

**Bible on table - some scriptures to look up**

people who love across the spectrum - real life not plastic/phony images - KINGDOM forever - feet firmly planted in world, hearts lifted by love and the other-thinking that drives your thing. - rescue us from apathy - pride - lie from isn't going to get better

**Prayer**

shiny happy person myth  
usually follower life falls apart  
doing right thing hard and costs a WHOLE LOT  
swimming upstream  
suffering central to following Jesus  
particularly learning to suffer well - next few weeks

**WHY - Shiny happy people**

I've spent several days over last week in home of a friend in his forties who is dying of cancer

my aunt neo natal - plastic bins struggling for life - come on little guy -  
my dad - bipolar - dream of playing a trumpet gone  
And you and I - changing community - the every day struggles of relationships, loss, pain, heartache, sickness, divorce...  
>300 funerals - 1 man at woman funeral - GOOD WOMAN - WHY???

When we begin to suffer that's often the first question - WHY???

**What are some WHY questions about someones suffering you have had? Your or others?**

something Jesus says loud and clear - exploring WHY question  
X with disciples - learning Kingdom life -  
Read v1-2

Common perception - suffering bc done something wrong - Leprosy

Conventional Wisdom (neither) - not out of line  
read V3  
Display means to buff, to shine - taking something dirty shining it up

**disciples: past/causal**

what happened? Why? What caused all this?  
Cancer? Why? What did I do? What caused it  
troubling question - what if God answered that - ran stop sign

What kind of God would give you answers? Rape - God: Oh you deserved it? Because someone else screwed up?  
What kind of harsh mean God would do that?  
X doesn't speculate on what kicked it in gear - let me tell you something about his grandparents

Done so God can shine up something bad and make something better - shine something up...  
Doesn't address what made the man blind - but what will come out of it

Here in great suffering - X interest is in what is going to come out of it

**X orientation is Future/Result**

Message translation: Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do."  
**Why do we want to blame?**

**John 9 - tonight walk through that question - WHY?**

X orientation is completely different than disciples

family dies, friends die, possessions stolen, camels were rustled (you know!)  
all at same time  
odd wager bt God and Satan

Chapter 2 - v8 - And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes - Middle East symbolism like thumping chest - worst situation!

v9 - wife says still pretending to have integrity? Curse God and die!!! She has an opinion

v 20 - don't call me Naomi - Mara (bitter) - call me Mrs Bitter - name change = permanent character change

I've tried to follow - not easy  
redeemed from the depths

**Turn to Job 1 - south really fast - worst chapter 1 in Bible**

Ruth 1 - Naomi - leaves home of Beth - marries - foreign land - 2 sons husband die - returns home with DIL Ruth

Ps 71 - Psalm of HE/She crying out soul to God - v20-21 You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. 21 You will increase my greatness and comfort me again.

I've tried to follow - not easy  
redeemed from the depths

**We can get bitter... or better**

Rough season? Betrayed? Breakup? Diagnosis? We have a choice!  
Lie is that suffering robs options - but we always have a choice  
Bitter or better? How am I going to come out of this?

**What does bitter look like? Is that ever what we really want?**

Truth? People we admire - actors, leaders, speakers, musicians, writers... whoever poured into you there are 2

1 They have to have suffered  
2 Suffering didn't make them bitter - didn't destroy them  
They feel things but made the right choices

The rare person - the leader - the hero - chooses to become better through it - to see how God shines this thing up

It's easy to run, to deconstruct, to become apathetic, to cover, to disengage, become cynical - crawl in a hole

**Time and again these scriptures we have a CHOICE - I will be redeemed**

small #s facing super army  
left home, feeling persecuted, abandoned, WHAT HAVE WE DONE

v10-13 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? [Their way of saying we don't like this!] What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

v21-30 God - Chris Angel Mind Freaks the whole thing - walls of water stand up to let Israel pass - then come crashing down on the army

v19-20 - angel of God went behind them bt them and egypt - then a MIRACLE salvation  
Then Chap 15 - Beach party! Dancing singing

Chap 16 - v1-3 desert of Sin (Las Vegas?) - v2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

1.5 chapters after HUGE miracle salvation - right after huge we made it beach party - they are grumbling against the leaders - against God - we're not going to make it! What did you do?

**Ex 14 - Chased out of Egypt - ragtag group - confidence prob to begin with**

**The danger of reading the bible is to think it is always about someone else... someone else's story; supposed to be dead and they're not - just a bit later complaining**

What will it take for me to remember God is always on the other side of my suffering? That God has always and will always rescue me?

Im like the Israelites - Hard for me to remember that God is on our side  
I ask myself that ? all the time - what will it take to make me remember? Look what he's done!

Our hearts spin/turn fast present troubles make us forget all that God has saved us in the past

Great command of Torah - Remember (Za'Char)

Thats why we have to keep remembering how he continues to give us life

Often suffering involves loss - Why isn't easier? If I just had..... (EGYPTI)  
**Greed. Anger. Resentment. of all that God hasn't given us that we think we need - deserve**  
And those lists are long - infinite - exhaustive and exhausting

Why is that? BC when we suffer, our hearts start to make lists of all the things we wish we had

Get greedy for what we should have, what he/they owe us, the way it should be

**When we suffer - not only choose Bitter Better - we also choose if we will be overcome with GREED or GRATITUDE**

choose to grow root of bitterness down into all you are or be thankful for what he HAS done and will do

Thanks for one thing... God goes, ok - anything else? is that all?  
Can't be bitter if gratitude  
**But to have gratitude we have to admit that we're angry in the first place**

But scripture is full of people who are really hacked off at God

v1-2 David is CRANKED! How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?  
2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have I sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? 3 Will you answer me, O Lord my God;

Be real - No plastic image  
Stop being polite with God  
This is supposed to be a community - a family - a place where we can be real with each other - get past the plastic surface - and we'll still be here for each other - that's how its supposed to work  
If with each other - how much more God

Scripture full of people yelling at God - and he seems to welcome it - more... more... cmon!  
Is God going - get me a lightning bolt?

Can God handle it? Our emotion? Anger? Being real? or does he run away crying? Hide behind an angel.

So in Ps 13 - David lets it rip - but then : v3-6 light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, 4 lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. 5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Im cranked... but I remember (Za'Char)

**Ps 13 - weird lie in churches that God wants nice, polite, don't say anything unkind, spout the party-line people**

One author - only thing God can't handle is your silence

Suffering? Looking for someone to blame? Wondering who was wrong? Hung up? No cause and effect.  
Look instead for what God can do - has done - will do to shine this thing up

And from a guy whose done over 300 funerals - why is a dead end

so dig into this next few weeks

**But when we do suffer we often UNIVERSALIZE my experience.**

Dumped? ALL men are pigs. But not all men - just him  
Hurt by church people - all church people are bad  
Friends betrayed you? No one can be trusted

If it seems like God forgot me, then he can't be there for anyone

One event shapes our view of God or people around us - all of life!  
All and Never language

Because it happened to me thats how it is!  
So we choose - to get bitter or better. greed or gratitude.

**And to CLOSE DOWN or REOPEN**

Open to healing or closed off? Open to new hope or convinced all will be like this

Close down and something starts to die

Are you still living in the pain and suffering of 20 yrs ago?  
TB's talk - healed or redeemed?  
Closed - shut down - all life

That you, me, WE are going to make it  
There will be better days - Suffering says TODAY is forever - never change  
Will we choose to stay open to hope? Or closed to new life, change

The lie = pain will never leave; and we choose bitterness, cynicism, greed, skepticism

But the truth is we can pray - God its a giant mess - tried everything and I can't carry it one more day - what are you going to do with THAT?

I think GOD loves those kind of prayers  
Let's see what God can do with the impossible

**PRAYER - we want to kind of people learn to suffer well ; too many buy into lie that suffering determines our lives - end up controlled - we want break free - We have choice (learning) - pray for Bros and sisters - carrying brutal stuff - what are we going to do with this - we want to take Jesus words seriously to see what you can do - all our options - miserable - help us embrace the idea that we have the choice of how to respond - what kind of people we become - and feel empowered instead of just darkness and suffering - so we can respond well.**

**Giving reminder**

No - you don't understand - we'll find someone who can make up something worse... haha

Don't know ill make it another month... a lot of us understand this...  
So whatever it is - find someone here and now that you can begin to share with - open up with - and well help you find someone who knows understands your suffering

Share some of what you are suffering - or have suffered - now or this last year maybe  
If you can't or just won't - prayer team up front  
Love talk, pray - join with you

Stand - couple thoughts - series start light then get more intense :)

And if you're ready to leave right now - Im still talking - what are you doing? - Chris deep spiritual? - [group] - we are going to take a minute - [group] up (2,3, table) move around

Let's roll up our sleeves and join in the pain, ok?

Bros and Sisters - may the peace of God rest upon you - may you become better, full of gratitude. May you become open to what this God of ours can do with your suffering - just like Jesus says. Peace to you

And if someone is sharing suffering with you - DON't come up with answers - that's not what we are doing - we are here to learn to suffer well together - to share our suffering - so let them share, ok?

**Central Topic**