**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Tough As Nails--Misunderstood**

**3-28-2021**

**Introduction (8 min)**

Table Talk Groups (45-minute study) begin by watching the video and sharing the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

Southside Home (35-minute study) can skip to “Starting the Discussion” as a follow up to the worship experience.

**Table Talk Video: Tough As Nails – Misunderstood**

In our sermon this week we learned Jesus chose grit over quit even when he was misunderstood, yet he continued to engage others so they would have the chance to comprehend and embrace what he communicated.

I came to understand the importance of communication in a deeper way while on a missions trip in Brazil. I was standing in the airport in San Palos after a 16-hour flight from Miami and found myself separated from my group. Time was running out and I needed to find the gate before our connecting flight to Fortaleza took off. I sought help but no one could understand me, and I couldn’t understand them.

Since I’m not bilingual (unless of course you count charades), I resorted to using whatever means I could to get my message across. So, I pointed and gestured toward signs and doorways with a quizzical look on my face.

I was relieved when a man pointed through the crowded walkway to what appeared to be a customer service center. I made my way up to the desk and asked for help. The agent spoke my language. It turned out the gate was right behind me. I couldn’t see it because the sign was obscured by the angle of a corridor wall. I made my way to the gate and was reunited with my companions.

Communication is at the heart of every human encounter. Sometimes we are effective in it. At other times it’s like speaking a foreign language no one understands. When what we are trying to communicate is important enough (like me trying to find the right gate) we make the effort to change the way we say something in order to deepen our mutual understanding.

Jesus traveled from Heaven to Earth so we could have a relationship with God. Jesus spoke a different language. He spoke a spiritual language and was misunderstood. Jesus didn’t quit. He had grit and continued to communicate his message. He didn’t stop with mere words; Jesus spoke through his death, burial, and resurrection.

When we reach out to others with the message of Jesus, we may seem to be speaking a foreign language. Just because we may be misunderstood doesn’t mean we should give up. I didn’t give up in the airport when no one understood me. I needed to find a way to communicate. It was important I didn’t get left behind. It is important others don’t get left behind and miss Heaven. Let’s try to find ways to maintain open lines of communication when we are misunderstood. Let’s choose grit over quit as we communicate the message of eternal life found through a personal relationship with Jesus.

--Carla Pollard

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Father, sometimes our words and actions are misunderstood. Help us to not give up when we reach out to others with the Gospel. Grant us the words we can speak, and the action we can take that communicates your love for us and others. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

**Starting the Discussion (3 minutes)**

1. Can you share a time when you had an experience where you were misunderstood?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (24 minutes)**

**Invite someone to read John 3:1-11, 7:45-52, and 19:38-42.**

2. From these verses what can we know about the man, Nicodemus?

3. How did Nicodemus view Jesus and his ministry?

4. Why would Jesus immediately address Nicodemus with such a puzzling spiritual truth?

5. In verse 10, Jesus expresses an expectation he has of Nicodemus. Would Jesus have similar expectations for us today? Why?

**Read John 1:19-32; 3:22-36, Mathew 11:2, Luke 7:11-35**.

6. As John preached repentance, what did he reveal about Messiah?

7. Why do you think John pointed to Jesus as Messiah, but then seemed to misunderstand who he was?

8. Jesus could have rescued John but chose not to. Why do you think Jesus spoke highly of John’s righteousness and ministry, yet allowed him to be beheaded?

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Dear Lord, help us to show grit over quit in sharing your light and love to others. As we communicate the Gospel help us remember our actions speak louder than words sometimes. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has any other questions or insights. Then summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (4 minutes)**

This week try to memorize John 3:3 and Romans 5:8. Take a few minutes to practice/repeat these together as a group. Find a way to make it matter! Keep the words of Jesus before you this week as you share His message with others.