

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides May 22nd

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

1. Summer is coming up soon. If you could plan your dream summer vacation, where would it be to?

Bible Study Questions

1. *Hesed* means to show someone an undeserved kindness. When was a time when someone did that to you?
2. Read Psalms 25:10, 36:7, 42:8 and Jeremiah 9:24. *Hesed* is often translated as mercy, kindness, or steadfast love. How is *hesed* used in these verses?
 - How does it impact your view of God to know that God's natural impulse is to show kindness to undeserving people?
3. The book of Lamentations is written during a time of great distress. In 3:21-22 writes, "*yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love (hesed) we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.*" How is God's *hesed* the basis for our hope?
4. Micah 6:8 tells us to love mercy (*hesed*). Why does God seem to be so passionate about this? What does it mean to you to "love" *hesed*?
 - What practices help you to develop a love for *hesed*?
 - How does this relate to masculinity? How does loving *hesed* relate to the tough guy image that we often expect men to convey?
 - Pastor Michael mentioned a concern that he has about Christians disregarding *hesed* in areas of life such as culture wars and politics. Have you seen that? How do we reclaim *hesed* in the way that we address major issues of the day?
5. In what settings is it hardest for you to show *hesed*? Is there a specific people group or lifestyle that make it more difficult?

6. Is there an opportunity that God is providing for you to practically live this out sometime this week? Who is God telling you to show kindness to?

May 22nd: Three Things I Require of You: Love Mercy

The second part of God's requirements in Micah 6:8 is to "love mercy." This is a passage that gives Bible translators a headache. The word "mercy" is taken from a Hebrew word of which we have no English equivalent, "*hesed*".

- I. **Hesed: the act of showing someone undeserved kindness:**
This is when you help someone who either you don't know, or someone who has hurt you in the past.
- II. **Hesed is a central aspect of God's character:** In Exodus 34:6-7, God describes himself to Moses. In the description, only one word shows up twice and that is the word "hesed", meaning that it was meant to stick out. In Micah 7:18, we are told that God "delights" in showing hesed. It is a central aspect of who he is. God's natural impulse when you catch him unaware, is to show *hesed*.
 - a. **We are constant recipients of his hesed:** In the Bible, we find several passages among humans in which one shows *hesed* and it is expected that the other would return the favor. We need to remember that every breath that we breath is a gift from God. We do not deserve anything from him. We have been recipients. As a result, we should be reciprocating.
- III. **The command to "love hesed"**
 - a. **Love means that it is something to be treasured:** It is notable that elsewhere in this verse, we are commanded to "act" or "walk". We are to do these things regardless of the motivation. Yet when it comes to *hesed*, we are told to "love" it. That means that we are to treasure and desire it. We live in a culture in which compassion is often viewed as weakness, something that won't get us any victories in the culture war. But God tell us to love it.
 - b. **God expected his people to be reciprocating his kindness by regularly showing undeserved kindness to each other:** When you love something, you do it. God expected that as a result of the kindness that he had shown his people, that they would do the same in the way that they treated each other.

reconciled to God. For anyone who struggles with loving *hesed*, a great practice is to take a piece of paper and make a list of all the different ways that God has blessed them. A challenge for the week though is to simply pray that God would open opportunities, even unexpected opportunities to show kindness to and underserving person.

Conclusion

As Christians, we have been recipients of the greatest act of *hesed*, God sending his son to come into this world and dying so that we could be