



Tough As Nails: Part One: In The Beginning INTRODUCTION

Life is full of danger and uncertainty. We see news reports almost daily about violence and terrorism. And sometimes it feels like faith is under siege. 2015 was the worst year in modern history for Christian persecution. More than 7,100 Christians were killed for faith-related reasons; 2,400 churches were damaged or destroyed. Surrounded by uncertainty, it's difficult not to be afraid. But Jesus offers us another option.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What part of Sunday's message stood out to you? Was there anything you disagreed with or that encouraged you?

"Uncertainty is unavoidable. Fearful is optional."

Do you have a phobia? If so, what is it?

How do you typically respond to uncertainty? Do you try to control your circumstances? Do you feel overwhelmed and shut down? How effective has your approach been throughout your life?

Read: Mark 15:15; Matthew 27:28-42; Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:28-31; Matthew 8:26-27

Context: These are accounts of the life of Jesus from those who personally saw him and knew him while he was on earth. This is the account of how Jesus handled trials and the commitment He called people to who followed him..

- Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged? (Mark 15:15)
- Take some time to list out what Jesus went through on His journey to the cross. (Matt 27:28-42)
- Why do you think that we have lost the true meaning of the cross over the years? How do you think that has affected our commitment to God as people who say they follow Jesus? How has that affected me?
- What does the cross truly mean in Luke 9:23? How is this different than our westernized version of Christianity?
- What is it that we as humans always fear? (Matt 10:28) Who are we really supposed to fear and why? (Matt 10:28)
- The disciples were afraid in the middle of the storm. Why shouldn't they have been? What was it about their circumstance that they should have focused on? (Matt 8:26-27)
- What did Jesus have power over? (Matt 8:26-27)
- Andy concluded with these questions to think about. Is our version of Christianity worth that? Is our version of Christianity worth dying for? Is the way we live worth the price they paid? As a group, discuss your thoughts on these questions.

MOVING FORWARD

Uncertainty is for certain. It's unavoidable. It's beyond your control. But living in fear is optional. Remember that Jesus—your Savior—was born into, lived through, and walked into the jaws of uncertainty. A world too often defined by violence, arrested and crucified him . . . and then God raised him from the dead. That is the cornerstone of our faith. That's why living in fear is optional.

LIVE IT OUT

Memorize: Learn Luke 9:23.

Journaling: Take some time this week to journal about the questions Andy ended with and personalize them. Be specific with how they relate to you personally. Is our version of Christianity worth that? Is our version of Christianity worth dying for? Is the way we live worth the price they paid?

Prayer: Pray for God to give you strength and boldness to be a committed follower of Jesus like in Luke 9:23.

Accountability: Begin meeting with someone from your group regularly to challenge each other in your walk with God.