

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

## Successful Suffering—2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Week of 2.17.2020

*God of All Comfort*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.*

*8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. 11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

Our guest speaker Dr. Matthew D. Kim, delivered a message that brought both healing and clarity. Who knew you can experience success while suffering? In fact, Matthew said that we view them as being on the opposite ends of the spectrum. Matthew said Christians should respond to intense suffering with praise. We recognize that our pain is real and our pain is hard.

- During times of suffering it's hard not to feel as if God has abandoned us or even forsaken us. Scripture tells us in **Deuteronomy 31:8 (ESV)** *8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.* In what ways or circumstances have you struggled believing that God will neither leave nor forsake you?
- How do you usually respond to suffering when you are in the midst of it? When you reflect back on it after the difficult situation is over?

- What are some ways you praise God during your suffering? Is this hard for you?
- What do you pursue for comfort to get away from or take your mind off of the suffering?
- In what ways do you believe God has equipped you to comfort others?
- How can we learn to be a disciple even in the midst of suffering?

Whenever we have the feeling of abandonment consider the story Footprints in the Sand. One night I dreamed a dream. As I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, One belonging to me and one to my Lord. After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints. This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it. "Lord, you said once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me." He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."