



AFTERMATH

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SERMON RECAP

In his sermon, Efrem Smith focused on the theme of pain, particularly in the aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion. He emphasized that God doesn't remove pain but walks alongside us through it, urging the church not to suffer alone, and to recognize God's presence in their struggles. Drawing on the story of Mary Magdalene, he highlighted the importance of seeking direction from God and using the experience of pain as an opportunity for a deeper relationship with Him. Efrem encouraged believers to share their journey of healing with others, reminding them that pain is not the end of their story but a chance for growth and transformation.

GET STARTED

- **Tell a story from childhood when you experienced something painful. It could be a bike wreck, the death of a family pet, or losing a favorite toy. What happened and who was there to comfort you? Or, tell a story from childhood when a friend suffered pain and you helped them through it.**

TAKE IT IN

- **What encouraged and/or challenged you from the message this week? Why?**

TALK IT OVER

Read John 20:11-18

- Mary was emotional and openly cried and expressed her grief and pain when she discovered Jesus' tomb was empty. Sometimes when we hurt we're advised to keep that to ourselves, but it's important to be honest about our feelings. **Think of a time when you felt pain as an adult. How did you handle it? Were you open about your feelings with others or did you hide your feelings? Why?**
- Efrem shared the **Big Idea** of the message was ***"God is with you in your pain"***, meaning God may not take away your pain, but He is present with you during your struggles. **What does the phrase 'God is with you in your pain' mean to you, and how can it change the way we deal with difficult situations? How does remembering God's is with you during tough times help you cope with pain in your life? Sometimes God sends people to us in our pain. When have you seen Him do this for you?**

- Efrem shared that sometimes when some people experience pain they draw closer to God while some people experience pain push away from God. The second type of person does so because they say they can't believe in a God who allows us to go through so much pain. **Have you ever seen someone who pushed away from God in their pain? Tell about what you saw and how that person dealt with their pain apart from God. Did they return to Him? Were you able to share with them and help them see God in the midst of their pain? Why or why not.**
- Mary was in such deep sorrow that she didn't realize it was Jesus when he asked why she was crying. **What does this say about our ability to see God in our pain? Have there been times in your life when you failed to see God's presence during painful moments? How can you be more aware of God's presence in pain in the future?**
- Efrem encouraged us not to deal with pain alone. He warned us that dealing with pain alone is a place where Satan can get us to doubt God and withdraw from people. **When you're in pain, who can you reach out to? Who are the people in your life who you know will walk with you through your pain?**
- In **John 20:17**, Jesus tells Mary not to hold on to him but to share the news with the disciples. **What does this say about the importance of sharing our experiences of healing or hope with others? How can sharing your own experiences of pain and healing help others who might be struggling?**
- Efrem encouraged us to find joy in the ways God reveals Himself to us, even during our pain. **What might it look like to delight in God showing up in your pain? Can you think of a past struggle where you saw God showing up? How can you look for signs of God's presence in your current challenges?**

LIVE IT OUT

Read **Mark 2:1-12**. This story illustrates what it looks like to have friends help you in your pain. Sometimes we're the man on the mat and sometimes we're one of the men carrying our friend to Jesus and supporting that person in love. Do you have anyone in your life who is in pain right now that you can support? Do you have them on your prayer list to faithfully lift up to God in prayer? Have you reached out to that person to pray with them? How can you help that person in other ways during their time of pain?

Memorize: "Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her." John 20:18 (NIV)

Further Study:

- ***Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*** by Timothy Keller
- ***Where is God When it Hurts*** by Phillip Yancey