

ICEBREAKER:

Would anyone like to share a story about how this study is impacting them?

When you are suffering.



WEEK 4

1. In part 4 of this sermon study, we looked to Scripture to answer the question: "What can you do when your suffering seems hopeless or endless?" How does that question relate to your life or the life of someone you love?
2. With that question and struggle in mind, take a moment to read aloud Romans 8:19-23. John shared about being a "co-heir" with Christ. Does the idea that you will be completely rescued out of your suffering encourage you?
3. John described an unbelievable true story. American Prisoners of War found themselves—for a few days—as victors, but they still living as prisoners in sick, emaciated bodies. Discuss life must felt like in the Japanese prison camp for those days after Japan's defeat, but before the prison camps were liberated.
4. In what ways is that physical image a picture of our present reality--as we await Christ's return to complete our rescue?
5. Take a moment to read Romans 8:19-23 again. And now, read aloud John 16:20-22. John shared a true story about the horrific pain of childbirth. Mothers who have endured the pain of childbirth willingly invite that pain again because the lifelong joy of a child eclipses the temporary pain of childbirth. Jesus says our present sufferings in this life are like those temporary birth pains. Our suffering is real and severe, but it will be eclipsed by the glory that awaits us in Christ. Discuss or reflect on this word picture.
6. What do these promises from God mean for your suffering? Does it take faith to believe that your future glory will eclipse your present suffering?
7. Which picture, story or promise (a verse from our study, or a story like childbirth or the WW2 prisoners) will you take with you this week to strengthen you?