

Suffering
Next Steps
May 31, 2020
Genesis 41:50-52

OPENING PRAYER:

O God, we gather to give thanks for your providence and care. When our ancestors were in a strange land, you led them from peril and delivered them from persecution. When we face the mountains, the valleys or the pits of our lives, you are our deliverer and savior. We praise you for your steadfast love that accompanies us throughout our lives. Amen.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What did you agree or disagree with in the sermon this week?
- Can you recall a time where you experienced joy in the midst of grief? Describe that experience.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Genesis 41:50-52.

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What do you think Joseph means by forgetting his hardships?
- How would that look in your own life? What about hardships that have been brought about by the actions of others?
- God made Joseph fruitful in the land of his affliction. Have you experienced this type of fruitfulness in your life? What might it look like to find fruitfulness in the midst of affliction?

Read James 1:2-4

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- In what ways has your faith been tested? Have you experienced growth through that?
- How might it look to see your trials as a way of growing our faith?

NEXT STEPS:

- How will your life be different based upon what you have learned in this week's scripture, lesson and/or sermon?
- What would help you to see the fruitfulness in the midst of difficult circumstances? How can you put that into practice over the next week?
- Consider keeping a gratitude journal of what God has done in order to see more clearly the fruitfulness in the midst of your circumstances.
- Examine your heart and see if there is any bitterness toward someone. Consider how you might be able to forgive that person or at least begin the process of forgiveness. Even a small step can make a huge difference.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to you, "Speak, for your servant hears." Let me hear you speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of your voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of your speaking voice. Amen.
—A.W. Tozer, in *The Pursuit of God*