

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

April 30th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. Are planning any summer road trips? If so, what are they?

Bible Study Questions

1. When was a time when you felt discouraged? How did you work through that?
2. Pastor Michael talked about our discouragement often being the result of unmet expectations. Do you agree with that or not? Why?
3. Read 1 Kings 19:1-18
 - Why was Elijah discouraged? Do you think that he was justified in his discouragement?
 - How does God respond?
4. God made the point with Elijah that he doesn't always show up in the big ways, but often in small ways. What are some ways that you see God working right now in small ways in your life?
5. Read Romans 8:31-39: What does Paul use to find hope in the midst of suffering?
6. What promises of God do you often hold on to in order to combat discouragement?
7. What is most causing you discouragement in your life right now?
 - What promises from God can best help you adjust your perspective?
8. Look up: Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, and James 1:2-4. How do these promises help us battle discouragement?

April 30th
Static: Discouragement

Discouragement is perhaps one of the greatest weapons that Satan uses against Christians. Even the best of us fall victim to the power of discouragement. This even included one of the greatest prophets in the Bible, Elijah.

I. Lessons from Elijah's experience with discouragement

- a. Discouragement is most often the result of unmet expectations:** In 1 King 18, Elijah gathers the people of Israel together to experience a display of God's power. For three years, he has been setting up this encounter and it results in the people declaring their allegiance to the one true God. Elijah's dreams are realized of God once again being worshipped in Israel. But that all falls apart in chapter 19 when the queen Jezebel orders Elijah's death and the people quickly run to her side. This wasn't the way that it was supposed to be. Elijah expresses frustration to God. He has done his part, but the people haven't followed (1 Kings 19:10).

Discouragement often happens because we think that events in our work, marriage, or health will be far better than what we find in reality. Ultimately, we look to God and become frustrated because he hasn't been doing what we think he should be doing.

- b. God gives Elijah space to air his frustration:** It is remarkable that God doesn't get angry with Elijah's discouragement, but gives him the space to speak (19:10)
Note: In 19:6, an angel provides Elijah with food and drink. Sometimes discouragement is the result of not caring for ourselves physically. We need to remember that we are holistic beings and that our health matters.
- c. Elijah discovers that he has been look for God in the wrong places:** God tells him to go and to wait for his presence. Then a wind, earthquake, and fire pass by. Elijah expects God to be in each of those, but instead he shows up as a gentle whisper (19:10-13). The message is that Elijah was looking for God in the wrong places. He was looking for God to do something big, while God was actively working in small ways.

- d. Freedom comes when he allows God to shape our perspective:** From this point on, Elijah's ministry is different. He learns to let God be God. Instead of national confrontations, he develops other prophets who carry God's truth throughout Israel.

- II. God's has given us his promises to rightly shape our perspectives:** In Romans 8, Paul writes about many reasons for discouragement. But he allows God to shape his perspective to see that God is still working in the midst of suffering. He is able to claim God's promises, such as eternal life, never being separated from God's love, the return of Jesus to shape his perspective. Doing so brings him to a point of freedom from discouragement.