Questions linked to the message preached on 5th November ‘Facing Suffering with Jesus’

Passage considered : Colossians Chapter 1 v24 - Chapter 2 v5

Please feel free to use those questions you think most relevant to your group - and to add others!

1. To what extent do you agree that everybody can expect suffering or hardship, whether a follower of Jesus or not?

2. Do you think followers of Jesus may suffer more? Explain why.

3. The apostle Paul was in a particular situation. Why did he rejoice in his suffering (v24)? Do we think that we can only rejoice when things are going well and life is easy?

4. It was suggested that Paul was able to get through this period of suffering by:

1. having a fresh understanding of who Jesus was (see Chapter 1 vv15 - 20)
2. being motivated by a particular objective (vv25 - 28), and
3. being strengthened within by the indwelling Jesus (v29)

Do you agree? How might these apply to us?

5. The experiences of the missionary Geoffrey Bull were mentioned. Can you think of individuals both in the public realm or known to you personally who have suffered precisely because they were followers of Jesus? As you share these stories are there common themes that emerge or are they all different?

6. If you know, how did those identified in Question 5 cope with their difficult circumstances?

7. Although Paul’s house arrest in Rome meant he couldn’t visit churches he did have Christians with him (Chapter 4 vv 7 -14). What role do you think they provided? In what ways could we help one another through difficulties?

8. Taking the message of the passage as a whole what ways do you think following Jesus makes a difference to how we cope with suffering - in all its forms?

9. How would you help a friend who is suffering but - as far as you know - isn’t a follower of Jesus?