

*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.*" C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

### The Stockdale Paradox:

- To never give up hope
- To never deceive yourself about current reality

**The brutal fact is that when sin entered into the world, death came in right along with it.**

**The message of Jesus was a message of hope that never lost sight of the fact that sin and death was making its way through the world.**

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John 9:1-5

**We have a hope tethered to the brutal fact that sin has impacted the entire world.**

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned... Romans 5:12

**Our hope is in Jesus who came to address the ultimate issue - sin that separates us from God.**

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Romans 5:17

**Your Heavenly Father's promise: you will receive mercy and find grace to help in your time of need.**

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

### Let's Connect

What's your favorite comeback story?

### Let's Talk About It

Everyone loves a good comeback story. But without a setback, those comebacks wouldn't be possible. Christians have never believed in a God who doesn't allow bad things to happen to good people. Christians believe the worst possible thing happened to the best possible person. We have a future hope of eternal life with Christ that is tethered to the brutal fact that when sin entered into the world, pain and death came right along with it. Our hope is in Jesus who came to address the ultimate issue – sin that brings suffering and separates us from God.

Micah 6:8; John 9:1-5; Romans 5:12-17; John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8; Heb 4:15-16

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Were you raised to assume there was a correlation between bad behavior and suffering? How did this influence your view of God?
- Read John 9:1-5. How does this account address the myth that good things happen to good people, while bad things happen to bad people? Has suffering ever chipped away your faith? If so, please share with your group.
- Read Romans 5:12, 17. Death reigns through sin today, but not forever. How will devoting yourself to follow Jesus, rather than devoting yourself to preserve your life, cause you to reign in life?
- Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What stands out to you from these scriptures? According to verse 14, why should we remain faithful during seasons of suffering? According to verse 16, what can we expect from God during seasons of suffering?

### Take a Step

- What step can you take this week to strengthen your faith in the midst of experiencing pain and suffering?
- SOAP reading: **Day 1:** Psalm 20, Ephesians 2; **Day 2:** Psalm 44, Ephesians 3; **Day 3:** Psalm 58; Ephesians 4; **Day 4:** Psalm 66, Ephesians 5; **Day 5:** Psalm 82, Ephesians 6; **Day 6:** Psalm 108, Philippians 1; **Day 7:** Psalm 116, Philippians 2

### Here's My Prayer

- You are the sovereign Lord who rules and reigns over all creation. My hope is in You and in Your promise of eternal life that will one day wipe away all pain and suffering from the earth.