



ALIVE

Wesleyan Church

Meredith Knox

Sermon Discussion Questions – March 3, 2024

Scripture Passages:

John 16:33 (ESV) - “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But **take heart**; I have overcome the world.”

Mark 15:37-39 (ESV) - “And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that **in this way** he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

Isaiah 53:3-6, 11 (NLT) - He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed...All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all...When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

Luke 23:39-43 (ESV) - One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

John 19:25-27 (ESV) - “but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

John 19:28-30 (ESV) - After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop

branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, *"It is finished,"* and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (ESV) - So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this *light momentary affliction* is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Discussion:

1. Read John 16:33. Pastor Meredith started her message with this verse. When you hear take heart, what does that mean to you?
2. Pastor Meredith gave us 4 different perspectives from those who witnessed Jesus at the cross. She started with the Roman Soldier. Read Mark 15:37-39. She then asked the question "Have you truly beheld the cross?" How would you answer this question? Have you truly beheld the cross?
3. The second perspective she gives us is through the criminal. Read Luke 23:39-43. Excerpt from Pastor Meredith:
Today, there are some of us who need to ask the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts and see if we have let a spirit of the critical criminal sneak in. We've become hardened to His Word. We resent His presence. We may have begun mock others who send us encouragement (at least in our own heads) or even mock Christ Himself. God is not scared of your questions. He will absolutely walk with you in your grief. He will let you cry and yell. He will weep with you. Christ Himself lived the example of praying with "loud cries and with tears". But grieving with God is not mocking Him...or resenting Him. Surrender to the suffering. It is securing some things for us.
Which criminal do you find yourself relating more to, the critical criminal or the surrendering criminal? Why?
4. The next perspective is from John and Mary. Read John 19:25-27. She then made the point "The blood of Jesus does more than save us from our sins, it joins us to a family." What does the family of God, the spiritual family, mean to you? Why is the family of God important to you?
5. The last perspective was of Jesus Himself. Read John 19:28-30. Excerpt from Pastor Meredith:
In light of these perspectives, we can now know that sacrifice and suffering are no longer pointless. Jesus' suffering was not just a means to our salvation, it is also our example!

Not only does His suffering release you from the power of sin, it releases you to a new power of suffering.

When looking at your own suffering, how does knowing Jesus's suffering is an example help you in that suffering? What does it mean to you knowing suffering is not pointless?

Next Steps:

Pastor Meredith ended by saying "On earth, we only have to taste suffering, because Jesus Christ consumed it."

What next steps do you feel God calling you to? Do you feel like you need to release the weight of suffering? Do you feel like you need to find your place in the family of God? Whatever it may be, what can you do this week to take the next step?