



STUDY GUIDE

PRAYER **04.15.2018**

[start with prayer]

Missions Prayer Focus this week:
True Freedom Ministries

Pray for fruit from the Mexico team that will just have returned (i.e. that conversations will be followed up on, people will come to know Christ, etc.).

[set up]

Is the problem of evil and suffering a problem you wrestle with? A better question might be, how do you deal with the evil and suffering you see in the world?

The problem of evil and suffering is a problem that others you know wrestle with (believers or unbelievers). What have you done in the past to try and help?

[digging deeper]

Read Psalm 22.

What is the tone of the first 21 verses of Psalm 22? Do you ever pray this way? What holds you back from praying this way?

David is encouraged by the fact that God sustained his forefathers (vv. 3-5). Are there any people you know or people you have read stories about who have encouraged your trust in God because you've seen God's faithfulness in their lives?

Read the following passages as a group: Mark 14:32-36, 15:16-39; John 19:28-30.

Make a list of all the links between Psalm 22 and what Jesus experiences in his crucifixion.

How could knowing that God has entered into suffering and experienced it help you as you face evil and suffering in your life?

What is the tone of verses 22-31? What are some things that strike you about this passage?

Christians oftentimes view heaven as their ultimate hope, but the Bible actually says very little about heaven and more often speaks of a new creation, or a "new heavens and a new earth." This is the ultimate hope towards which Christians look. Verses 22-31 foreshadow this ultimate hope, which is most clearly laid out in Revelation 21-22. If you have time in your group, read Revelation 21:1-22:5.

Do you ever spend time thinking about the new heavens and the new earth to come? How does knowing our hope encourage us as we face evil and suffering today?

[living it out]

Of the three responses laid out in Psalm 22 for how we respond to evil and suffering (look up, look back, look ahead), which do you do the most often, and which is the hardest for you to do?

What is one way you can practically respond this week to evil and suffering either in your life or in this world (i.e. how can you implement looking up, back, and ahead?)

[end with prayer]

Pray as a group in response to the evil and suffering that group members are experiencing (or those who they know) and/or the evil and suffering in our world. Let the look up, look back, and look ahead model help you as you pray.