



**Suffering Church Action
and Awareness Week**
2023 – 2024

Small group Bible study

Great is Your faithfulness



1. What afflictions affect God's people today? Are any self-inflicted?
2. Is God's wrath directed against Christians today (v.1)? When is punishment by God for Christians justified?
3. Have you ever experienced times of apparent hopelessness or even bitterness towards God (vv. 15, 18)? How did you recover from such times?
4. Because of the LORD's great love (hesed) we are not consumed (v.22). How has this active, unwavering, steadfast love of our covenant-keeping God been most apparent in the history of God's people, in both Old and New Testaments?
5. Can you think of situations when human compassion, despite the best of intentions, runs out but God's compassions do not fail? What do we learn about the limits of our compassion without God?
6. God is good (v.25). Psalm 23:6 talks of God's goodness and mercy pursuing us. Have you experienced that kind of close pursuit? Share with the group how you felt and how God's constant pursuit benefitted your Christian walk.
7. Jeremiah states that "no one is cast off by the Lord forever" (v.31). Are there times or situations when you have had reason to challenge this statement?
8. Is it your experience that God brings grief (v.32) or is grief simply the inevitable consequence of living in an imperfect world?
9. What examples spring to mind of God exercising justice on earth? How is your faith tested by justice being delayed, or apparently not being administered?
10. Reflect on God's foreknowledge (vv.37-39). Is this just a philosophical concept or can it have a positive impact on our day-to-day lives to know that God decrees and knows what is going to happen in advance?

This study follows the same Bible passage as the sermon outline (pp.16-17) of the **September/October 2023 Barnabas Aid magazine**. It can be used before or after hearing the sermon. If it is used without the sermon, it may be useful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. You may also like to read the SCAAW 2023 eight-day devotional booklet, which is enclosed with this magazine and can be ordered from barnabasaid.org/scaaw or contact your nearest Barnabas Aid office.

The section headed "Digging Deeper" is for those who would like to explore the theme in more depth.

11. God used the Babylonians to get His message across. How do you feel about God using the ungodly to communicate to His people?

12. We are called to examine our ways (v.40) and test them, and return to the Lord. Is there a sinful habit of which you need to repent? Is there any way that you can enjoy closer fellowship with God? Share with your group, if appropriate.



13. King Zedekiah did not heed God's warning (Jeremiah 21:8-10) and suffered the consequences (Jeremiah 52:1-11). How can we understand God's will better when it seems that a crisis is getting worse? How can we discern that God sometimes is using unlikely means (such as pagan rulers from Babylon) to achieve His purposes? Are there modern-day examples of God raising up ungodly leaders or governments to further His kingdom and build up His Church?

14. Are there instances when godly resistance to evil is called for? If so, how should we act when faced with oppression, imprisonment or severe restriction on our freedom? See Esther, Daniel, Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-50), Paul and Silas (Acts 16) and other instances in Scripture. Share examples of Christians who have had to wrestle with these questions over the centuries.

15. The Church will not be cast off forever, even if it may be virtually wiped out in places. Identify examples from Scripture where God's people suffered to the point of despair and apparent extinction. How should the Church respond under such circumstances?

16. How should churches (or even nations) examine themselves? Think about how calls to self-examination may apply to the Church as a whole, or a local congregation (2 Corinthians 13:5-7; 2 Peter 1:10-11; Psalm 119:59; Ezekiel 18:27-28; Galatians 6:4). What part can those in leadership play (Jonah 3:6-10)?