

## **Becoming like Jesus in suffering** (Based on Chapter 4 of *Costly Grace*)

### **The Big Idea**

Suffering teaches us to trust in the very nature of God himself, in that we come to understand God always has our best in mind even when we cannot see what he is doing.

### **Biblical Foundation**

*Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. "If any of you want to come with me," he told them, "you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it."* Mark 8:34-35 (TEV)

### **We become like Jesus through suffering**

Jesus became the Christ because he was rejected and suffered, and for us to become his disciples—to become like Christ—we must share in his rejection and suffering.

Why was it important that Jesus be rejected in addition to his suffering? If suffering and rejection lead to intimacy with the Father, is it possible our avoidance of these things keeps us in the shallow waters of discipleship?

### **God is a God who bears**

What does Jesus mean when he says we must carry a cross? Why does God acquaint us with the grief, heartache, and sorrow?

### **The cross gives us the power to forgive**

Forgiveness is a bloody work that costs not only the life of Jesus but your own life as well: "For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it." What do you think Jesus means?

### **And how do we know what kind of cross we are meant to bear?**

We find out as soon as we begin to follow Jesus. It is not a cross you can pick, but it is the one God will use to prepare you for life in the kingdom of heaven.

As we learn to think like Jesus, our perspective on suffering and rejection will change from fearful avoidance to redemptive endurance. We will come to understand that enduring the cross is not a tragedy; rather, it is the fruit of "an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ." (Bonhoeffer)