

Life Group Study Guide: Loved what you heard on Sunday?
Want to go deeper? The life group study guide will help you unpack what you heard on Sunday while diving deeper into God's word.

1. *What was a childhood lesson you had to learn the hard way? How does the pain & consequence we experience in our childhood help us grow to in our adulthood? What is the danger of not experiencing some of these lessons?*
2. *When it comes to painful circumstances in your life, do you find yourself complaining first or praying first?*
3. *What insight, observation, or principle from this weekend's message did you find most helpful, insightful, or troubling? Explain.*

Over the centuries, people have had different perspectives on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Sometimes, few remember that there were even differences among the eyewitnesses that were actually there. The two thieves that were crucified with Jesus give us two different vantage points in how we tend to deal with our personal suffering, and the suffering of others.

- *Read Luke 23:32-43. What questions or insights do you have from this text? What do you think caused the penitent thief to have a change of heart about Jesus?*

- *In Luke 23:32-43 we see displayed two different ways to respond to suffering: Cursing Jesus or Calling out to Jesus. How have you experienced these two responses in your own life?*
- *Why does God allow suffering? If He has the power to protect us from pain, does it mean God is not good when He chooses not to use his power to make our lives what we desire?*
- *Have you ever experienced a season of suffering that afterwards you found yourself thankful for?*
- *Read James 1:2-4. What does James say about trials and faith? Without trials, is our faith able to grow? What was a trial that you endured that resulted in an increase in faith?*
- *Read 1 Peter 2:20-25. Peter shows us there are two reasons for suffering: Suffering for doing evil, and suffering even when we are good. How have you experienced both? What example are we given when we suffer even when we have been good?*

Digging Deeper

- *Has personal pain, or the pain of others been a hurdle for you to overcome to have faith in Jesus & His resurrection? Share with the group. What helped you to overcome this hurdle?*
- *Do you have friends or family that are in a season of pain or suffering? How can you take what you learned this week and walk alongside them in this season?*

VANTAGE POINT: “TWO THIEVES ON A CROSS”

Luke 23:32-43 // March 19, 2017

John 20:24-25 (ESV) *Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.*

The thieves' Vantage Point shows us there are...

TWO WAYS TO RESPOND TO SUFFERING:

1. CURSE JESUS.

Luke 23:39 (ESV) *One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”*

Matthew 27:38-44 (ESV) *Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads... ⁴⁴In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*

2. CALL OUT TO JESUS.

Luke 23:40-42 (ESV) *But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

WHEN WE CRY OUT TO GOD IN OUR SUFFERING, WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

1. OUR FEAR OF GOD.

Job 2:9-10 (NIV) *His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” ¹⁰He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.*

2. OUR SIN.

3. OUR LIMITS.

4. OUR NEED FOR A SAVIOR.

HOW DOES JESUS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

Luke 23:43 (ESV) *And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

❖ JESUS SUFFERS WITH US.

❖ JESUS PROMISES US PARADISE.