



FEBRUARY 18, 2024
SUFFERING AND GLORY
MATTHEW 16:21-17:13

Introduction – Suffering Avoidance

1. It's a Problem of Theology
2. Suffering is expected for followers of Jesus
3. Suffering will happen, but glory is coming!

Conclusion

*A disciple of Jesus is someone who is **following** Jesus, is being **changed** by Jesus, and is **committed** to the **mission** of Jesus. (Matthew 4:19)*

HARBOR OF HOPE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



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Reflection Questions for Groups or Individuals:

1. *Today we talked about how we tend to avoid suffering. Can you think of any way that you avoid suffering in your life?*
2. *We said that Peter and the other disciples had a similar avoidance problem with suffering. Is there any way that the world's idea of success has impacted your expectations for your life?*
3. *Jesus said that to follow Him means to deny ourselves and take up our cross. What are some ways you can practice this?*
4. *Take some time to do the Prayer of Examen each day of Lent. This prayer will help you consider where you are avoiding suffering and seeking comfort more than God's plans. Where you seek to satisfy your selfish desires instead of God's desires for you or others. As you consider these questions, is there something you realize you are using as an escape that might be something to fast from during Lent so that you seek solace in Jesus, and practice not avoiding suffering?*
5. *Take some time to consider the reward waiting for you- to hear our King say "well done." How does this help you as you consider how to follow Jesus into suffering and self denial?*

Prayer of Examen for Lent

1. **Give Thanks.** *I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.*
2. **Pray for Light.** *I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.*
3. **Find God.** *I look at my day in the light of the Spirit. I look back over the morning, the afternoon, and the evening. What gifts were in my day? Who did I interact with?*
4. **Anything Wrong?** *I ask God to reveal where I faced the possibility of suffering or self-denial. When I faced suffering or pain, what did I turn to for relief, help, or escape? When I avoided, ignored, denied, or escaped pain, I ask God for help to accept suffering as I follow Jesus, and in His strength face it instead of avoid it. I ask Him for help to turn to Him instead of escaping to food, alcohol, or entertainment. I ask Him to help me see where I turn to self-satisfaction instead of denying my selfish desires in order to serve Him or others.*
5. **What Now?**
What have I to do now? Is there something I could fast from in order to practice Christ- focused self-denial or to remove that which I use as an escape for the unpleasant things in my life?

I look forward in hope, thanking Jesus that He forgives me, empowers me, and transforms me day by day.

