

What Shall I Choose?: Philippians 1.20-26
[Going Deeper]

Think about your life. Have there been any situations that were so painful or difficult that you just wanted to pack it up and get out? List them.

Did you find your feelings battling your beliefs/convictions? How? What did you do?

How did those situations challenge your understanding of God? How did you make it through those situations?

Read James 1.5-8

When do you find yourself most tempted to doubt God, others or simply that things will ever be ok?

What are the nagging doubts, thoughts or fears that keep creeping back into your life? What are some things we do to avoid our doubts and fears? Does it work?

Why is it so difficult to doubt those doubts?

Read Romans 1.1-5

With everything that Paul experienced, what is his perspective on suffering?

What would it look like if we saw our own suffering not as problems to be fixed but as opportunities for God to breathe new life and new creation into the world?

Read Nehemiah 8.10

What does it look like for the joy of the LORD to be your strength in the midst of your suffering?

Why do you think Paul and so many others who have experienced great suffering have such a great experience of the joy of the LORD?

Is it possible to experience true, overflowing, abundant love and not be changed? Explain.

Read Jeremiah 6.13-14

Jeremiah is upset because the people of Israel aren't taking their situation seriously. They would rather be filled with false hope. Does that sound familiar? In what ways do you tend to look for hope instead of in the self-giving love of God?

How is this like putting a band-aid on an amputation?

Have you found yourself gaining a deeper understanding of God's abundant love and overflowing joy in the midst of your painful experiences? How?

How do you think God might want to use you to reflect His overflowing joy and abundant love in the suffering world He has planted you in?

"For to me, to live is Christ (Christos) and to die is gain (kerdos)"
(Philippians 1.21)

How can you embrace this vision of life – Christos/kerdos?

In what ways do you need Christ to become "bigger" in your life?

In what ways do others need Christ to become "bigger" in your life?

Why don't you ask Christ to do that?