

WHAT COMES NEXT? Matthew 4:1

CONNECT

1. What is something from the craziness of 2020 that you're thankful for?

CELEBRATE

2. Read Matthew 3:13–4:1. Try to place yourself in Jesus' shoes. What would it feel like to be baptized, then see the heavens opened? What would it feel like to then be led off into the desert?
3. Jesus was eager to begin His work as Messiah. Yet the Spirit led Jesus away from the people He wanted to help and sent Him to suffer attacks, physical hardship and temptations for nearly six weeks. Why did Jesus follow the Spirit's guidance?
4. Read James 1:2–4. James commands believers to do two things when we encounter trials and hardships. What are they? What is the promised result if we do? Why will we fall short of that result if we don't follow the two commands?
5. Read Philippians 2:5–11. Using only this passage, how do we know that Jesus is fully God? How do we know that Jesus lived a genuine human life, just like yours? What did Jesus choose to do with His human life?
6. Jesus is the "Man of Sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3), suffering intense hardship through His life and death. What does it mean about our own suffering that Jesus experienced it as well? What stigmas does this remove from suffering?
7. Read Genesis 2:15–25 and Revelation 22:1–5. What kind of life does God desire for His children? What stopped us from experiencing this life on earth? Why was the cross necessary for us to experience this life again?
8. Does suffering ever have the last word?

CONTRIBUTE

9. Take time around your group to be honest about how hard 2020 has been. As you do, pray for each other, encourage each other and do what you can to help each other.
10. Next, look forward to 2021. What has God been accomplishing in your life in 2020? How might these things be preparing you for 2021? How has God used 2020 to help you love people better?