



Isaiah 53:3-6

Read and discuss: This prophecy of Isaiah, often read on Good Friday was fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Isaiah points to a saviour who would be despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and suffering, burdened, afflicted, pierced and crushed.

While it doesn't say that Jesus experienced, say, the trauma of a car accident or cancer, he certainly knew the worst kind of human rejection, pain and despair.

- How does it feel to hear that Jesus has passed through all these experiences?
- How might this change the way you pray for yourself or your friends?
- What about how you relate to God in tough times?

Revelation 21:4

John received a vision from the Lord that points to the fullness of joy that we will enjoy forever in the new heavens and new earth. Until that day arrives, we live by faith that the future has been secured and nothing and no-one can take it from us. So while we cannot see it with our eyes yet, we trust that it is true and God will do as he has promised.

While that's not easy - Jesus' resurrection points us to the fact that we too will rise from death with new resurrection bodies that will see and experience all that Revelation 21:4 promises.



Imagine you're having a conversation with a friend who says,

I hear people at church say things like, "God works out all things for good," and it makes me cringe. It's a nice cliché until you're the one faced with a family that's being torn to pieces by cancer. When my mum died someone told me, "your mum's at peace now, it's all part of God's plan." Why would I want to have anything to do with that kind of God?

- How might you respond to what they're saying?
- What do you think might be a helpful way to care for someone in this situation?
- How can a church community help absorb the suffering people face in life? (Consider also the different ages and experiences often present in a faith community)



- For the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit soothing our hearts in difficult times
- For wisdom as we come alongside people who are in pain
- For people to know Jesus and cling to him in their time of need
- For the power of the resurrection to take on new meaning for people in times of need



Bless each other with these words or make up your own.

Jesus meets you in every situation you face and will never leave you. Amen

RESOURCES

Yancey, Philip *The Question That Never Goes Away*
Grand Rapids Michigan, Zondervan, 2013

Yancey, Philip *Where is God When it Hurts?*
Grand Rapids Michigan, Zondervan, 2013

Keller, Tim *Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering*
New York New York, Penguin Books, 2013

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