

CTK Community Group Sermon Discussion Questions & Announcements
Week of 5/23/21

Announcements:

The **CTK Diaconate is in need of more deacons**. We usually call for officer nominations at the end of each year, but in light of the current need, we are issuing that call for deacon nominations now through the end of May. If you are a member of CTK and want to nominate someone for deacon, or deacons' assistant, please follow these steps:

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13 for biblical qualifications.
2. Approach your nominee and ask that you pray together for wisdom.
3. With the approval of the nominee, please submit the nomination to office@ctkcambridge.org

Sermon Discussion Questions | [Joel 2:18-32](#)

1. Read Joel 2:18-32. Look for the promises in the passage. What do they reveal about God's character?
2. What does the symbolism of the rain reveal, vs. 23?
3. What is the difference between guilt and shame? vs 26-27. How does God free us from our shame?
4. What does the promise of the pouring out of the Spirit mean for us?
5. Discuss how the Gospel changes the way we view our suffering? Read the summary of [David Powlison](#)'s book **God's Grace in your Suffering** from the Gospel Coalition.

Why Not Me?

In his suffering book, David Powlison noted that so often our initial reaction to painful suffering is:

*Why me?
Why this?
Why now?*

Why? . . .

He wrote:

[God] comes for you, in the flesh, in Christ, into suffering, on your behalf. He does not offer advice and perspective from afar; he steps into your significant suffering. He will see you through, and work with you the whole way. He will carry you even in extremis. This reality changes the questions that rise up from your heart. That inward-turning "why me?" quiets down, lifts its eyes, and begins to look around. You turn outward and new, wonderful questions form.

*Why you?
Why you?
Why would you enter this world of evils?
Why would you go through loss, weakness, hardship, sorrow, and death?
Why would you do this for me, of all people?*

But you did.

*You did this for the joy set before you.
You did this for love.
You did this showing the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

As that deeper question sinks home, you become joyously sane. The universe is no longer supremely about you. Yet you are not irrelevant. God's story makes you just the right size. Everything counts, but the scale changes to something that makes much more sense. You face hard things. But you have already received something better which can never be taken away. And that better something will continue to work out the whole journey long.

The question generates a heartfelt response:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget any of his benefits, who pardons all your iniquities and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion, who satisfies your years with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

Thank you, my Father. You are able to give a true voice to a thank you amid all that is truly wrong, both the sins and the sufferings that now have come under lovingkindness.

Finally, you are prepared to pose—and to mean—almost unimaginable questions:

*Why not me?
Why not this?
Why not now?*

*If in some way, my faith might serve as a three-watt night-light in a very dark world, why not me?
If my suffering shows forth the Savior of the world, why not me?
If I have the privilege of filling up the sufferings of Christ?
If he sanctifies to me my deepest distress?
If I fear no evil?
If he bears me in his arms?
If my weakness demonstrates the power of God to save us from all that is wrong?
If my honest struggle shows other strugglers how to land on their feet?
If my life becomes a source of hope for others?*

Why not me?

Of course, you don't want to suffer, but you've become willing: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as you will."

*Like him, your loud cries and tears will in fact be heard by the one who saves from death.
Like him, you will learn obedience through what you suffer.
Like him, you will sympathize with the weaknesses of others.
Like him, you will deal gently with the ignorant and wayward.
Like him, you will display faith to a faithless world, hope to a hopeless world, love to a loveless world, life to a dying world.*

If all that God promises only comes true, then why not me?

6. Pray for revival in CTK and Cambridge. Pray for a third Great Awakening in New England.