

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

June 4th

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

1. If you could be on a Minnesota lake right now, what would you be doing?

Bible Study Questions

1. Have you ever read the book of Psalms? If so, what was your experience?
2. Psalms was written in poetry.
 - Do you enjoy poetry?
 - Why do you think that God chose to have poetry in the Bible?
 - What does the presence of poetry teach you about God's perspective on emotions?
3. Read Psalms 1
 - What contrast is given between the kind of person who lives a flourishing life and that one who is like chaff?
4. The way of the wicked is one that is opposed to submission to God's Word. What examples of this do you see in our culture?
 - How is living life "my way" in opposition to the flourishing life?
5. What does it look like when someone "delights" in and "meditates" on the Word? What practices do you currently have in your life to receive that nourishment?
6. How does this chapter about the "blessed" life set up the rest of the book of Psalms? How does studying this book make you "blessed"?

June 4th Summer in the Psalms

This summer we will be focusing on the Psalms. The goal of this morning is to launch the series.

I. **The Psalms: The hymnbook of God's people:**

- **Meant to guide us in worship in all of life's circumstances:** The Psalms was the worship guide for the Jewish people. It contains prayers that cover the full spectrum of human emotions. You find prayers of thanksgiving, lament, and even cursing psalms. The goal of these books was to guide people in communing with God.
- **The poetic nature is meant to link our heart with God:** The prayers are written in poetic form. The purpose of poetry is to not to give information, but to create an emotional response. In a way it is God saying that he doesn't want our head, but wants our heart also. When the Psalms are properly used, they create a heart desire to know and love God.

Psalm 1: The introduction: The Psalms are not random and were intentionally organized. The 1st and 2nd Psalms were likely written as an introduction to the Psalms. The 1st one is considered to be a "wisdom" song, meaning that it isn't a prayer but is poetic teaching instruction the reader on the value of studying the Psalms.

- **A life that flourishes:** Verse 3 describes the tree that is planted by streams of water. It is a picture of flourishing and health. It prompts the reader to say, "I want to be that tree!"
 - **Refuses to participate in the sin of the world:** Verse 1 tells us that this person refuses to take part in things that are wicked. They have looked at the values of the world and have said, "I don't want that."
 - **Immerses oneself in the Word of God:** It says that they "delight" in the law and "meditate on it day and night (v. 2). This shows a commitment to immerse themselves in God's Word. They want God's Word to shape and nourish them.
- **A life that withers:** The other side is someone who is described like chaff (v.4). Chaff has a short life, then dries up and turns into nothing.
 - **Engages in the rebellion of the world:** The life that withers is the opposite of the life that thrives. It takes part in the life of the world.

- **Ignores God's Word:** This person has chosen not to delight and mediate on God's word.
- **Teaches that one who studies and applies this book lives a blessed life:** Verse 1 begins with the phrase "blessed is the man" meaning that one who applies this is blessed. In verse 6, we are told that the Lord watches over the righteous, meaning that God intimately cares for them. The organizer of the Psalms, intended for the Psalms to be a regular part of worship. It was all a part of not going with the wicked and delighting the law. The implication is that one who takes the time to read and live out the book of Psalms will enjoy the flourishing blessed life.

Conclusion

Psalms begins with a contrast asking the reader to decide who they want to be. We are confronted with the same question. Do we want to do things God's way and enjoy life to the fullest, or do we go with the crowd, often defined as "my way", possibly enjoy brief flourishing, but who soon wither afterwards?