

Circle Up 5 – Suffering Circle Serving Circle

Hello Redemption Church! I love you guys!

Hello everyone perhaps tuning on for the first time! This is Redemption Church in Plano Tx and I am Chris Fluitt

Everyone please let us know if you have any prayer requests, needs, or even praise reports.

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Some good news. We had a wedding yesterday!

Randy & Gracie Adams

Palm Sunday

Happy Palm Sunday!

Palm Sunday is the day we remember Jesus arriving in Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem took palm tree branches and laid them before Jesus; they welcomed Him as their King. Let's read...

John 12:12-16 (NIV) The next day the great crowd who had gathered for the festival, heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and rode into Jerusalem on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him, fulfilling the Word of God.

The people in Jerusalem shouted Hosannas and honored Him as King... yet many in this same crowd would also be present at the end of this week shouting, "Crucify him" as Jesus was being nailed to the cross.

Knowing this would happen; Jesus still circled up with them. Knowing that we don't always treat Him as King, He still circles up with us.

Circle up

We need community. We need family. We need friendship.
We need intimate relationships.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem in John 12, we know from prophecy that He did not come to be enthroned as King... instead Jesus came to suffer and to serve.

Suffering Circle

Now don't get me wrong. Jesus will come back to earth and we will all crown Him King. This will happen. ..But when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of donkey's colt, he came to suffer and serve.

Jesus came to suffer. Isaiah prophesied in Chapter 53 about this suffering.

Isaiah 53:3 (NIV) He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Isaiah 53:4 (NIV) Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus came to suffer, "A man of suffering." "Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering."

Jesus came to suffer. He came to be pierced for our transgressions on the cross. Jesus came to be crushed for our iniquities. He came to take on the punishment that was meant for us. Jesus came to suffer wounds that would bring us healing.

Suffering Circle

Jesus did not avoid suffering. Jesus suffered for His circle.

Do we avoid suffering? Are we willing to suffer for those around us?

Are we even aware that God in His Word calls us to suffer? These verses about suffering are just as true as the verses about prosperity, blessing, and love.

- John 16:33 Jesus says in this world you will have troubles.
- Luke 14:27 Jesus says whoever doesn't carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.
- Philippians 3:10 Paul said, I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
- Psalm 119:71 It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.
- Romans 5:3 ...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;
- Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
- 1 Peter 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

There are many, many more scriptures... You can't find a single bumper sticker, a t-shirt, or bracelet with these scriptures written on them. I can't think of a worship song that uses these scriptures about suffering. **BUT THESE VERSES ARE TRUE.**

The Church of Jesus should be a suffering circle.

1 Peter 4:1-2 (NIV) Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Christ suffered in his body and we should have the same attitude? And whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. That is quite the claim! I spent time trying to understand that this week.

**Pleasure for self is sin's calling card.
Suffering for others is love's calling card.**

Pleasure for self is sin's calling card. The temptation for sin is self-centered pleasure.

Suffering for others is love's calling card. Suffering is not a temptation, but a cost we become willing to pay because we love.

When Satan tried to tempt Eve into sin, he did not tempt her with suffering. Satan tempted her with self-centered pleasure.

When Satan himself fell into sin it was a self-centered pleasure that tempted him.

Whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. Do you want to be done with sin?

Are you willing to suffer? Or will you avoid suffering to follow after the temptation of self-centered pleasure?

All sin is rooted in self. The willingness to suffer for others is rooted in love.

Take a moment and try to think of a sin that can't be answered by saying no to pleasure and embracing suffering. Pride, Greed, Lust, Lying...

Have you joined the suffering circle of Jesus Christ?

Suffering Circle

Jesus did not avoid suffering. He actually came into the city to suffer.

Redemption Church, why are we here? Why did God call us to this city?

What is your mental image of suffering?

What does suffering look like?

At its most extreme, suffering looks like Jesus on the Cross. Nails in his hands & feet, crown of thorns on His head, stripped and humiliated, beaten and betrayed, wrongly accused...

I have a hard time seeing myself willing to suffer at that extreme for others. Are you with me? Anyone feel honest enough to say that? Well the Bible tells us that Jesus suffered more than any other and was actually disfigured beyond recognition. (Isaiah 52:14) I'm not sure anyone can suffer to his extent, because his love for us is beyond measure. ...but we also see in Scripture and in early Church history Christians who were willing to suffer greatly for Christ. It happened so much that it would be considered unusual to be a Christian and not experience suffering for Jesus.

Stephen was stoned to death, James was beheaded, Peter crucified upside down, Thomas run-through with a spear, Paul imprisoned and beheaded, John boiled in oil and survived to be left on a deserted prison island called Patmos... I say this to tell you that our willingness to suffer has a lot of room to grow.

But also I would have you see suffering beyond physical persecution.

- When you pray
- When you read your Bible
- When you give
- When you worship
- When you help/serve
- When you forgive
- Right now as you are watching this... you are suffering because there are many self-centered pleasures you could be giving your focus.

What does suffering look like? Does it look like us?

Romans 12:15 (NIV) Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Life in a circle is not all about you. Life in a circle becomes how can I connect, how can I serve, how can I love those in the circle.

When someone rejoices the entire circle rejoices with them. Have you ever had good news but no one to share it with? In the circle of Christ this should never happen.

When someone mourns the entire circle mourns with them. We suffer for each-other. We bear each-others burdens - we do all of this out of love.

Are you connected to a suffering circle?

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NIV) We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4:10 (NIV) We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:11-12 (NIV) For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

**Carry the death of Jesus in your body.
Reveal the life of Jesus in your body**

Carry in your body the suffering of Jesus Christ. Physically take on suffering. Emotionally take on suffering. Spiritually take on suffering.

And, carry it within your body, your body, which was once tempted to sin. Your body which was once driven toward self-

centered pleasure - YOUR BODY will now reveal the life of Jesus.

A Church that avoids suffering is a church that will not reveal Jesus.

Suffering Circle

This subject of suffering is the opposite of the world's focus.

Our world, right here in the USA, is focused on themselves... Have you been to the grocery stores? Have you seen the people hoarding toilet paper? WE NEED TO BE THE OPPOSITE!

Our world is focused on complaining on the situation instead of finding a way to help our neighbors. WE NEED TO BE THE OPPOSITE!

Our world is consuming more entertainment than ever before... streaming Netflix, YouTube, and Disney plus... WE NEED TO BE THE OPPOSITE! Could we for a moment serve our family? Could we for a moment pick up the phone, or face-time with someone who is alone and scared.

Our world is frightened by the constant fear-mongering of the media... WE NEED TO BE THE OPPOSITE! We need to be praying!

Jesus came to suffer. What are we here for?

Musician

Worth Suffering For

Jesus rode through the city of Jerusalem. He embraced the very ones who would betray him, cry out for his death, and completely forsake him. He suffered all of this because they were worth His suffering.

When He prayed on the cross "Father forgive them..." it is because they were worth suffering for...

You are worth suffering for. It was out of love for you that Christ suffered.

Redemption Church, is Plano worth suffering for? Is your city, your community, your neighborhood, your co-workers, your school, your family and friends... are they worth suffering for?

Are you willing to suffer?

Will you suffer in some prayer right now?

Will you suffer in some repentance right now?

Will you suffer in asking God to direct you... God what would you have me do? Who would you have me help?