

Discussion guide for 10.29.23

Suffering. God: Suffering. Together. Luke 17:11-19

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Opening thought and questions: The world is full of much suffering, both personal, in our own circle of loved ones, and in the broader world. How do you carry an awareness of these many dimensions of suffering without becoming numb or immobilized? What do you think is the Christian's faithful response to suffering?

Scriptures to ponder: Before or after discussing some of the questions below divide up some of these Psalms of lament, find a few verses that connect to your own personal journey of suffering or that you imagine would have connected to the ten lepers. Share with the group what you have found. Psalm 6:3; 38:9-11; 10:1; 42:7; 25:1-2,16-21; 31:1-5, 9-16; 86:1-4, 14-17; Psalm 13.

Discuss: Suffering. Together.

Our story from Luke introduces us to a group of people seeking healing. Most of the other healing stories in the New Testament are with individuals. What might Jesus want us to learn from this story about ten men seeking healing together? How do we hold suffering collectively?

Discuss: Suffering. Story.

As a community of faith how does sharing our stories of suffering shape us? Think about the Anabaptist connection to *The Martyr's Mirror* for instance. Why was that book so important for so many years? In what other ways do we share stories of suffering? Share about a time when you found strength in sharing your own story of suffering.

Discuss: Suffering. Gratitude.

Carmen shared a story about her family's experience visiting the paramedics who saved her son's life. What stories do you have of times in your life when returning to say thank you or express gratitude really made a difference for you or for the person that you thanked? What is the connection between suffering and gratitude?

Homework/for Further Thought: Sharing stories of suffering can be a real gift of trust. Think about whether God is calling you to lighten your burden and share some of your pain with someone else in the community of faith. Similarly, sharing gratitude can be a sacred gift. Think about whether God is calling you to thank someone for the role they have played in your life. This is not meant to be cheap shallow positivity that discounts your real pain, but rather, is an invitation to see and to name what God has done in your life.

Prayer: "Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow. Give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow. You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness. Spirit of all comfort fill our hearts." VT 644 *Healer of Our Every Ill*