



## Life Group Work Sheet

### Suffering and Darkness

December 15, 2013

*In the sermon this Sunday, Pastor Kurt looks at the sufferings of Jesus, as predicted in the book of Isaiah. What we see in Isa. 50 is that in spite of all the suffering and hardships that Jesus faced, he continued to trust God. This week in Life Groups, we will look at the sufferings in our own lives and how we too can trust God in the midst of these hard times. We will do this by continuing in Isaiah, picking up where Pastor Kurt left off in Isaiah 51.*

### Getting to Know Each Other

1. What does it mean to trust God? Do you find trusting God during hard times easy or difficult?

### Into the Bible

*Isaiah 51 provides us with three reasons for why we can trust God in the midst of suffering. The rest of our time together, we will be looking at each of these three reasons and how they can help us in our situations of difficulty and suffering.*

**Read Isaiah 51:1-3. Here we see the first reason why we can trust God: history. Isaiah reminds his people to look to the past and see how God has worked in their history. With that in mind, answer the following questions:**

2. Here Isaiah refers the people of Israel back to their history to see how God as worked on their behalf. What are the examples that Isaiah uses here?
3. Think of your own life. If you were to create a similar list of how God has worked on your behalf, what would you put on your list?

- a. How does remembering how God has been at work in your past help you to trust God today?

- b. What is one way that you can daily remind yourself of God's loving care, provision, and guidance in the past?

**Read Isaiah 51:4-6. Here we see the second reason why we can trust God: God's purposes will never fail. Too often we do not trust God because we are not looking at God; we are looking at our problem. Isaiah reminds us to look to God first and foremost as the one who is fully trustworthy.**

4. Make a list of the different characteristics of who God is (i.e., loving, merciful, just, etc.).
5. Looking at your list, think of a time in your life that you experienced hardship and suffering. How would this list of who God is have helped you to trust him more during that time? How can it help you in future seasons of hardship?

**Read Isaiah 51:7-8. Here Isaiah gives us a third reason we can trust God: there is a happy ending. God's word promises that his people will one day dwell with him forever. That may not mean that things will work out the way you want during your season of suffering, but you can be confident that God will come through.**

6. Here Isaiah tells the people to 'fear not' those who are causing hardship and difficulty. Why does Isaiah tell the people not to fear? In your hard times, have you found yourself 'in fear' of those who have caused your hardships?
7. Isaiah concludes this section by reminding the people of the promises of God's word: that righteousness and salvation *will* come. How does this future guarantee help us trust in the here and now?

### Putting it Together

8. Think back on these three ways you can trust God more: by looking to the past (1-3), by looking to the future (7-8), and by looking to God (4-6). Write down how you plan to actively practice your trust in God this week through these three ways.