



Sunday 31st July 2016

Allan Demond

Grow in suffering.

This Sunday we welcomed Allan back from Long Service Leave.

As we conclude the “Grow” series Allan encouraged with a verse from 2 Peter 3:18 “*But **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” The word grow in this particular passage is the same word used to describe Jesus’ own growth in Luke 2:52 “*And Jesus **grew** in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*” In reflecting on his time away with Janet, Allan highlighted two aspects of growth that they experienced whilst away from NewHope. Aspects of **Suffering** and **Surrender**.

Growing in the midst of suffering.

Suffering typically comes in two flavours, the first being suffering we choose ourselves, and the second, suffering that chooses us.

All spiritual growth requires some form of pain or discomfort. Similar to our muscles when we exercise, our growth and strength come after pain.

Suffering we choose ourselves:

1. When have there been times when you’ve had to choose to embrace suffering, or to shut it out?
2. When is a time that you’ve ‘run in’? How have you grown spiritually in these times?
3. Are there times when you find it easier to embrace suffering, and others when it is difficult?
4. What does it mean for us to embrace some measure of suffering for the kingdom of God?

Yet so much of life’s pain chooses us.

Times of pressure can be times of growth.

5. When have you experienced times of great pressure that have led to growth?
6. How would you describe the spiritual growth that occurred in these situations?





Read John 16:33. Allan encouraged us to remember that we are in an envelope of God's profound care. How else do you hold on to hope in times of pain or suffering?

Surrender

In surrendering, we can create space for growth. Read Philippians 2:3-4 as you reflect on parts of your life that you might need to surrender.

7. Can you think of moments when an act of surrender has been needed for you to grow spiritually?
8. How did you discern the part of you that God was calling you to surrender?

Allan reflected on the opportunity to sit in the San Miniato al Monte in Florence. The chapel is built to commemorate Saint Miniato – an Armenian prince who was martyred in Florence for his Christian faith. Within the chapel, there is a large mosaic of Christ ascended in glory and overlooking all creation. Beside Christ is an image of St Miniato offering his own crown to Jesus.

9. Read Mark 8:36. What might God be calling you to in an act of surrender? How might you offer this 'crown' to Jesus?

Grow

Allan urged us to reflect on the message in 2 Peter and reminded us that our best days and moments with our creator are still ahead of us if we are willing to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

10. How might you grow deeper in knowledge and faith, knowing that your best days with God are still ahead of you?