

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Willingness to Suffer

Last Letter - Week 5

ICEBREAKER: What's your favorite quote? Why is it special to you?

OVERVIEW: The Bible says that we must be willing to suffer for Christ, and that we will suffer for Christ if we are truly following Him. But many Christians would have to admit that they are not suffering at all for Christ, nor have they ever. And they aren't sure that they are willing to suffer if the opportunity presented itself. So where does the willingness to suffer come from? Why do some Christians have it, while others do not? In 2 Timothy 2:8-13, Paul shares why he is willing to suffer. If we can develop the same perspective, we will be willing to suffer, too.

1. Read 2 Timothy 2:8-13. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Read Acts 21:7-14.
 - a. What was the prophet's message to Paul?
 - b. Why do you think God sent this message to Paul?
 - c. Do you think it was wrong for the people to beg Paul not to go to Jerusalem? Explain.
 - d. In verse 13 Paul seemed irritated that the people were weeping about his decision to go to Jerusalem. Was it wrong for them to weep? Explain.

- e. What did Paul mean that he was willing to suffer "for the name of the Lord Jesus?"
- f. In verse 14, the people gave up on trying to persuade Paul to avoid suffering and said, "The Lord's will be done." How might this story look different if everyone was singularly focused on doing the Lord's will from the beginning?
- g. How do you think it would affect your willingness to suffer for Christ if your priority and passion in life was doing God's will?

3. Jesus said in John 15:20, "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Does this mean that if you are not suffering for Christ and the gospel, you are not saved? Explain.
4. In Sunday's sermon, what were the four things that motivated Paul to be willing to suffer? Which of these truths is the most motivating and encouraging to you? Explain.
5. Do you think you are suffering enough for Christ and the gospel? Explain.

The Last Word: If you are truly a Christian, then there is no reason to fear death. If we die, we will wake up in heaven, and heaven will be infinitely better than anything we could possibly experience on earth.