

PMC SERMON "LIVE IT OUT" GUIDE

Date: 8 February 2015

Text: John 11:32-37

Title: The God who Suffers with us

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Series: The Gospel I Love

[For Group Leaders: The following serves only as a guide. Please feel free to adapt according to the needs of your group.]

1. SERMON RECAP

(Visit pmc.org.sg to listen to the sermon and download a copy of the Powerpoint slides)

- a. According to the Bible, we have a God who is emotionally affected by human action and human suffering (e.g. Hosea 11:8-9; John 11:32-37).
- b. God suffers because God is Love.
- c. "When tragedy strikes anywhere on this earth, God's great heart is the first to break".
- d. While God does not give us all the answers about suffering, He does show us how we are to live *in the midst* of it.
 - i. Live on; Carry your cross (Luke 9:23)
 - ii. Share your story; Declare His goodness (Job 19:25)
 - iii. Keep doing good, until evil is overcome. (1 Pet 4:19)

2. LIVE IT OUT

- a. Ask for 2-3 volunteers to share:
 - i. A time in their life when they suffered tremendously.
 - ii. How they managed to "survive".
 - iii. What were their thoughts toward God during that time?
 - iv. How did their faith in God help them?

(Be concise and specific in your sharing)

"Faith may make healing possible, but loving faith makes suffering and pain easier." D.L. Moody

- b. Are you suffering right now? Consider the following:
 - i. What is the specific "cross" you are carrying?
 - ii. Is there someone you can "share your story" with?
 - iii. How have you "declared His goodness"?
 - iv. What good can you "keep doing" in the midst of your suffering?

- c. Very often when we suffer, all we do is to get lost in our own suffering. When we look up to Jesus and remember He suffers with us, He gives us the perspective and strength to *continue doing good*, esp. to those in greater need.
 - i. Share with your group one person who you know is suffering right now.
 - ii. Commit to be an encouragement and to bring a message of hope to him/her this week.

3. **PRAY**

- a. People who experience great suffering often lose sight of the promises of God. They cannot understand why God would allow them to suffer.
 - i. Do you know of anyone in this situation, be it personally or as a group? Take some time to pray for them. If the person is in your group, lay hands on him/her as you pray.
- b. This Good Friday (3 April), PMC is going to serve the poor and bless them with a special meal. As a group, pray for:
 - i. God's favour as we invite our guests
 - ii. Wisdom and unity as the organising committee put together the programme and allocate manpower and resources
 - iii. Volunteers to experience God's love and joy as they prepare to serve the neighbourhood
 - iv. For patience and sensitivity as we collaborate with various agencies e.g., Pasir Ris Family Service Center, Tampines FSC, Walk-With-The-Poor families, Youth Care Center, Prison Fellowship, Downtown East ...
 - v. For God's presence and glory to be revealed during the banquet.

4. **GOING DEEPER**

- a. Read Habakkuk 3.17-18

*Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

The first three items: figs, grapes, and olives – all the permanent crops. The next item: fields – the annual crops, the staple foods, the source for most of the calorie supply. So neither the permanent nor the annual crops have yielded anything. Final two items: Flock and cattle – sheep and cows. All their livestock are dead.

Habakkuk not only foresaw the possibility that he could lose everything; he foresaw the certainty that the world as he knew it – along with everything and everyone he loved – would be destroyed terribly. But in this extremity he said not only, “I won’t accuse God of being unfaithful,” but, “I will REJOICE in God.”

Discuss how and why Habakkuk could respond in this way.
