

Small Group Discussion Guide — April 26, 2020

- Series: Character Studies
 - Sermon: I Thought I Knew
 - Scripture: Job 42: 1-8
-

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

What is the one thing that requires the most courage from you during the current Covid 19 pandemic? How has your courage been bolstered or renewed this week?

CONNECT:

1. What is something that you were absolutely sure of, but ended up getting it wrong? How did it feel to have to admit that you were wrong?
2. How have you responded to the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis? Are you pleased with what your response has shown you about your character? Why or why not?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Job 42:1-6
 - How does Job show his wisdom by his statement in verse 3?
 - How do God's questions to Job change his perspective?
 - What does Job mean when he says, "I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes." What did Job "see" that changed him and caused him to repent?
2. Read Job 42: 7-8.
 - What was the sin of Eliphaz and his two friends? Why is this such a serious sin in God's eyes
 - Why do you think that God would only accept their offering if Job prayed for them?
 - What does it say about Job's character, that he would pray for friends who had tried to steer him wrong?

APPLY:

1. Describe a time or event in your life from which you emerged stronger from a time of pain or struggle. How has this time changed your view of the world and your place in it?
2. Who do you look to as a paragon of faith in the midst of untold hardship? What stands out to you about that person or their situation?
3. How do you exhibit your need to control things in your prayer life? How are we exceeding the boundaries of our control, and how do we change how we approach our sovereign God?
4. Have you reached the point in your faith journey where you can honestly say that hardship and pain have become gifts to help you? Or are you fearful about what the future holds for you? What does your answer tell you about where God's place is in your life? Explain.

PRAY:

Lord God, you know our innermost thoughts, our fears and our failures, yet you love us all the same. Let our faith in you grow as we learn to see through your eyes, and to know that in all situations you are sovereign, you are good, and you are with us and for us. In every situation, the happy and the really hard, give us the faith to say, "It is well with my soul!" Amen

GOING DEEPER

1. Job is questioned by God in chapters 38-41. Quickly read through just chapter 38. What does God impress on Job? What does this chapter impress upon you about how you see God?
2. Are there any "formulaic Christianity" explanations that you cling to or have clung to in the past? What were reasons that you believed these things, and how can you truly set them aside forever?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Romans 5:3-4 Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

John 9:1-3 Now as Jesus was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth, and His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God would be displayed in him.

Psalms 27:13-14 I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Habbakuk 2:20 But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.

QUOTES:

"For the faithful Christian, is the understanding that life lived in this tension between desolation and trust is in fact the place where we will most certainly find our Lord and Master. Jesus has shown us this model of trust when asking God 'why have you forsaken me,' yet stating next, 'into your hands I commit my spirit.' There are times when life is lived between these two cries."

Fleming Rutledge

"Patience is love for the long haul; it is bearing up under difficult circumstances, without giving up or giving in to bitterness. Patience means working when gratification is delayed, it even means suffering - without lashing out."

Timothy Keller

"To be grateful for an unanswered prayer, to give thanks in a state of interior desolation, to trust in the love of God in the face of cruel circumstances, is to whisper a doxology in darkness."

Brennan Manning

"I am reminded that Alexander Solzhenitsyn spent 8 years in prison for making a few disparaging remarks about Joseph Stalin. He went into prison an atheist and came out a Christian. After he was released, the first words out of his mouth were: 'I bless you prison - I bless you for being in my life, for there lying on rotting prison straw, I learned the object of life is not prosperity as I had grown up believing, but the maturing of the soul.'"

Richard Simmons