anything He doesn't do Himself.

Q. Have you ever been betrayed? Explain. How would you describe the difference (both in feeling and experience) between being hurt, disappointed, let down, versus being betrayed? What is the qualitative difference?

Jesus has a beautiful and powerful way of confronting dubiousness with the truth. Both with Judas (“...are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”) and with the mob that came to arrest Him (“Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?”) Jesus makes sure the truth of the situation is not missed. It is really a demonstration of love to allow those intent on hurting Him to be confronted with the incongruity of their actions.

Q. Describe a time when someone lovingly (or perhaps not so lovingly) confronted you regarding wrong, inconsistent, or troubling behavior. Describe a time when you did the same for someone else.

Anytime when injustice occurs we could say, like Jesus, that it is a time when “*darkness reigns*” (vs 53). Our expectation is that Jesus and His kingdom (and thus, us, as His followers) are to confront darkness and strive for light and goodness to reign. But the question is HOW? The story of Jesus is the exact opposite of the story of human history. Instead of using power, force, and violence to confront evil (which only perpetuates evil) Jesus absorbs evil and doesn’t return it. He allows evil to do all it wants to Him. And the shocking thing is that He asks us to do the same. This is the significance of Jesus telling Peter to put his sword away. Force and violence is NOT how Jesus’ kingdom will be built.