



SMALL GROUP



CATCHING UP

- Has anything new or exciting happened in your life since the last time we gathered?
- What was one blessing you experienced this week?
- What was one trial you experienced this week?

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 34: 17-20

*The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;
he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.*

STORY BEHIND THE HYMN

In 1873 Horatio Spafford wrote the lyrics of 'It is Well' after a series of tragic events in his life. Horatio was a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago. He and his wife, Anna, had five children, four daughters and a son. Tragically their son died from pneumonia at just two years old. Later that same year, in 1871, Horatio lost much of his business in the great Chicago fires. Just a few years later, in November 1873, Horatio's wife and their four daughters boarded the ship, Ville du Havre, bound for Europe. Four days into the voyage, records show that the Ville du Havre collided with another ship. In just twelve minutes the Ville du Havre sunk in the Atlantic Ocean, and of

the 313 passengers on board, 226 people drowned, including the Spafford children. Amazingly, Anna was rescued and survived the shipwreck. She sent a telegram to her husband who booked passage on the next available ship to be with his wife. According to records, as the ship went over the place where his children drowned, he wrote the lyrics to "It is Well".

DIVING DEEP

- Do you have a favorite hymn? Why is it a favorite?
- Have you ever experienced beauty out of tragedy?
- How do you answer the question: Why do bad things happen to good people?
- In verse 17 we are reminded that God hears us, and in verse 18 that the Lord is close. How have you experienced this?
- Read 1 Samuel 21: 10-15. This event in what prompted this Psalm. How does this Psalm speak to that historical event?
- Suffering shows up in our lives in both big and small ways. It could be a tornado or work frustrations. These moments can take our eyes off of God and keep them focused on the problem. How are you aware of God in the midst of suffering you have experienced?

CONCLUSION

- What are some things we can be doing for each other in this upcoming week - prayer requests or actual things?