

Session 2

Maundy Thursday: “How am I going to get through this?”



A note to leaders:

Welcome back! In Session 2 of The Unanswered Prayer Course we explore the deep heart questions we tend to ask when confronted with suffering. The aim of discussions this time is, therefore, to help people open up emotionally in a way that builds trust and elicits prayer ministry.

You may want to take a little time before the meeting starts to pray through Isaiah 61:1-7. Apply vv 1-3a to yourself, asking the Spirit to anoint you today to 'bind up broken hearts' (v.1) and to 'comfort all who mourn.' (v.2). Then pray vv. 3b-7 over the members of the group.

1. Introduce the session

5 minutes

Key verses

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death... Abba Father ... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” – Mark 14:34, 36

Introduction

Welcome to session 2 of The Prayer Course II: Unanswered Prayer!

Once again we're going to watch a video, then we're going to discuss the questions it raises and finally we're going to pray together. The course as a whole aims to help us process pain and disappointment by addressing the four big questions we all tend to ask when we suffer.

Today it's the questions of the heart: "How am I going to get through this?" and we're going to look at Jesus on Maundy Thursday in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Begin the session by asking someone to open in prayer

2. Watch the video

35 minutes

Bible passages from the session

Mark 14:32-37, Psalm 23, Romans 5:3-4

Key points

(for your reference in case people need a little prompting!)

- We can learn 4 keys to coping with despair from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane:
Place, People, Prayer, Purpose
- Jesus isn't just dying for us, He's suffering with us
- Find a purpose in the pain when you can, and find a purpose in spite of the pain when you can't

"I don't want to remain in this place of sorrow and anger... I want to choose life again, and I want to find life again." - Simon Thomas

3. Discussion questions

30 - 40 minutes

- Q.** What did you find most helpful, inspiring or challenging in what Pete Greig, Gemma Hunt and Simon Thomas shared?
- Q.** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus shares with his friends that "[His] soul is overwhelmed to the point of death" – what are the barriers or obstacles you face when sharing honestly or openly with friends? Would anyone be willing to share about a time in which their soul felt 'overwhelmed'?
- Q.** What happens to your prayer life when you are feeling overwhelmed or upset? What do you notice that you do differently?
- Q.** Pete Greig says, "God does not leave us to suffer alone" – is this something that you have experienced? Where has God met you in your suffering?
- Q.** Do you think that it's possible for everyone to find a purpose in – or in spite of – their pain?

- Q. Pete Greig talks about the holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl and the importance of finding some kind of purpose in spite of our pain.

Take a minute or two in the silence to reflect on an area of suffering you have experienced, consider ways in which you have been able to find – or might be able to find – some kind of purpose in it or in spite of it.

[When the group reconvenes]

Would anyone be willing to share a purpose they can see in something they have suffered?

- Q. Simon in his interview shares about his honest – often angry – prayers to God. What are the things that make it hard to be truly emotionally honest with God?
- Q. How might we as a group do more to invest in one another during struggles and trials? Are there practical steps that need to be taken to support one another more?

4. Small group prayer

15 minutes

Leader's note

If your group is more than 3 people, we would recommend splitting into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to give everyone an opportunity to share and pray for one another. Explain how much time you will have for prayer, and roughly how much time each person will have for sharing and praying.

Ask one another

- Q. How are you feeling about the things we've discussed today? Are there any areas in which you'd appreciate prayer?

5. Closing comments

5 minutes

Share with the group what you've really appreciated about the session.

Next week's session will explore Good Friday and some of the biggest questions we face in pain and suffering: "Why does God permit suffering?" "Why does sometimes seem so far away?" "Why do my deepest prayers remain unanswered?"

To prepare for that, and to get the most out of the session, read chapters 7-10 of *God on Mute*. This is also available as an audiobook if you find that easier.

Closing prayer

*Lord,
help me to stand today.
Temptations and trials abound.
When life hurts,
I get confused, dishonest, suspicious, and critical.
I put on the belt of truth.
When life hurts,
my relationships suffer—especially my relationship with You.
I put on the breastplate of righteousness.
When life hurts,
I either get really lazy or I make myself really busy.
I put on the shoes of the gospel.
When life hurts,
I let down my guard and leave myself exposed.
I take up the shield of faith.
When life hurts,
my thinking gets negative and I question everything.
I put on the helmet of salvation.
When life hurts,
I'm a coward.
I take hold of the sword of the Word.
Lord, it doesn't feel very "finished" down here.
I don't feel very "finished".
See me kneeling.
Help me stand.*

– taken from *God on Mute*, by Pete Greig, chapter 10

Further resources & reflection

Journaling question

Where is God inviting me to meet Him in my pain, this week?

Daily devotions

At the back of the book that accompanies this course - God on Mute - you will find “God UnMute” – a forty day devotional journey. The daily content can help you process and pray at a much deeper level.

Reflect on...

Take time to pause and reflect on The Isenheim Altarpiece, by Matthias Grünewald, which Pete Greig talked about in the session. (available online at <https://www.wikiart.org/en/matthias-grunewald/the-isenheim-altarpiece-1516>)

Books

- Love, Interrupted: Navigating Grief One Day at a Time, Simon Thomas
- Man’s Search for Meaning, Victor Frankl
- God on Mute, Pete Greig