



God's Kindness in Suffering
Pastor Rich Harris 02.15.2026

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

[Philippian 1:29] (ESV)

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake

Granted = charizomai

- to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favor to, to gratify
- to show oneself gracious, kind, benevolent
- to give graciously, give freely, bestow

[Lamentations 3:32-33] (NLT)

Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love. For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.

[Psalm 145:13] (ESV)

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.

Suffer with the right people

[Philippians 1:3-5, 7-8] (NLT)

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. So, it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

[Proverbs 17:17] (NLT)

A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.

Suffer for the right purpose

[Philippians 1:12-14] (NLT)

And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.

Suffer with the right perspective

[Philippians 1:20-21] (ESV)

it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

[2 Corinthians 4:17] (ESV)

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison

Key Points:

- 1. Suffer with the right people***
- 2. Suffer for the right purpose***
- 3. Suffer with the right perspective***

Applications for the Week:

Who are the "Philippian" friends in your life—those who would suffer with you, support you, and point you back to Christ? If you lack these relationships, what is one practical step you can take this week to cultivate them?

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What does the word "granted" imply about the nature of suffering for Christ, according to the original Greek meaning discussed by Pastor Rich?**

2. According to the letter, what were the two outcomes of Paul's imprisonment for the sake of Christ?
3. What perspective does Paul offer in Philippians 1:20-21 when facing the possibility of life or death?
4. How can suffering, which is inherently painful, be understood as a gracious gift or an act of kindness from a good and loving God?
5. What does it mean that "to live is Christ and to die is gain," and how does this eternal perspective transform one's experience of present affliction?
6. Why is it crucial to have the right companions during a season of suffering, and what distinguishes a "Philippian" friend from others?
7. What is a current area of struggle or suffering you have been trying to manage on your own, and what would it look like to consciously invite Jesus into that place today?
8. Pastor Rich's story of worship during a crisis shifted the atmosphere in his story from fear to joy. When anxiety or fear strikes, what is one specific worship song or scripture you can turn to in order to regain an eternal perspective?
9. What is one thing you are thankful for in regard to your small group? Have you shared that with your group recently?