

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

March 26th

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

1. If you could choose one animal to kick off of the ark, what animal would it be?

Bible Study Questions

1. At the beginning of Genesis 18, Abraham has been waiting almost 25 years for God to fulfill his promise of a son to both him and Sarah. What do you think that you would be thinking at this point? How would a 25 year wait have impacted your trust of God?
2. Read Genesis 18:1-15
 - a. What do you notice about the characters in this story?
 - b. Why does Sarah laugh?
 - c. How does God respond to Sarah's laugh?
3. God's ability to do anything is not a promise to be claimed but an attribute to be embraced. What examples have you seen in which Christians have taken God's power as a promise that God will do something for them? What does it look like for us to embrace this attribute of God?
4. Read Genesis 21:1-7
 - a. What do you think that it would have been like to be in Abraham's home during that time?
 - b. Why do you think that God took so long to fulfill that promise? What was he teaching Abraham? What is he teaching us?
5. Have you ever had a time in your life in which God has shown up and done something that seems completely absurd (wonderful and unexpected)? If so, then tell the story.
6. What promises has God given us today? (Matthew 24:30-31, John 14:16, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 21:3-5 are a few references). What do these promises tell you about the character of God?

7. Pastor Michael talked about the culture often having a life aimed toward death...in which we must make the most of the moment because when death is the end. How do you see this in our culture, and even in your life at times? Other people devote themselves to social issues with the belief that it is up to them to save humanity. How have you seen that?
8. How does God's promises give us hope? If we have that hope, how does it impact the way that we live?

March 26th: The Promise
Genesis 18,21

From the beginning of Abraham's faith journey, there is a question in the background. Can God be trusted? Abraham took the risk of following God into the unknown trusting that God would fulfill his promise of giving him a son. Chapter after chapter, God acts to protect Abraham, but the promised child remains elusive.

- I. The Problem: A long delay in the fulfillment of God's promise:** At the beginning of chapter 18, Abraham is now 99 years old. His wife is 89. At this point, it has been 25 years since God had first called Abraham. As time went on, the likelihood the promise being fulfilled seemed to be less and less.
- II. The answer:** God visits Abraham, along with two angels. During that visit, they tell Abraham that in a year, he and Sarah would have a child (Genesis 18:10).
 - **Nothing is too hard for God:** When Sarah hears this news, she laughs not believing that it could be possible. God replies saying, "*Is anything too hard for the Lord* (18:14)? Abraham is to trust that there is nothing outside of God's power. Today, we often fall into two extremes. One is to reject God's power, the other is to claim this as a promise that God will do whatever we ask him to do. This is best taken not as a promise that God will serve us, but an attribute of God to be embraced.
 - **God proves that he is faithful to keep his promises:** In Genesis 21, the unthinkable happens. A woman at the age of 90 gives birth to a healthy baby boy. God proved that he could be trusted. Faithfully fulfilling his promises is a part of who he is.
- III. Our Response: God's faithfulness enables us to live obedient and hopeful lives.** Most people live under the philosophy that death is the end of our story. As a result, many seek to "seize the day" and experience every pleasure possible before death comes. Others devote themselves to environmental or justice issues in a vain attempt at saving humanity from destruction. But a Christian lives with the hope that they are under the protection of a good and faithful god. We have the promise of a resurrection of our bodies, justice, and renewal of the world. All of these things enable Christians to live lives free of anxiety and full of hope.

Conclusion: The idea that a couple in the 90s would have a baby seems completely absurd to us. However, God often does absurd things. The very idea of God becoming human and dying for sinful humans sounds absurd to

us. But love can prompt us to do absurd things. That is why God does it. Because he loves us.