

Week Beginning: 19th May 2019

Worship Series: #4 in series



lifegroups
live life abundantly

living sharing growing

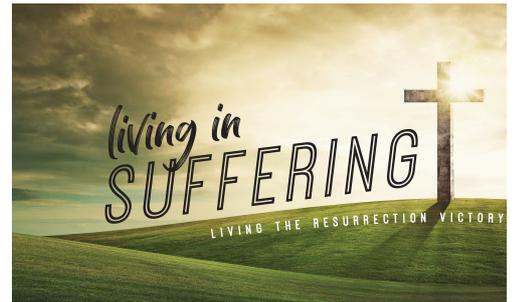
Theme Verse

He who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Revelation 7:15b-17

Remember This Week

Whatever scars you bear or ordeal you are going through know this: Christ sees you. He knows the grief that weighs heavy on your heart. He knows the depression or addiction that oppresses you. He knows the challenges you are facing and uphill struggles you are contemplating. Through it all, the Lamb bears the scars for you, continues to bless you and is present with you to lead you to life and victory forever.



My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why are you so far away when I groan for help?

Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.

Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them.

They cried out to you and were saved. They trusted in you and were never disgraced.

Psalm 22:1-5

Loving heavenly Father, you sent your Son Jesus Christ into this world to suffer and reconcile the world to yourself. Strengthen our faith, so that we remain united with him and bear the fruit of love, even when we experience trial and suffering in our own lives. We ask this in the name of the Lamb who is our Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Every scar has a story. What stories do your scars tell?*
4. *What's the worst thing that has ever happened to you because of your faithfulness to God and his Word?*

Sometimes life hurts. That's the unavoidable reality in our world. Turn on the news and you see it. Look in the mirror and your body either bears the scars physically or your heart the wounds emotionally. Being a Christian doesn't guarantee a safe passage through this world unscathed. Neither is being a Christian like a flu shot that immunises you from pain or loss. Luther once said that one of the marks of the Church is struggle. Wherever there is faith, there is also struggle and suffering. Living in suffering is not a sign of failure or even a lack of faith, but is actually testament to a deep faith that takes God seriously; that believes God's promise that suffering will never have the last word. That claims his victory which alone provides strength in suffering, hope amid hurt and gives courage to keep on living. We will explore and experience that promised triumph even if today it feels at a very real level to be another loss for you



Read Revelation: 7:1-17

5. *What is your first impression of these verses? What speaks to you? Challenges you? Confuses you?*
6. *What is the significance of John hearing the number of those who are sealed?*



7. *What are the multitude doing and why is this important? What can we learn from that?*

Revelation 7 has two scenes, 7:1–8 and 7:9–17, which describe God’s protection (sealing) and comfort for his people. This chapter forms an interlude between the sixth seal (6:12–17) and the seventh seal (8:1). It is like a dramatic pause, which keeps the reader waiting for the final act that will unfold with the seventh seal. But before that happens, before people will see the catastrophic events that take place, God wants his people to know they are safe in a world where they are enduring and will endure mounting pressure, persecution and suffering. The word ‘salvation’ in verse 10 literally means ‘rescue’. In the Old Testament the word seems to mean ‘the victory through which rescue is won’. It seems to have that same meaning here. The victory through which rescue is won comes from God and the Lamb. This truth leads the redeemed to worship and recognize with joy that everything good, noble, powerful and wise comes from God himself.

8. *This chapter reminds us that suffering is a given in life and yet we often receive suffering in our lives as an anomaly? Why do you think we are shocked when suffering occurs?*
9. *Why does suffering often make us question God?*
10. *What does it mean to say “the Lamb becomes the shepherd?” In what ways is this a comfort?*
11. *Consider the promises made to the multitude in 7:14-17. What links/imagery from the book of Exodus and what happened to the people of God do you see in these verses?*

There are 7 promises outlined to God's faithful people in these verses.

- a) **they will worship and serve God day and night**
- b) **they will live in the presence of God**
- c) **they will no longer suffer physical cravings and needs**
- d) **they will no longer suffer physical discomfort or discontentment**
- e) **they will be totally fulfilled and content physically and spiritually**
- f) **they will have access to the source of eternal life**
- g) **they will no longer suffer, feel physical pain or the pain of loss.**

12. *We have not reached the other side of the ordeal yet. We are in the midst of it. How do these promises offer comfort, hope and assurance in the midst of suffering or severe trial?*

13. *Which of these promises do you most need to hear in your own life right now?*

The Lamb who laid down his life for us is the Shepherd who leads us to living water. In him, all God’s promises find their fulfillment (2 Corinthians 1:20). Remember Jesus never promised us a bubble wrapped existence, free from suffering. What he promises is that any suffering you experience will not have the final word in your life. 'In this world, you will have trouble', Jesus tells us in John 16:33, "but take heart, for I have overcome the world."

14. *What pain do you carry that you are eager to have “wiped away”?*

15. **"Only God can turn a mess into a message, a test into a testimony, a trial into a triumph, a victim into a victory."** *How have you experienced any of that in your own life?*

16. *How can you let the scars/suffering you bear be a testimony to God? What promise of God do you need to claim to enable you to do this?*

- * Praise God for or his constant love and presence in our lives even in suffering. Thank Jesus for taking on our suffering so that our scars can be covered with his robe of righteousness. Ask the Holy Spirit for a faith that clings to Jesus in difficult circumstances.
- * Pray for all Christians that we may not bubble wrap ourselves from the world but reveal God's purpose in our lives, even in the midst of trials, struggles and suffering.
- * Ask Jesus to restore your broken, dented, scarred and mishandled lives that you may continue to endure and hang in there in times when it is easier to give up.
- * Pray for the sick, the weak, the vulnerable in the Church, community and those that you know in your own lives.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, live victoriously for the Lamb bears all your scars. Amen.

