

Small group notes 19 May 2019 – The goodness of God

**Recap** - Last week, you may remember the challenge Jenn gave us all – Stories (Jesus), Practice (soul training exercises), Community (living in), and Power of HS (being filled). Also the discipline of sleep – did it make a difference? Did anyone confess to taking a nap during the day? Did we grow a bit closer to God?

### **God is good – all the time**

Discussion: Is it true? Do we believe it? Do we believe God is good ALL THE TIME? Does this narrative always hold true? Have you ever been in a situation where you doubted God's goodness?

What is our response when we listen to the news / papers? How do we deal with despair and sadness?

### **Banish the narrative**

When we feel confused, we must turn our attention to what Jesus actually taught us about God and His goodness – we want to know the God that Jesus knows, to see the true God that He reveals. Let's bust some false narratives that the world peddles about God and then dwell in His goodness!

### **False Narrative 1: God isn't good, and he certainly isn't good all the time:**

Matthew 19: 17, Psalm 107:1, James 1: 17, Isaiah 55:9

### **False Narrative 2: Bad things happen because of our Sins**

John 9: 1-6, Exodus 20:5, Matt 5: 43-48

### **False Narrative 3: When we are in pain, I don't believe that God knows our pain.**

What does this mean for us?

US → Feeling / experiencing failure / disaster → feeling cursed → God is bad → our pain is our own

Job 13:15 - Who believes for us when we cannot? Who knows our hearts before we pray?

### **False Narrative 4: The calling of Christ to suffer is too great a burden – surely we deserve an easy life?**

Galations 2: 15-21, John 16: 33, James 1: 2-4

Corrie Ten Boom: "When a train goes through a tunnel and the world gets dark, do you jump out? Of course not. You sit still, and trust the driver to get you through." Next time you are disappointed / afraid – don't panic. Don't give up. Be patient. Just Be, and let God take control!

### **False Narrative 5: Surely as I give and serve, I am destined to be blessed, healthy and wealthy**

What does this make us think? US → Success / Giving → Feeling blessed → God is Good → Our hard work has paid off - read: Matthew 5:46-48

### **The Narrative – what we really should take away:**

St Augustine: "we must seek out the good things peculiar to the good, and give the widest berth to the evil peculiar to the evil people". Do we share stories of God's goodness often enough?

Joy and hope overcome suffering and doubt. If you want to receive the blessings of joy and hope – live as Christ did. To know joy and hope, seek out the good things particular to good people and do likewise.

### **The Narrative 2: Just be.**

This next challenge is about the practice of silence – of just be-ing. Seek that space, silence, God's creation. Just sit and be. Take a notepad, a drawing pad, use colours, note the sights, sounds, colours.