

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

Sept 17th

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

1. What is your favorite restaurant? What do you prefer: quality or quantity of food?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Jeremiah 2
 - What do you notice about God's message to the Jewish people.
2. God begins describing his early relationship with Israel as that of a marriage. Why does God introduce himself in this way?
3. In verse 13, God talks about the people abandoning him, the living water, and building their own broken cisterns.
 - Alliances with Egypt and Assyria are identified (v. 18 and 36). What fears prompted this decision? How did these reflect looking for power in the wrong places?
 - Idol worship is referenced (v. 25, 28). What fears are represented here. How did idol worship reflect looking for power in the wrong places?
4. In verse 24, God compares the people to a donkey in heat running after other passions. Why do you think that the people so easily pursued other sources of power other than God?
5. Read John 4:7-14.
 - How is Jesus our living water?
 - How does he fulfill in a way that our own power of other sources can't?
6. Imagine that God was giving this message to our culture. What would you identify as broken cisterns that we dig instead of trusting in the power of God?
 - How do churches do this by relying on something other than the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - Is there anything that you need to repent of?

Sept 17th: Building Broken Cisterns

In Jeremiah 2, Jeremiah delivers God's first message to his people. God's message is rooted in a specific context. In 2:2, God describes his relationship with his people as that of a husband and wife. The sin of the people hasn't just upset him, but it has been a betrayal of their marriage vows. God then goes on to present what would have been understood as a legal lawsuit against the people. Understanding the problem requires piecing a number of puzzles together.

- I. **The Problem: The Jewish people were violating their covenant to trust God.** Verse 13 is a key verse in which God charges them of forsaking God as the spring of living water and instead trying to make their own cisterns that are unable to hold water. They have made the decision to find security on their own terms.
 - **They sought to bribe foreign pagan nations for military protection:** In verses 18 and 36, God exposes their alliances with Egypt and Assyria. God had originally told the people not to put their trust in armies or in other nations. God would be their protector. But Jewish leaders had a fear that God wasn't enough. So instead, they sent money to other pagan powerful nations trusting that they would give them protection instead of God.
 - **They worshipped false gods in order to access their power:** Baal was believed to be the god who oversaw the weather. Again, there was a fear that God wouldn't grant them rain, or health, or children. By worshipping Baal, they were putting their trust in a false god to provide them with prosperity.

The Answer: Trust God as their source of power: The answer to it all is found in verse 13. God was the spring of living water that would supply everything that they need for life. There was no reason to fear. They were to renounce their dependence on other sources and trust in God. To do otherwise was foolish and a betrayal of their covenant with God.

Application

- **Identify the ways that we seek fulfillment and security apart from God:** Jesus is our living water (John 4:10,13) and as his disciples, he is to be our source for fulfillment. Yet we often dig our own wells. Some of us try to earn salvation by good works. Others try to get the life that we want through our own intelligence or willpower. Some try to find fulfillment through money, power, or sex. We find meaning through our work or through relationships. Some of these are good gifts from God, but they become problematic when they become our source of fulfillment instead of Jesus. Even

churches can be guilty of this by relying on business principles, strategic planning, and money instead of the power of the holy Spirit.

- **Repent and restore God to his rightful place:** Once we identify those things, the next step is to repent and restore God to his position as our source of living water.

Conclusion

The final thing to remember is God's identification as the betrayed groom. God is not upset because he doesn't like our actions. He is upset because he loves us. Our decision to look elsewhere for meaning not only hurts us, but it is a betrayal of our faith in him. He is personally hurt when we do this. As people who are followers of Jesus, we should take this very seriously and constantly ask ourselves about our source of meaning.