

## Meeting God in Pain and Suffering

# Small Group Questions

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The following questions are intended to start conversations.  
Use only the ones your group finds helpful. Explore others as they come up.

Our preaching series during the season of Lent will focus on apprenticeship to Jesus (what does it mean to follow Jesus?). Questions will be provided each week to help you think about these stories *BEFORE* you listen to the sermon. It is our hope that this will encourage your own study and prepare you for the upcoming sermon.

- Can you tell one story of a painful experience you've been through that has been used for good in your formation?
- How have you experienced God in times of pain and suffering?
- Read **Mark 14:32-42**. What do you notice about how Jesus faced suffering?
- What does this text tell us about suffering?
- People often respond to emotional pain by denying, detaching, or drugging (or numbing) themselves with substances or other activities. Which are you most inclined toward? What has that looked like in your life? *This is a vulnerable question. Be as open and honest as you are able. Be gracious toward others.*
- About 40% of the Psalms are lament; that is, prayers of complaint (e.g. Ps. 13). What does that tell us about how we can pray?
- In describing Psalms of Lament, Walter Brueggemann (theologian) wrote: "Nothing is out of bounds, nothing precluded or inappropriate. Everything properly belongs in this conversation of the heart. To withhold parts of life from this conversation is in fact to withhold part of life from the sovereignty of God. Thus these psalms make the important connection: everything much be *brought to speech* and everything brought to speech must be *addressed to God*, who is the final reference for all of life." Are you able to be honest with God? Explain.
- Read **John 16:33**. What does Jesus mean? What might this mean for you?
- What could it look like for you to reorient yourself to the pain in your life as an opportunity to be formed by God?