

small group **discussion**

For the sermon on February 23-24, 2013
"Paul's Résumé"

lean in

What makes a good résumé for an Apostle of Jesus, in your mind? If you were looking to hire an Apostle, what qualifications would you want to see?

look down

This week we continue in the series, *The Resilient Life*. Suffering can come from many sources: It comes from living in a broken world. Suffering can come from poor decisions, as well as sinful choices we make. But, there's another kind of suffering—it's the struggle we face when we commit to something bigger than ourselves. It's suffering *for* Jesus and spreading of the Good News about him. This week, we'll look at Paul's résumé of suffering. As you read this passage, ask yourself, what did Paul endure and what did he sacrifice for the mission God gave him? And, was it worth it—to him and to us?

Read 2 Corinthians 11.1-5 together. As we open this passage, it becomes clear that Paul sees a problem brewing with the church in Corinth. What's happening? What's Paul's concern?

Read 2 Corinthians 11.23-30 together. In the context of warning against the problem of false prophets infiltrating the church and leading the Corinthians astray, Paul lists all that he's been through in order to fulfill his mission. Take a minute to list these points of suffering on a piece of paper. What stands out to you?

Why do you think Paul does this? Why is he "boasting" about his suffering? Is he just being a martyr? What's his point in telling them this?

look in

Spend time discussing this simple—yet hard to honestly answer—question: What is worth suffering for?

Discuss the opposite: What is not worth the pain and struggle? How would Paul answer these questions?

Read Philippians 3.1-10 together. Zero in on verse 10. Paul wants three things:

1. To know Christ.
2. To experience the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.
3. To share and participate in Jesus' suffering.

Why does number 3 stand out from the other two? What strikes you when you hear that suffering with/for Jesus may be required of his followers? Do you resist it or embrace it? Why would Paul embrace suffering with Jesus?

There's something powerful about dedicating and sacrificing for something bigger than ourselves. Why is this true?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A quest for a life of safety and comfort can dramatically impact our ability to follow Jesus. Discuss your answers.

Is God asking you to adjust something in your life as a result of hearing this week's sermon, reading these passages, and discussing this material? What is it?



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