

Which Church Does Jesus Love? Sermon Discussion Leader and Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: Discuss what it looks like to hold onto Jesus so that we can endure the hardships that come our way.

Sermon Refresher: Keith talked about how as Christians we must fix our hope on Jesus so that we can persevere through life, even though it can be difficult and we don't feel up to the challenges.

Icebreaker: What denominations have you been a part of? Why are denominations often a turn off to people?

Transition: Jesus doesn't love one denomination more than another, but instead he loves a faithful church made up of faithful Christians.

Discussion:

1. What do you feel overwhelmed by at the moment in your life?
2. Toward the end of this life, Malcom Muggeridge, the British journalist who became a Christian after seeing Mother Teresa's work in India, said, "The only worthwhile things I learned in life were through suffering." What is a difficult thing you've been through and what's one of the lessons you learned from the experience?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

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"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have

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come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

There is present power in a future promise. In this passage, what is the future promise? What difference could it make in how we live our lives now?

What specific situations in your life would be affected if you believed in this promise more fully? How?

4. List some of the reasons that God might be taking us through a season characterized by hardship.
5. In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl says that we can endure almost any “How” or “What” if we have a “Why”. When you're facing a difficult challenge in your faith, why is it so hard to think about the “Why”? What is the “Why” of your life?

Sharing and Prayer: Break up into groups of men and women. Have each person share in more depth about the hardship you're facing at the moment, and take time to pray for each person to hold onto Jesus and his promises.