



*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

INTRODUCTION

5/27/2018

Esther's story demonstrates the value of pressing in when things get tough. Faith is not a matter of escapism but perseverance because God promises that his presence will be with us.

QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message?
2. How does that message impact your view of God or your view of hard times?
3. Reflecting on the story of Esther, what parts resonate with you? Why?
4. Tough times can vary in intensity. How do you typically respond to tough times?
5. What have you found to be most helpful or least helpful when facing a tough time?
6. If you have been following Jesus a while, how has your understanding of God developed over different seasons of life?

If you are new to following Jesus, or just exploring faith, how do react to the idea that faith does not exempt people from tough times?

7. Pastor Derek spoke about Esther's decision to hold a fast. What do you think of when you hear about someone "fasting"?
8. Have you every participated in or tried to fast, for spiritual or religious purposes? If so, would you share why you chose to do that or what your experience was?
9. What were some reasons or purposes for fasting that Pastor Derek discussed?
10. In tough times, it is vital to press into God. To press into his promises. When you think of these phrases what might that look like for you?
11. If you could hear one promise from God, what would you want it to be?
12. Passages like Matthew 28:20 and Isaiah 41:10 have powerful promises of God's presence in the midst of tough times. How do these and similar promises help during tough times? What does it look like for God to be present?
13. What is one way you would like to "press in" this week?

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank you for the gift of your presence. You promise, in the midst of tough times and pain, to never leave me but to be present with me. Remind me of this promise when life becomes overwhelming and give me the strength to press in during those moments. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.