



Sermon Discussion Guide
Even If: I Can Have Hope
Sunday, February 21, 2021
Based on Pastor Jason's Message

Introduction

We're in week three of a four week series where we're looking at stories from the Old Testament about people who faced unexpected problems, and chose to trust in God and follow Him through those challenges. The question we're asking ourselves is, "Will I follow God, *even if* things don't go the way I planned?" In this third lesson we learn that even if we're suffering, we can still have hope.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/messages

Share Your Story

1. Think about a time when you went through suffering. What positive thing did you learn from it that you carry with you today?

Hear God's Story

2. Read Job 1 straight through. Very briefly, summarize what's actually happening here.
3. Most of the book of Job is a series of debates between Job and his three friends who come to him to explain why he's suffering. Pastor Jason summarized various myths the friends held onto throughout the book. Sometimes, we can agree with the friends' advice and say to ourselves false things like:
 - "I am suffering because I did something wrong."
 - "My reason for this suffering must be the correct reason."
 - "I can know exactly why I am suffering."What myths about suffering do you need to let go of?

4. The first Christians looked at Job as the example of how to get through suffering. Read what Jesus' half-brother James said about Job's story in James 5:11. What did Job believe about God that got him through his suffering and acted as encouragement for the early Christians?
(Parallel James 5:11 with Job 1, 2:10, and 19:25-26.)
5. Read Jesus' words in John 16:33, and Paul's words in Romans 5:3-5. What truths about suffering can we learn from these verses, what do they tell us about God, and how do they relate to each other?
6. Skim through God's response to Job, in Job 38-41. What can we learn about God here that can give us hope even during difficult times of hardship?

Create a New Story

7. How does what we talked about in this story help draw you closer to God?
8. What areas in your life do you need to surrender over to God so you can better represent His heart to others amidst times of suffering?
9. How can you help someone this week hold onto what is true about God?

Further Studies: Learning to Pray with Surrender

We've spent time studying the topic of suffering in the Bible, but the hardest part is incorporating this thinking into our hearts and personal lives where it matters the most. Cultivating a daily prayer life that's raw and genuine, while also keeping a healthy reverence for God, is key to truly growing in our spiritual lives.

In her book, *Prayers for When You're Mad, Sad, or Just Totally Confused*, Brittany Waggoner gives us an example of how to pray when in times of suffering. Read her example, then move onto the discussion questions:

"Dear all-knowing, all-loving Father, I am facing one of the hardest battles of my faith. You don't make sense to me right now, Father. I don't understand why things happen that you could prevent. My mind and my heart cry out for reasons and answers, yet I know that may not be for me to know right now. Everyone around me thinks I am crazy to remain faithful to you, but I know that it is my only choice. Either you are God in control of the universe or you are not God at all. I believe that you love me and want what is best for me, even when it doesn't feel that way. Give me strength and grace to fight this battle. Help me to focus on you, remember your love, and take the next step. In your almighty name, Amen."

DISCUSS

10. How do prayers with this heart behind them help us mature in our spiritual lives?
11. What does your daily prayer life look like right now?
12. What are you going to be reminded of this next week when you pray to God?
13. Spend a few moments now quietly thinking about God's love and presence in your life. What are you most thankful to Him for today?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com