

“Making Sense of Suffering” – Hope-Filled Living

Blue Mtn Church – February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

1 Peter 3:13-18

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt distinctly like a stranger in a foreign land? Share your story and how you felt in that scenario.
2. Would you say that you ever feel this way, or like you’re “cheering at different moments of the game” than others in your life?  
-Willing to share any examples?

3. The last piece of the Tim Keller quote went as follows:

*“But modern Western culture is different. In the secular view, this material world is all there is. And so the meaning of life is to have the freedom to choose the life that makes you most happy. However, in that view of things, suffering can have no meaningful part. It is a complete interruption of your life story— it cannot be a meaningful part of the story. In this approach to life, suffering should be avoided at almost any cost, or minimized to the greatest degree possible.”*

Would you agree with this perspective and analysis of our cultural narrative? Why or why not?

4. What would you say has been your general response to the suffering accompanying this season of Covid-19 and its effects on our lives?

***Read 1 Peter 3:13-18***

5. Have you ever experienced a moment or season in your life where you felt as though you were “growing weary of doing good?”  
-Perhaps you’re feeling in a season like that right now. How can we as a community encourage and spur you on in that?
6. How do you tend to react to situations where you have made sure to do what is right and yet suffering or pain still comes?

***Read Matthew 5:3-12***

7. Go through this list of the “blessed” according to Jesus, one by one. Which, if any, attributes do you identify with as strengths in your life?  
-Which, if any, do you identify as weaknesses?
8. Take this opportunity, if you’re willing, to affirm and call out a strength or growth you’ve seen in one of these Beatitude traits among any of the members of your community.

9. Have you ever had the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with someone who had asked you specifically about why you behaved or responded to situations in a certain way?
  - Share your experiences with the group.
  - If you haven't, do you think that this really happens? Or is it generally a hypothetical?
10. What do you think it means to "share in Christ's suffering," as 1 Peter 4:13 puts it?
11. Have you ever engaged in a particular spiritual discipline for the season of Lent?
  - Share any experiences? Any engagement this year?
12. What do you think this season in the church calendar has to teach us, if anything, about sin, suffering, and repentance?