



## THE BIG IDEA

The Jesus who suffered  
suffers with you

## THE BIBLE

Matthew 26; Isaiah 53:1-5

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

**STORY** | Talk about your family's favorite Easter traditions.

- What are they?
- What makes them special?

### DISCUSSION

- Have you ever spent a lot of time or energy on something that was *not* worth the investment? What was it?
- Have you ever done something that was difficult, but worth it in the end? What was it?
  - When we're experiencing something difficult, sometimes the thing we need most is comfort from someone who understands what we're going through.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

### LIFE IS TOUGH WHEN WE FEEL ALONE

- When life gets tough, it's easy to feel alone – like we're the only ones who've ever experienced what we're experiencing, and no one else could possibly understand.
- Even though people tell us God is with us, it can still *feel* like we're going through life all alone when . . .
  - Your friends turn their backs on you.
  - You don't make the team, pass the test, get the job, or win the award.
  - Someone says something hurtful.
  - Your family is struggling.
- When life is difficult, we might wonder, "Why would God let this happen? Should I just give up? Is it all worth it?" This may come as a surprise, but even Jesus understands what it's like to ask questions like these.



### SCRIPTURE | Matthew 26

- We've heard, and know, that Jesus died and then rose from the dead a few days later. That's what we celebrate every Sunday.
- But before we talk about what happened *after* Jesus died (His resurrection), let's talk about what happened *before*, because I think Jesus has something to show us about suffering.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 26 together. Afterward, come back to verses 36-39.*

- In this one chapter, Jesus experienced more suffering than most of us can imagine. He said goodbye to His friends, was plotted against, let down by everyone he loved, arrested, taken to trial, sentenced to death, spit on, beaten, and betrayed by two close friends.
- We might imagine Jesus walked toward death with complete peace and composure, but the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane tells a different story.
  - The biblical accounts of this moment say Jesus was "overwhelmed," in "anguish," and "exhausted" because He knew exactly what was about to happen. They even tell us Jesus' sweat turned to blood — a condition that can happen under extreme stress.
  - In the final hours before Jesus' death, we see Him asking, "God, is there *any* other way?"
- If I were Jesus, I'd be asking another question too: "God, is this worth it? These people who've betrayed me, forgotten about me, humiliated me, hurt me, and want to kill me — are *they* really worth this pain?" If I were Jesus, I think my answer would be, "No."

### DISCUSSION

- Think about the hardest thing you experienced this year. How did that experience make you feel? Sad? Anxious? Hurt? Afraid? Alone? Ashamed? Rejected?
- Think about the emotions that were just shared. Can you think of a time when Jesus would have felt each of those emotions? Share your ideas!

### IS IT WORTH IT?

- We've already said that comfort matters more when it comes from someone who understands what we're going through. If that's true, then Jesus can understand and comfort us better than anyone, because He understands suffering better than anyone.
- When life gets hard, one of the reasons we can hold firmly to Jesus is because He understands exactly what we're going through — and He's with us every step of the way.
- So is it worth it?
  - When Jesus stared death, torture, and humiliation in the face, He decided that yes, **you were worth it.**
  - And if following Jesus ever gets hard or exhausting (and it might), the author of Hebrews would say that yes, **Jesus is worth it too.**



## WORTH IT | WEEK 1 AT-HOME DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Life isn't easy. Following Jesus isn't easy. There might be days when you want to give up, but on those days, I hope you remember that God is with you *and* understands you, because the **Jesus who suffered suffers with you.**

Sometimes experiencing pain and suffering can make us feel far from God, but what if we decided to see pain and suffering as a way to get closer to God? **What if everything hard we face is an opportunity to know Jesus better?**

- Are you disappointed? Stressed out? Lonely? Afraid? Jesus knows what that's like.
- What if, instead of asking, "God, why did you let this happen to me?" you asked, "Jesus, when did you feel this way?"

### DISCUSSION

- Read Isaiah 53:1-5. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus thought you were worth all of that suffering?
- Why should we remember and reflect on the suffering Jesus endured?
- Why do you think it's helpful to talk to God about the hard things we experience?
- Do you think we can only help or comfort others if we have experienced the same hurt they're experiencing? Why or why not?
- How can we comfort others if we haven't experienced the same hurt they're experiencing?
- Do you need any help or comfort because of something difficult going on in your life right now? Is there someone you can comfort? How can this group help?

### MUSIC | "Wounded Healer," by Audrey Assad

- As we close, let's spend a few minutes thanking Jesus for the suffering He endured on our behalf.
  - Thank Him for deciding you were "worth it" – all the pain, death, and suffering.
  - Tell Him about the ways you're suffering, and ask Him to help you know Him more through the pain you both understand.
  - Ask Him how you can help others in the middle of their suffering. How can you help them feel less alone in their pain?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play "[Wounded Healer](#)," by Audrey Assad as you reflect.
- This Holy Week, I hope you remember that we can't always avoid pain, but there a real Person who understands. Jesus knows how you feel, and His heart breaks when yours is breaking.
- Sometimes there is no greater comfort in the midst of pain than to know that somebody else gets it – so isn't it incredible to know that **the Jesus who suffered, suffers with you?** On Good Friday, that is truly good news.