

**Imagine! DO justice, LOVE mercy, WALK humbly with our God**

**Inspirit Bible Discussion Materials**

**For Sunday, March 30, 2025**

Zoom link at thepalms.org and go here:

<https://thepalms.org/bridges/>

Click on **InSpirit Bible Study**

LAST SUNDAY

**Last Sunday was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent. Pastor Paul was preaching from Luke 13:1-8. Can we trust God, in joy or in pain, to be our God? Where is God when bad things happen?**

Who can explain Jesus' response in today's text? Pastor Paul compares the outsiders and insiders who are all tragically killed. Why did this happen?

Pastor Paul mentions Rabbi Kushner's bestselling book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

Jesus lumps all pain together. Jesus refuses to ask the question.

In Jesus' time sin/misfortunes are lumped together.

We take the Bible seriously, so seriously, that we don't take it literally.

We still talk in the same context as Jesus' time. When we suffer, we say, "What did I do to deserve this?"

Jesus did not give an answer because there is no answer. When Empires strike, there is no discrimination on who gets hurt/killed. When natural catastrophes occur whoever is in the way suffers/gets hurt/possibly killed.

Rabbi Harold Kushner says that there is good luck and bad luck but neither occur because the good luck denotes goodness and bad luck equals sin. They are what they are!

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Life is unfair. But Jesus has a different take on life stuff than Rabbi Kushner. Jesus calls us all to task, gets us back on track. There is no ready-made answer to the stuff of life that happens.

We play the Christian card- I go to church, I tithe, I do all kinds of good things in the name of God, but why did this happen to me? We make suffering individualistic and cultural and forget about God.

Jesus challenges us all to stand before God. Do we want God, or do we want simplistic responses to complex life situations?

When we farm out our faith to find gods that will meet our needs/answer our complex questions, then we are not followers of Jesus.

The notion that only good things happen to good people was put to rest when Jesus was crucified.

Can we love God without linking the cards we were dealt in life? When things are going great, we just love to love God.

Can we love God with the same intensity no matter what happens in life?

The promise is this. God will be with us, through it all, no matter what happens in our life journey.

We come to God with loads of questions and we are left with little to no answers. We get life from God to live life fully, to love no matter what life stuff has happened.

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For me, the questions in the earlier text get played out as Jesus tells the parable of the Fig Tree. Jesus the Gardener works the soil, pampers us, gives us more time, and put down the manure that life deals us. One of my favorite preaching lines was Manure Happens! Now what do we do about it?!

**Did you hear anything from Pastor Paul's preaching that impacted you?**

NEXT SUNDAY

**Next Sunday is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent. The Prodigal Son story is the scripture – Luke 15:1-32. Who do you play in the story? The Prodigal? The parent? The elder brother? The fickle friends? Or the slaughtered calf?**

Luke gives this account of Jesus the Storyteller giving one of his most intriguing parables. My favorite parable. By the way, no one talks about the missing mother in the story. I like to include her. The father-figure plays a dual role. I think he projects male and female imagery. That's my take on it. We'll hopefully be connected and share this wonderful text along with Psalm 32.

**Other Christian churches will be reading the following Scriptures:**

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 and Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32.