

# DIGGING DEEPER

VOICES 2022- BEN SLEDGE

JULY 24

This Sunday, “Sledge” is coming back to Gateway! Long-time Gatewayers know how compelling and hilarious Sledge is as a speaker. You may also know him from his work on Medium.com where he writes primarily on mental health. His new book *Where Cowards Go To Die*, is a memoir from his time serving in the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan. His book “cuts through the bravado to reveal a brutal portrait of war and the cost of returning to a country that no longer feels like home.”

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time in your life when you experienced deep pain or hurt, whether the result of circumstances or sin, that God now uses to bring healing to others?
2. What stood out to you from the message?
3. Read **John 21:15-17**.
  - Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):
    - Who is talking?
    - What is the circumstance?
    - Any repeated phrases?
    - What surprised you?
    - What stood out to you?
  - Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)
    - What questions do you have?
    - Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences - what are the main points?
    - What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
    - What do you learn about yourself and your choices?
  - Now make some applications (what's my response)
    - How do you respond to what you are reading?
    - How does this apply to your life?
    - What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
    - Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?
4. Read **Galatians 2:20**, **Luke 9:23**, and **1 Peter 2:24**. Ben Sledge shared how he had to face the cowardice and trauma of his past in order to truly find healing in Jesus. He said it feels a lot like death. Scripture often describes death as essential to following Jesus. What areas of your life are you hesitant to let die in order to embrace the life and freedom Christ offers? What holds you back?

5. Ben ends his message with the beautiful implications of what Christ has done for us as quoted by Timothy Keller: “That we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” Sit with this for a moment. Do you believe both of these things to be true? How might recognizing and facing the depth of sin and shame for which Christ died help us experience even more the depths of Christ’s love for us?

## KEY SCRIPTURE

**John 21:15-17** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you. Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

**Galatians 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**Luke 9:23** Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

**1 Peter 2:24** “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

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1. If you want to do more exploration with God on areas of your life that you are suppressing where God wants you to surrender, consider reading the adaptation of, “My Heart Christ’s Home” in the “Read” section of the Trust Christ outcome beginning on page 7. Reflect on the questions at the end and share with some trusted community. <https://www.gatewaychurch.com/resources/trust-christ/>
2. Scan this QR code if you’re interested in participating in upcoming veteran-specific events or head to [gatewaychurch.com/connect](https://www.gatewaychurch.com/connect) for more resources.

