

sermon

discussion guide

October 8, 2017

“Bearing Crosses”

Pastor Steve DeNeff

Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Opening Prayer:

Guide us, O God, by your Word, and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace; through Christ our Lord, Amen. ([Prayers for Illumination](#))

Discussion Starter:

Share about a time when someone seemed to read your mind? What was that like? What was your relationship to that person?

Sermon Summary:

Review the sermon as a group.

- *Review why we are talking about living the gospel. What is the gospel?*
- *What key points or ideas from this week's sermon stood out to you?*
- *How did the Spirit stir you to action or change?*
- *What other Scripture passages came to mind during the sermon and why?*
 - **Other passages referenced:** John 15:18-27; Galatians 6:2

Key sermon points:

- *Share about a time you did not feel heard because someone was distracted by technology. What do you do in order to stay present with the person in the room instead of being distracted by technology?*
- *Discuss the different levels of engaging hurt:*
 1. *Charity – Giving (usually money) to a cause. This is more about the cause than about a specific person.*
 2. *Compassion – Our hearts begin to feel what the other person feels. It is feeling alongside someone else.*
 3. *Empathy – Reading and understanding the other person, stepping into the feelings with that person. The example was a collective yawn.*
- *When are we most likely to participate in each of these levels of engagement with the hurts of others? Which of these do you feel you engage most often?*
- *Remember the story leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. (Mark 15:6-23) Share of times when you have related to each of the characters in the story.*
 1. *Soldiers: We inflict crosses on others. We cause them to experience loss, shame, disgrace, abandonment, or injustice either knowingly or unknowingly.*
 2. *Barabbas: We should be the one feeling the weight of the cross but have gotten away.*

3. *Crowd: We stand at a distance feeling sorry for the person bearing the cross but we do nothing.*
 4. *Simon of Cyrene: We get under the cross with the person bearing the cross and we help lift.*
- *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4 NLT) ...we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive... (2 Corinthians 1:4 NIV)*
 1. *We must sit in our mourning and receive comfort in order to truly comfort others.*
 2. *When has your past hurt helped you comfort someone else?*
 - *The only way through the mourning is by holding tightly to the promises of God. Those promises often come in the form of a person or the community.*
 - *You cannot experience the vitality of the local church until you become a part of the local church in a relational way.*

Next Steps:

- *Some may want to share that they are in a time of mourning and let the group bear a cross with them.*
- *Some may need to reach out to someone who is carrying a cross alone.*
- *Some may have placed a cross on another person and will need to ask forgiveness.*
- *Allow time for quiet prayer and reflection and then allow anyone who is will to share which of these steps they may need to take.*

Prayer:

Spend some time sharing ways you can pray for each other. Specifically in regards to how you will respond to the sermon.