




SISTERHOOD LOUNGE ROOM


From our lounge room to yours

LET'S TALK ABOUT LIFE, WITH MARGARET STUNT: Part 1




We are so excited that you are joining us for this month's Sisterhood Lounge Room. In this episode, Julie is hosting a conversation with Margaret Stunt on the topic of navigating challenging seasons. As you watch this episode, we have highlighted the key scriptures, thoughts shared, as well as a few questions that you can use in your group or in your own personal devotion ... enjoy.


Julie began by saying that suffering is a universal part of the human experience, but many people struggle to make sense of why suffering happens both in their own lives and in the world around us. She invited Margaret to start by sharing her story.



Margaret shared that she grew up in a home with an alcoholic father and a mother who was diagnosed with manic depressive schizophrenia. She was abducted off the streets of London and sexually abused all before the age of 11. At the age of 16, Margaret took an overdose. This she says wasn't a cry for help as she didn't think anybody could help her, but thankfully she was found, treated, and survived. Fast forward to when she married her husband Fred and became pregnant and then discovered that she was an epileptic diabetic which resulted in the loss of all her hair and teeth. Through medical scanning it was discovered that she incredibly has four kidneys and was given the prognosis that she would die before the age of thirty.



Miraculously, she survived however her marriage didn't and Fred and Margaret got divorced. Throughout this time sadly Margaret discovered she had breast cancer, but during treatment, she and Fred were reconciled and during a trip around Europe together they both surrendered their lives to the Lord on an American air base on a Greek island.



Margaret spoke about having a conversion moment and how in our culture today we have lost these radical moments of change because without conversion we don't have conviction. Not everyone has a crazy story, but everyone can have a 'I once was blind, but now I see' encounter with Jesus.

Q- What is your story? Take a moment to think about where you were before Jesus and where that road might have led. If you are in a group share your stories with each other.


Q- Do you question why there is suffering? What troubles you the most about the challenges and hardships we face?


Q- What are your thoughts on having a conversion that leads to conviction? How did your first encounter with Jesus change you?

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.


Psalm 40:1-3

Julie observed how in the last century, especially in the Western church it has been believed that suffering was caused by sin, demonic forces, or a lack of faith. She said that we have moved a long way from believing these reasons are the sole reasons of why suffering occurs, and invited Margaret to speak on why we suffer.






Margaret said that we live in a fallen world. There are no promises in the bible to say we won't suffer, in fact Jesus said that we would certainly face trouble but to take heart as he had overcome.



Likewise, to think that sickness comes from God as a result of a lack of faith or sin is not true. The devil comes to rob, steal, and destroy and in that moment, he is stealing hope and healing from you. In Psalm 40 it says he lifts us out of our circumstances and gives us a firm place to stand. The slimy pits, mud, mire are our circumstances of sickness, depression, fear, loneliness etc. It does not say I will throw you a rope so you can get yourself out, it says He lifts us out. Margaret said that independence will keep you in the pit.

Julie agreed saying that independence and self-sufficiency are dominant in our culture today and they keep people alienated and stuck.



Margaret continued that she has walked alongside many people with cancer, and she has encouraged them not to own sickness. It's not *your* cancer, it's *the* cancer. Margaret encouraged us to turn up the worship and to turn down the circumstances.

Julie agreed and said that she too did not own cancer and she frequently forgets it's ever been a part of her journey.


Q- Have you believed that suffering has been a result of lack of faith?

Q- Read Psalm 40, how can you trust God in the midst of your challenge rather than being self-sufficient? What does this practically look like?

Q- Have you owned and personalised sickness in the past? If so, how will what Margaret shared in this section help you move forward?


So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18



Julie said that she has observed in people and in herself at times, that if they are not delivered out of a situation for a lengthy period, self-doubt and worry can creep in. Even doubting the goodness of God, and invited Margaret to share her thoughts on how we address this.

Margaret said that the bible is clear that we must continually fix our eyes on Jesus and not on ourselves. So, the first step is if you find yourself in the place where your focus is on your situation or your feelings, pause and readjust your focus. Fixing our eyes on Jesus is not just something we do on Sundays or at mid-week groups and gatherings, it is a full-time posture we are to adopt. People have become over-thinkers and over-sharers instead of going to the Father, fixing their eyes on Him. Margaret said by fixing our eyes on Jesus we keep our eyes on eternity and not the temporal. When eternity's light shines on it, it becomes passing rather than all-consuming.



Margaret shared how her grandson was unwell and in hospital for the first few years of his life. They had to watch him suffer and all she could do was invite Jesus into the room. She didn't question why he was suffering because that line of questioning helps no one, instead, they sought His presence, and even as a child her grandson imitated them and worshipped in his cot.

Margaret encouraged us to get a word from God, this may be a bible verse or a song that resonates with you. We all need to have a word that we can stand firm on and speak over our situations. Julie agreed that during her own



cancer journey, God gave her a word from Isaiah that strengthened her and which she clung to.

Q- Has doubt and worry crept into your life when you haven't seen a breakthrough? If so, how have you addressed it?

Q- How can you adopt a posture of fixing your eyes on Jesus?

Q- What is a scripture you have held onto in a tough season? How did it help strengthen you during that time?

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Psalm 119 v50 and v105

Julie asked Margaret to speak into disappointment. Margaret said disappointment is something you must guard against. She shared that during COVID both her brothers died of cancer suddenly and that she couldn't be with them. She reflected on a moment last year when she was at a gathering and asked to pray for someone with cancer. She said at that moment she had a split second to decide if she would allow her own personal disappointment with cancer to rule or for God to reign. Disappointment will stop you from praying, you must choose to come back to faith. His way are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts.

Julie added that it is not that we deny our reality, but we cling to the sovereignty of God through suffering.

Margaret reiterated that the first step here is to have a word to hold tight to. You cannot deny your circumstances, you must be real with what's happening, and to remember that God can cope with your honesty, especially when people can't.

Margaret added that many people don't think God is in the valley, but it clearly says in scripture that He will walk us through the valley. When reality is more prominent than sovereignty, people tend to camp in the valley and invite others to join them because misery loves company.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

Julie noted that Margaret has mentioned having a word as a way to walk through suffering and invited her to expand a little further on this concept.

Margaret said to ask Jesus for a living word, pray and ask for a word for the season you are in. The word of God sustains, and in suffering you need to be sustained. See what scriptures are clearly speaking to you. The word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. You need a lamp in your hand to show you the way through the darkness. Margaret said that we aren't just light bearers in our own suffering, we are light bearers in all circumstances. When you walk into a room, you carry the light of Jesus. See yourself as Jesus sees you, his light bearers and carry in His presence.

Q- Have you ever camped out or joined someone else in valley moments? How can you safeguard yourself from doing so again in the future?

Q- Have there been moments of disappointment that you've allowed to rule over your heart and if so, what decisions can you make to ensure God will reign in those moments instead?

Q- How do you know you have a word from God for your situation? Does seeking God in the valley come easily to you?