



Small Group Questions: Experiencing Great Joy (Mother's Day)

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Read

Acts 8: 1-8 and Romans 5:3-5

Reflect

In verses 1-3 of Acts 8, the early church is already suffering persecution. Stephen, one of their own, has been murdered, and the person (Saul/Paul) responsible, is now going house-to-house dragging out Christians to throw into prison. Believers, forced to leave their homes, find themselves scattered to other regions and cities. Yet, by verse 8, they are experiencing great joy. How did they go from such suffering to joy? Josh and Lisa Surratt offer us three principles to help us learn to experience this kind of joy:

1. Persevere through the tough times.
 - a. On First Wednesday (May 6), Pastor Jon Hohm told us that we can't lose by fighting the battle that Christ has already won, but we can lose our day-to-day struggle by forfeit. What has been your experience with continuing the fight...or giving in? If you could go back, what would you change?
 - b. When times get rough, what do you do first? Who (or what) do you turn to?
 - c. How will you go about developing a passionate patience and a persistent hope to get through the tough times? Are you relying on God to get you through the storm?
2. Turn obstacles into opportunities.
 - a. Have you ever been tempted to let the tough times define you as something other than a child of God? What words did you hear in your mind or say to yourself or others? What words from Scripture will you use to replace those lies?
 - b. What obstacles are you facing that God could use to help others in their walk of faith? How open are you to sharing your story?
 - c. Are you underestimating the power of your story? What have you learned from the believers who went on to preach the Good News in the cities where they were scattered during persecution?
 - d. What stories have impacted you the most and helped you keep going?
3. Expect a miracle.
 - a. Believers spread the Good News and helped people bound by sin to become free in Christ. What miracle are you desperate for that only God can make happen?
 - b. Do you think you are doing your part to persistently obey God's Word? How bold are you in believing God for an answer?
 - c. Have you felt the miraculous power and presence of God in your life? Explain.

What do you think it would take for you to experience great joy during a time of hardship?

Respond

What is your next step? Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you and hold you accountable in this?