



OCTOBER 10

SIGNS

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

This weekend we continued our series, *Signs*, and unpacked John 12:24-36. We learned that suffering is a real “cost” to following Jesus, and that Jesus encourages and strengthens us to draw close to Him through those experiences. This week we will be digging deeper into those truths.

To begin, let’s prepare our hearts to receive what the Lord has to say. **Take a few minutes to read this declaration from Romans 8:18 several times and meditate on it:**

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.



READ

What do these passages say about following Jesus?

The following passages highlight the reality of suffering:

- Matthew 16:24-27
- 1 Peter 4:12-13
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- Acts 5:41-42
- Isaiah 61:1-3



REFLECT

What insights do these passages give us about the cost of following Jesus?

1. In Jesus’ time it was not considered “socially acceptable” to speak of a cross, as a cross represented suffering and judgement. And yet, in Matthew 16 Jesus tells his disciples (then and now) that we are to “*take up our cross...*”
 - a. What do you think it means for us to “*take up our cross*”? Explain.
 - b. What other words or phrases jump out to you from this passage? Why?
2. Both 1 Peter 3 and 2 Corinthians 1 speak of “sharing in the sufferings of Christ.” What do you think that means?
 - a. Reread both passages. What words or phrases describe what Jesus does in us through our sufferings?
 - b. How do you think “sharing” in Christ’s sufferings can deepen our connection to Him? Explain.

3. In Acts 5, we see the Apostles celebrating that they were “worthy” of experiencing suffering due to following Jesus...
 - a. Honestly (no judgement :-D), how did you react emotionally to this passage? Why?
 - b. Why do you think that suffering did not stop the Apostles from following and proclaiming Jesus?
4. Isaiah 61 tells of the power of the Messiah to bring beauty and transformation through the suffering we often face.
 - a. Vs. 2 says that the Messiah brings “comfort.” We’ve seen this word in our other passages as well. What do you think it means?
 - b. Have you experienced Jesus’ comfort in a time of suffering? If yes, then how so?



RESPOND

In light of these insights, how is Jesus asking me to follow Him?

1. This message was taught by our good friend and brother from Uganda, Pastor Peter Kasirivu. What was one learning or insight that you gained through Peter’s teaching?
 - a. In the message, Peter shared several of his personal experiences of being a Christ-follower in Uganda. What was one thing that jumped out to from these stories?
 - b. One of the key points from the weekend message was that there is a real “cost” to following Jesus. The reality of suffering can often challenge the paradigm many have about what it means to follow Jesus.
 - i. Is suffering something you had anticipated or expected as being part of following Jesus? Why or why not?
 - ii. There’s a very real temptation to try and ignore or not acknowledge this reality. Why do you think that is? Explain.
 - iii. Many times, in Scripture, we see that suffering can lead to seeing and experiencing a much bigger Jesus. Why do you think that is? Has there been a similar experience in your life? Explain.
2. Another key point from Peter’s message is that Jesus is present in our sufferings, drawing us closer to Him. Speaking to this truth, Pastor Matt Chandler writes in his book, *Joy In The Sorrow*:

The Bible isn’t full of clean, happy living. You could argue that it’s a book more full of tears than smiles. It’s full of God working for the good of his people in the mess brought about by sin and death. God is with his people through suffering and through difficulty, so that they come out on the other side as a picture of grace and glory, and he uses them in their pain and changes the world through the results of their trials.

 - a. What insight(s) do you gain from this quote?
 - b. Has there been a person or situation from Scripture about suffering that has brought comfort or hope to you? Explain.
3. Lastly, Peter shared that one of the purposes of Jesus’ signs are to encourage and revive our faith as we walk with Him through seasons of pain and trial.
 - a. Peter spoke of how rooting ourselves in the character of Jesus is how we are then “drawn” to Him. What is one practical step you can take this coming week to pause and focus on the character and presence of Jesus in your life/circumstances?
 - b. Before leaving this study, go before the Lord in prayer. Reflect on what you’ve been learning from this message and study. Listen for His encouragement and write down anything He is calling you to remember.