

Kasey shared the idea that incarnation always leads to crucifixion. To be incarnate (in the flesh) with and for another will lead to suffering and possibly even death.

- Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Is it possible to love someone accurately and not suffer?
- Why or why not?
- Would you say that we tend to embrace or avoid suffering?
- Are you surprised or not by the idea that Jesus expects that we will suffer as we enter fully into other's humanity to walk through the mess with them towards the new humanity?
- Why or why not?

Take a look again at John 15:9-13

- What does Jesus say we will do if we love Him?
- What is Jesus' command?
- What example does He give of fulfilling that command?
- How do we justify or explain away not laying down our lives for others?
- When Jesus speaks of laying down our lives do you think He is speaking of physically dying or something else?

Look again at Matthew 16:21-24

- What did Jesus begin to explain to the disciples?
- If we read just that part and knew we are supposed to follow His example and live as He did...what would that mean?
- What does it mean to deny yourself?
- What does it mean to take up your cross?
- What does it mean to take up a cross and follow Jesus?
- Where does Jesus take His cross?

Kasey shared that taking up our cross is not about bearing with minor annoyances, but about going to our deaths.

- Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- If it's not about minor annoyances and yet we are not physically dying then what does it look like to take up our cross and follow Him?

Kasey shared that when we take up our crosses and follow Jesus, we follow Him not just to a physical death, but we follow Him into the depths of other people's humanity. We enter into their time and space and consequences with them.

- Do you agree or disagree that this is a picture of taking up our cross and following?
- If Jesus bore His cross for others, then for whom should we bear our cross?
- On the cross, Jesus was punished not for His own wrong doing, but for ours. Does that really mean that we should be ready and willing to accept and pay the consequences for others? Why or why not?
- How does personal responsibility play in if we are willing to suffer the consequences for others?

Look back at Colossians 1:24

- Why would Paul rejoice about suffering?
- Do you see suffering with and for others as participating with God in what He's doing? Why or why not?
- Really, practically, how do we get past our intense desire to avoid suffering at all costs?
- Can you think of a time that you know you've purposefully avoided someone else's suffering?
- Can you think of a time you entered into someone else's suffering with them?
- What were the results of those interactions? How have those relationships played out?

Over the past couple of weeks, we've been encouraging each other to pray about what relationships God is calling us to dig deeper in.

- You don't have to say aloud if you don't want to, but do you feel any direction yet?
- What practical steps are you planning to take to step more fully into that person's time and space and consequences?
- What excuses are still racing through your mind telling you to avoid this?

Please allow us to take the opportunity once again to remind each other that the goal here is not for everyone else to finally get it and start loving us accurately. Rather, the goal is for each of us to decide that we will make this choice to step more fully into those relationships that God is directing us towards regardless of if the decision is mutual or not.