

Prayers for Faith

We are continuing our study on bringing our deepest griefs and needs to Jesus to receive his comfort, healing, and help. We are deeply saddened by the recent events in Ukraine and want to stand with our brothers and sisters during this time, lifting our voices and hearts in prayer to our Lord and Savior. We know he hears us, and we believe that he will guide and help us during this very difficult season.

The scriptures that we've selected for our Bible Study this week are simply from the seed of the Gospel: our faith. While we believe that the Gospel is the best news for our world, the power of this message in our lives begins with our faith. Faith is not only trusting that this message is true but believing that the message of Christ has real power to transform us and the world around us. We will be reading verses about the role of faith in the message of Christ and praying through faith for our Lord to move with power in our personal and national situations.

Review

From the last three studies, we walked through together some of the purposes of suffering and began to make prayer statements that allow us to experience for ourselves the beauty of these purposes. Let's read what we learned about some of these purposes:

Isaiah 53 and James 5:13-15 teaches us that God allows us to suffer to draw us closer to him, to depend on him, and to experience his love, peace, strength, and comfort. Suffering teaches us to trust God through all situations, to long for him, and to search for him. Suffering allows us to go deeper into our relationship with Jesus more than we've ever experienced in our lives. We begin to understand what matters the most in life: our relationship with Christ. We realize that we can no longer put our faith and hope in this world and that everlasting faith, hope, and love are found only in Jesus Christ. In suffering, we long for eternal relief and the hope of heaven becomes stronger in our hearts. We no longer fear death, but we long to live in peace and rest with our heavenly Father and want to invite others into eternal life to gain that peace.

Suffering helps us to receive love from people who genuinely care for us. In a deep and meaningful way, we experience human kindness and friendship that can last a lifetime. We experience Christ's love through the hands of people around us. As we experience this love, we are then able to turn and love others.

Through suffering, we learn compassion for other people. We can now share real experiences with others who are going through the same challenges. We understand better how they are feeling, how they are responding, and why they might be behaving in a certain way. We learn not to judge one another. We learn how to be patient with others in their grief. We learn how to support, encourage, and pray with others who are hurting. We can help people to recognize the signs of unhealthy grief and point them to the One who can comfort and heal them fully: Jesus Christ. We can make an eternal difference in the lives of others who are also suffering.

Isaiah 53:11 says that after his suffering, Jesus saw the light of heaven, the light of our salvation, and the joy of finishing his life faithfully. In this, Jesus was filled with gladness because he had won the battle for our souls and for us.

For us to finish faithfully, we must begin with the message of our faith. What does Jesus ask us to believe and why is this belief important? This week, we will discuss what the New Testament says about this message, our faith, and the glory that our faith can bring us during our suffering.

Lessons 1

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...

John, one of the first followers of Jesus, tells us who Jesus is. What do we learn from each verse?

- The Word became human, so we know that the Word is Jesus. Jesus is God's spoken words.
- Since the Word is Jesus, then in the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.
- Jesus is the creator all things (God spoke through his Word, Jesus).
- In Jesus is life and the light for all mankind.
- He is the source of life and light.
- His light cannot be overcome by the darkness.

How can these words help us and give us courage when we are facing challenges?

- Nothing good or bad can happen to us outside of the will of God. Maybe he is trying to teach us patience or something else. So, we can accept it. We're free to accept.
- If we are in Christ, the God will keep us in his will. So, we can trust him through the events of our life.
- Knowing that Jesus is the source of life, we understand that if he has life, he can give life to us – even life on the inside of our minds, hearts, and even physical bodies.
- If there is darkness in any area of my life, then I can know that the situation is not over yet because his life and light will overcome the darkness. It gives us hope.

Why is reading scripture important when we face challenges?

- We can turn to the Word of God, the Bible, for our direction, comfort, and strength. We can experience this life and light through his Word.
- We find insight that our own minds don't think about. The Word reminds us of how to think and what is true.
- When we lose our faith, the Word helps to restore our faith and believe in Jesus.
- The Word calms us and keeps us from getting us upset. It gives us hope.
- When I spend time in the Word of God, I am spending time with Jesus.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of who Jesus is and the power that he has in this world and in your life.

- Jesus, you are the beginning and the end. Only in you can I find comfort and peace. You are my healer, and you are always on my side.
- Jesus, there is a lot of darkness around me and in some areas of my life. But you are the light of the world, and I ask you to shine into this darkness and to help me to seek the truth and to show me direction.
- Jesus, you are my life and hope. I ask you to save our lives and give peace to our country.
- Jesus, you are God and creator. You know everything and can work everything out for our good.
- Lord, I know that you have a will and that you are the light and giver of my life. You are able to give me life to the full inside my heart and body – even through this situation. I am still alive, so I know that you are working to overcome this darkness.

John 1:9-13

⁹The true light (Jesus, the Word) that gives light to everyone came into the world... ¹²Yet to all who received him (Jesus, the Word), to those who believed in his name (Jesus), he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not in natural ways, or by man's desire or will, but born of God.

What does it mean to believe *and* receive Jesus?

- If you believe in Jesus, you will follow the teachings of the Bible, help people, and try not judge people.
- We can believe in his existence but receive means that we receive his words and his teachings, and we want to follow him. We allow Jesus to have authority over us. The Bible says that even the devil believes in Jesus, but they are not saved.
- Believing should change our minds, our hearts, and our lives. It's not an intellectual belief.
- We trust the teachings of the Bible and believe that it is true because we know that Jesus is the Word, the Bible. They are the same. If I spend time in the Word, I am spending time with the living Jesus.

What happens when we believe *and* receive Jesus?

- When we believe and receive Jesus, we become the true children of God.
- As children of God who truly believe and receive Jesus in our lives, we are born again, made new.

Why is this promise and hope so important to know when we face challenges?

- If we don't remember this promise, then we will become weak spiritually, and we won't remind others to follow Jesus's teachings.
- We know that even if we die, we will go to God. If we are not afraid of death, we can face challenges. Death is not the end. It is even better for us!
- If we are the child of God, the Creator of the universe, we will also be able to face challenges because he is Almighty. He is our Father and can help us to find peace.
- We can face losing everything, but we remember that our true treasure is Jesus. This is temporary in eternity. There is a life after this.

- As children of God, we can be certain that he loves us and that he has a will for our lives. If we have chosen to believe and receive Jesus, then we have invited God's perfect will for us – even during the most difficult times. I can know that he is going to work for my good because I have chosen him. His will is still going to happen in my life, even if I am suffering.

How is God the Father different from our earthly fathers? Why is this important to know?

- In Jesus, we are all brothers and sisters of our Father. Sometimes children are children of God, but parents are not.
- Our earthly father is still just a man. He has sins and full of imperfections (anger, unforgiveness, selfishness, etc.). But God the Father is perfect (loving, patient, selfless, not angry with us, caring, wanting the best for us).
- Our earthly father pays more attention to our physical development and material things – education, health, food, clothes, etc. But God the Father cares that we develop our spirit, that we are rich spiritually. He may pay less attention to the material things because he knows what really matters in the end. He has a bigger picture for our lives.
- This is important to remember when we are suffering because we won't feel that God will abandon us or let us down. We will trust him even though it may be difficult – to trust him to the end.
- When we are suffering, we don't feel like someone is with us. We feel pain and don't feel loved. Now, we know we are children of God. His eye is on us. He is still loving, and we can find comfort in this suffering and pain. We can know God is near us even when we don't feel us. This helps us to be strong enough to get through these problems. It helps us to know God more and show our love. When we suffer, it makes us better and we know that everything – even the worst things – are for our good. We know this because the Word of God says this is true. He is keeping us safe. He will make us better.
- He may not have the goal of making our physical life better (the world is dying, our bodies are dying), but his goal is always to make our eternal lives better and better – the best resurrection and reward in eternal life. If we suffer faithfully now, God will reward us. There is nothing better, and he knows that.

Have you ever made the decision to believe and receive Jesus? If no, do you want to? Explain. If yes, share about the time when you made that decision.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of who you are in your relationship with Jesus, the kind of Father he is, and his love for you.

Time of prayer

Go to next page.

Lessons 2

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

John 1:14-18

¹⁴The Word became human and lived among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁶Out of his fullness we have all received overflowing grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

How does John describe Jesus here?

- Jesus is full of grace and truth. Grace here is mercy, forgiveness, and undeserved blessing – something we receive but do not deserve.
- Jesus is the Word of God and the Word of God became human.
- Jesus shows us who God is because he is the Word of God.

When we sin in our grief, how does this passage give us comfort?

- We don't want to sin, but when do, because of Jesus's overflowing grace (mercy, forgiveness, and undeserved blessing), we can find comfort. Jesus receives us and loves us even when we sin.
- We can go to him with our sins and not feel ashamed.

Jesus helps us to know who God is. He is the Word of God, and he is God (1:1). In other words, whatever we learn about Jesus is true about God. What kind of Father is God?

- God the Father is love. He is the sources of love. We begin to understand this when we know Jesus. This is something we learn about God as we learn more about Jesus.
- God the Father will direct us to what is right. He might allow us to experience negative situations when we sin so that we learn what is right. He does this because he loves us.
- God is full of grace. He is full of mercy and forgiveness and love for us even when we sin. He wants to give us grace and direct us to his light of love.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of God's nature and character.

- God, you are my Father. You are Almighty God who is full of grace and mercy. You can turn all of my sins into something good.
- Heavenly Father, thank you that you are full of grace, and I can come to you just as I am. I can confess my sins before you and you will forgive me.
- Our heavenly Father, comfort me, give me strength, and give me hope through Christ Jesus, my Savior and Lord.
- Grace and truth and mercy came through Jesus, and he showed himself as God in the flesh for me to believe in him.
- It pleases you, Father, to give me forgiveness and mercy when I sin. Your pour out mercy.

Acts 2:17-36

¹⁷God says: "In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will have special dreams. ¹⁸In those days I will pour out my Spirit on my servants, men and women, and they will prophesy... ²¹And

everyone who trusts in the Lord will be saved. ²² My fellow Jews, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. He proved it by the miracles, wonders, and miraculous signs he did through Jesus. You all saw these things, so you know this is true. ²³ Jesus was handed over to you, and you killed him. With the help of evil men, you nailed him to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. It was his plan—a plan he made long ago. ²⁴ Jesus suffered the pain of death, but God made him free. He raised him from death... ³² ...We are all witnesses of this. We saw him. ³³ Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now he is with God, at God's right side. The Father has given the Holy Spirit to him, as he promised. So, Jesus has now poured out that Spirit... ³⁶ "So, all the people of Israel should know this for certain: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Messiah..."

How is Jesus described in this passage? What do we learn about him?

- He was a very special man. He proved this by miracles and wonders.
- He is Lord and Messiah.
- Jesus lived, died on a cross, was buried, and was raised from the dead.
- He died for me – for my sins and my forgiveness.
- He is with God at his right side (he is in the place of authority).
- He has the Holy Spirit and will pour out this Spirit to us.

How does knowing these things about Jesus give us strength and comfort when we face challenges?

- Knowing that Jesus healed the people, I believe he can heal me too.
- He conquered even death. So, he can comfort me in my situation.
- Jesus saved people and he healed people. He performed miracles, so he can save me and do a miracle in my life. He can comfort and heal me. So, I trust him.

How does knowing that Jesus is Lord and Messiah give us courage and peace when we face challenges?

- Jesus is the highest authority so he can care for me, take care of me.
- Jesus is higher in authority than any person or government. He is the one who is in control.

How can the Holy Spirit help us when we are facing challenges?

- The Holy Spirit is a comforter. He reveals truth and can give us understanding, direction, and guidance.
- The Holy Spirit can remind us of scripture and God's promises so we can be comforted.

Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit helping you in a challenge? Describe.

- It's happened me when I needed to make a decision, how to behave – some divine direction. It's happened many times. An answer came to me, and it felt like supernatural guidance.
- If I am angry with someone, and it is difficult to forgive, then suddenly forgiveness comes. I think this is the Holy Spirit because the anger goes away, and I can suddenly forgive. Maybe I feel discouraged, and I listen to a sermon and am reading the Word of God, the Holy Spirit helps me to believe in this Word. I become encouraged and peace comes. This also is the work of the Holy Spirit – to encourage me.
- The Holy Spirit told me what to do. I was having a quiet time and I heard a voice saying, "You are going to testify to your family about me." I was afraid because my sisters are not believers. But God worked in out. I was able to share the Gospel with them when my mother died. I prayed over my mom with my sisters there. And they asked me to conduct the funeral. So, during the

funeral, I was able to share the Gospel with everyone who was there, even beyond my sisters – uncles, aunts, and cousins! It was bigger and better than anything I ever dreamed.

- A few years ago, I had to make a choice. I didn't know what choice was right. I noticed that people who were around me who didn't know about my situation. But they were telling me what to do – not just one person but many people saying the same things. I realized that through these people, Jesus was telling me what to do. So, I did what they said and everything turned out well.
- I was trying to help my Buddhist friend to become a Christian. But she was not accepting Jesus fully. So, the Holy Spirit sent me a dream that she was going to die. He told me how she was going to die and the exact time that I was to share the Gospel with her again. One year later, the dream began to happen in real life, and I knew exactly the time that I was to share the Gospel with her – that I was to go to the hospital and ask her one more time if she wanted to follow Jesus completely. So, when this happened, I knew what to say. And at that moment, she made a decision to stop following Buddha and to give her whole life to Jesus. She was baptized in the hospital that night and she died within the next two days. This was to me a miracle of the Holy Spirit.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of who Jesus is, his power, his Spirit, and his promises.

- Heavenly Father, we look to you for our salvation. Give us peace and lead us to comfort and happiness.
- Jesus, you are my Lord and Savior. You are my Healer. Holy Spirit, you are my comforter. You give me joy even in a difficult situation. Your promises are "Yes and Amen." Thank you!
- Thank you for being with me in times of need and comfort, for guidance and revelation to do your will.
- Lord, I remember the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 men. He fed them all with just a few fish and some bread. This reminds me of your power. I know that you will help me too in my situation. You will not leave me alone.
- Jesus, because of your resurrection, you have overcome death and darkness. You have the Holy Spirit, and you willingly pour out your Holy Spirit upon me. Now, lead me through the power of your Spirit. Let me know with certainty your direction.

Time of prayer

Go to next page.

Lessons 3

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

Acts 10:38-43

³⁸You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Messiah by giving him the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good for people. He healed those who were ruled by the devil, showing that God was with him. ⁴²Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one God chose to be the Judge of all who are living and all who have died. ⁴³Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name. All the prophets agree that this is true.

What do we learn about Jesus and the Holy Spirit in this passage?

- God was with Jesus.
- Jesus is from Nazareth and God made him the Messiah by giving him the Holy Spirit and power.
- Jesus did good for people. He healed people – even people who were ruled by the devil. This showed that God was with him.
- God will be the judge for all who are living and for all who have died.

What promise does Jesus give us if we believe in him and put our trust in him for our life and our salvation?

- Jesus promises us that if we believe in him and trust in him, he will forgive our sins in his name.

Do you believe that Jesus does miracles today? If yes, explain why, and please share any miracles you've experienced. If no, explain and read Mark 9:14-32 and Luke 8:40-56.

- I believe in miracles today. Several times I've had experiences that would be divine or miraculous. I had serious back ache due to my spine. I was taking medication and working. A North Korean clinic across the street opened in a basement. They used a huge needle and stuck it my spine. I thought I would die! Then he cracked my back with his knee, but he put it on the right place. No one had been able to do this for 20 years! Then within a week, the clinic closed permanently. Another time, a soccer player in a theater was able to adjust my back and everything went into place.
- We are alive, and this is a miracle today!
- I've seen a lot of healing miracles. My niece struggled with warts on her fingers. She went to doctors and spent a lot of money to solve this problem, but it didn't work. One time, I told her to trust God and believe what the Lord says about this situation – Isaiah 53 says that we are healed by his wounds. She put this verse on her phone and every morning it would pop up. After two months, the warts were gone! So, now her fingers are completely normal.
- One of my friends telling me about another Christian. One day, during the shelling of Russians, an artillery shell flew into her house through the roof. Right before, she had been awakened by her dog. She got up from her bed and started to go downstairs. At that moment, the shell entered the house and flew over the bed that she had just left. For this reason, she wasn't harmed. Another shell exploded in a neighboring house. Debris, including glass, blasted toward her. She didn't even know if she was alive because she could see herself from outside (from her

soul), but she remained unharmed! She was awakened by her dog and awakened by another blast. This is a miracle because if the dog hadn't awakened her, perhaps she would have died.

- I was healed miraculously from a heart valve infection, and the doctors said it was a miracle because I should have died. My friend's grandmother was deaf and was healed through prayer.

How do these words give us strength when we are facing challenges?

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of the miracles of Jesus in the Bible or in your life. Make a list of specific miracles that you want to see Jesus to do *soon* in your life or country. Add any other words that give you strength.

- I pray for the end of the war and that Russia will remove Putin from power.
- I believe and know that Jesus you did miracles during your time on earth, and I know that you do miracles today. Now, I ask you about ending the war and healing those people who have been wounded.
- Jesus, you have all authority and power to heal us of any disease and to forgive us of our sins. The miracles that you did back then, you can still do today. The miracle of ending this war is in your hands.
- My prayer is that Jesus can and is willing to end the war completely by Easter (U.S. date, April 17th) to remind us that his resurrection power is still alive today and that he heals us and forgives us for our sins through his death, burial, and resurrection. There would be no greater celebration.

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹¹In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. God had already planned [or predestined] for us to be his people, because that is what he wanted. And he is the one who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants [his will]... ¹³... You heard the true message, the Good News about the way God saves you. When you heard that Good News, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit that he promised. ¹⁴The Spirit guarantees the payment for what we now possess and will inherit when we are fully delivered and become God's possession for the praise of his glory.

What does it mean to be chosen? When does this happen? Why does this happen?

- Those who believe in Jesus are predestined for salvation (as a group or as individuals).
- Predestined means that God chose for us to be his followers before the world began, before we were even born.
- It's not something we do but something God does for us.

What other assurance can we have about our situation based on verse 11?

- We are in God's will! We may go up and down spiritually, but because he has chosen us, we are in his will.

What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in this passage?

- The Spirit guarantees our inheritance and ensure that we will be God's possession for his glory.

What security do you see that you have in this passage?

- When we are in Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit and are marked to show that we belong to God. This is God's stamp on us, his ring and seal of approval.
- We are in Christ when we hear the Good News of Jesus and believe in him.
- We can learn more about the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. I received the Holy Spirit after a Messianic Jew laid his hands on me and prayed. It didn't happen immediately but at night. I became hot and heard words I couldn't understand.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you that you've been chosen, of the promise given to you by the Holy Spirit, and of the security that you have for your life and future because of Jesus.

- I am chosen by you from my mother's womb, and I believe you are my Lord and Savior. I received the Holy Spirit who comforts me. In you, I can have peace, joy, restoration, future, and hope.
- Holy Spirit, you lead me, guide me, and guard me into the life of faith.
- Heavenly Father, thank you that I am chosen in Christ! Thank you for the Holy Spirit who is in me. Thank you for the security that I have in Jesus Christ regarding my eternal life.
- Thank you, Lord that I do not have to worry about man's approval of me. Your approval and seal of the Holy Spirit is all I need.

John 5:24-30

²⁴ "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

- Jesus says that whoever hears his voice and believes in him who sent him will not be judged but have eternal life – cross over from death to life.
- He is the Judge of our souls

How does this passage inspire us to follow Jesus and give comfort in our situation?

- We have eternal life. We will not be condemned but enter life everlasting!
- Those who are doing evil right now will be judged. Justice will happen!

Write a prayer statement to remind yourself of who is in control of our world. Tell Jesus about your life and how you want to live. Confess where you see that you need to grow in your faith?

- Jesus, I know that you have all authority. You can save me, and you will save me because you have chosen me. This is something I feel that I am learning for the first time, and I pray for a deeper trust and faith in you through all situations.
- Thank you, Jesus, for the life everlasting! Be with me always and help me everywhere.
- Jesus, I know that you are the one who controls the war. Maybe I can see clearly my future and the way I should go. But I know and believe that you have a plan for my life for good, not bad. I ask that you help me to trust you more and more in my life, not just in my mind, but in my heart.

There are many verses in the Bible that can strengthen our faith in Jesus and teach us more about who he is, how he lived, and what he taught. John 14:6-7 and Acts 4:12 say that Jesus is the only way to the Father and only by his name can we be saved. In John 17:11-12, Jesus prays to his Father that he would protect his followers by the power of his name. Romans 10:8-13 promises us that if we confess with our mouths that “Jesus is Lord” and believe in our heart that he was raised from the dead, we will be saved.

Another Purpose for Suffering: Suffering tests our faith (James 1:2-4). Suffering allows us the chance to grow in our faith, and how we respond to suffering reveals our faith. Through suffering the way Jesus teaches us, we grow in our dependence on God, and our faith becomes genuine. This evidence of our faith can increase our joy as we wait for our Lord and Savior, knowing that our life is bringing glory to Christ, and our suffering will be rewarded.

Do you deeply believe the prayer statements you wrote and scriptures we read? Do you believe that Jesus is the only way to be saved, that he is the true Savior and Lord of this life?

If yes, **write a prayer statement** that confirms your faith in Jesus, the joy that your faith gives you, and the glory and honor that your faith brings him.

Time of prayer

This week, use the prayer statements from last week and this week to have time with Jesus in prayer.

After you’ve prayed, here are some things you can do to listen for Jesus’s words of love, comfort, direction, and healing

- Spend time in silence or take a quiet walk outside
- Spend time reading the New Testament or Psalms
- Attend church and listen for his response
- Share your grief and your faith with a close friend
- Spend time writing about your experience, thoughts, and prayers
- Write about what you are learning
- Watch for ways that Jesus answers your prayers and write about them
- Share what you are experiencing and seeing with others
- When you experience new feelings of grief, continue bringing these needs to Jesus in prayer