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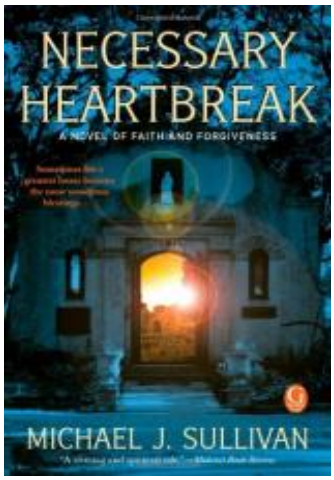
Necessary Heartbreak

by Michael J. Sullivan



About the Book

An extraordinary journey back in time shows a struggling single dad that the faith he?s lost is still alive ---and stronger than ever?

Michael Stewart has weathered his share of hardships: a troubled childhood, the loss of his mother, even the degradation of living on the city streets. Now he?s raising his teenaged daughter, Elizabeth, on his own and doing the best he can at work and at home. But he?s turned his back on his faith --- that is, until the morning Michael and Elizabeth volunteer for a food pantry at their local church. While storing boxes in the basement, they step through a mysterious door ?and find themselves in first-century Jerusalem during the tumultuous last week of Jesus Christ?s life. It is a dangerous and violent place, where doing what your heart tells you is right can get you imprisoned --- or worse --- and they are thankful to take refuge with a kind widow. But when they come face-to-face with Judas Iscariot and the condemned Christ himself, Michael realizes that before they can escape Jerusalem, he must experience history?s most necessary and shattering heartbreak --- and that pain and loss must happen if Michael is to be set free: to live, love, and reclaim the blessings he has in the present day.

Discussion Guide

1. Michael stumbles upon Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey in a peaceful, loving demonstration. Jesus? beautiful gesture is countered by whom from the opposite side of the city?

2. Michael chases Jesus in the street, begging for Him to bring back his deceased wife, Vicki. Discuss this and how it relates to one of Jesus? greatest miracles. Which one is it?

3. Michael sees Judas betraying Jesus. Where does this scene take place?

4. As the disciples defend Jesus against the soldiers in the garden, the fighting abruptly stops. Why? What did Jesus say?

5. Michael chases Judas into a field after the betrayal. He tries to persuade Judas to return the blood money. Would you have done the same thing? Why?

6. If Michael had been successful in stopping Jesus from being crucified, what do you think it would have meant for Christians all over the world?

7. Michael, Elizabeth, and Leah are in the courtyard as Pilate rules on Jesus? fate. Who does Pilate release so that the crowd can have Jesus executed?

8. Michael and Elizabeth celebrate Passover with their friend Leah. What does the meal consist of?

9. What animal was sacrificed by Jews during the feast of Passover during Christ?s time on earth?

10. Michael volunteers to carry the cross for Jesus. In the Bible, who carries it?

11. Michael reaches the top of the hill, carrying the cross. What is the name of the place where Christ is nailed to the cross?

12. Michael sees two women weeping as Christ and the cross are lifted skyward. Who are they?

13. The Romans ruled with an iron hand in first century Jerusalem. Where were some of the prisoners taken, especially during the Passover holiday?

14. Were there any apostles imprisoned in the facility mentioned in question #13? If so, who? If not, where were they taken?

15. In this novel, Judas commits suicide by hanging. Explore the different Biblical accounts of his death.

Author Bio

Michael J. Sullivan is an author and sportswriter living in New York who graduated from St. John's University.

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