

# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## October 4th

### 1. When Plans Change

- a. Think of a time when something important didn't go according to plan. What was hardest about having to adjust your expectations?
- b. Paul wanted to travel and preach the good news that Jesus is King, but prison made his original plan impossible. Fiona points out that what looked like an obstacle actually opened unexpected opportunities for the good news to spread. What does that story suggest about the difference between our plans succeeding and God's work moving forward?
- c. Where have you seen something good emerge from circumstances you never would have chosen?

### 2. A Different Kind of Deliverance

- a. When you hear someone pray for God to "deliver" them from something difficult, what do you naturally imagine or hope that deliverance will look like?
- b. Fiona points out that Jesus wasn't delivered from the cross; he was given what he needed to remain faithful through it. How does that expand or challenge the way you think about God's help in difficult circumstances?
- c. How might our prayers change if we asked not only, "God, will you get me out of this?" but also, "God, how will you meet me in this?"

### 3. What Suffering Says

- a. Think of someone whose response to hardship has stayed with you. What was it about the way they lived through it that made an impression on you?
- b. Fiona says that Paul's suffering became part of his message: his life under pressure began to tell the story of Jesus—a God who gives himself away and lives for others. What do you think our responses to difficulty can reveal about what we really believe about God?
- c. Paul isn't joyful because prison is good; his circumstances are genuinely difficult. Yet he still experiences peace and gladness. What do you think makes that kind of joy different from simply trying to stay positive?

### 4. Down Before Up

- a. Most of us are used to thinking of progress as moving up—becoming more successful, capable, comfortable, or secure. Where do you notice that definition of progress shaping the way we think about a "good life"?
- b. Fiona describes the way of Jesus differently: "We go down to go up." Paul's growth doesn't come by escaping difficulty or climbing a ladder, but by knowing Jesus more deeply through it. How does that challenge the way we normally recognize growth or spiritual maturity?
- c. Fiona is careful to acknowledge that "dying to yourself" has sometimes been used in unhealthy ways. What do you think distinguishes healthy surrender to Jesus from simply ignoring your own needs, dignity, or well-being?

### 5. Jesus With Us Where We Are

- a. When life gets difficult, what are you most tempted to believe about God—or about yourself?
- b. Fiona closes by asking what it might look like to stop focusing only on getting out of a situation and instead invite Jesus into it. Why can that be such a difficult shift to make? Grace Livestream
- c. Her closing prayer includes the reminder that Jesus is already present in whatever situation we find ourselves: "You don't need anything to change for you to be there." What might it look like to become more aware of Jesus' presence in the circumstances of your life as they actually are—not simply as you wish they were?