

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

July 30th

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

1. We are now in the last month of summer. Are there any things that you want to accomplish yet before the season is over?

Bible Study Questions

1. Karma is a popular belief in today's culture. It teaches that the universe will reward all of our good actions and punish all of our bad actions.
 - What do you think about the idea of karma?
 - What is attractive or harmful about it?
2. Read Psalm 37
 - What observations does David make in this wisdom Psalm? How would you summarize the message?
3. David says that we should not fret (be angry or seek retribution) or be envious of those who do wrong.
 - Why are those both attractive options?
 - Have you ever had a time in your life in which you have pursued one of those directions?
 - Why are they both harmful?
4. David teaches that the prosperity of the wicked is short term and that those who do what is right will enjoy eternal rewards. How does having an eternal mindset help us navigate the "unfairness" of the world?
 - How does knowing God's eternal plan give us confidence?
5. What does David teach us to do in this Psalm?
 - Verse three tells us to "dwell in the land and enjoy safe pastures." What does this tell us about enjoying the world that God has given us?
 - There is a theme of trusting God and doing good. What does it look like for you to live this out?

July 30th

Psalm 37: A Wisdom Psalm

Wisdom Psalms are a unique genre in Psalms. They are not meant to be prayers, but are wisdom teaches presented in a poetic manner. Psalm 37 is written by King David, likely later in life, and provides his observations to a perplexing question of that day

- I. **Problem: Why do the evil flourish?:** The idea of karma is popular in today's culture. It teaches that the universe pays everyone for what they do. Good is rewarded and evil is punished. (ironically, we get to define for the universe what is good and what is bad). Yet our experience with the world tells us that life doesn't always work out that way. People do horrible things with little or no apparent consequences. Good people are abused and fail. This creates the perplexing question as to why the evil seem to flourish.
- II. **The wrong responses**
 - a. **Become the justice enforcer:** Verse 1 warns that we should not fret, which means to be angry or take out retribution. It is not our job to bring justice, but to leave that both to God and to the state.
 - b. **Fall into envy:** Another danger that we can fall into is to look at the prosperity of the wicked and to desire it. David tells us not to go there.
- III. **David's observation**
 - a. **The prosperity of the wicked is temporary:** a reoccurring theme in this Psalm is the eventual demise of the wicked (v 2, 9-10, 17, 20, 28, 36, 38). They may enjoy short term gain, but their time is coming.
 - b. **God provides for his people:** David reflects that he has seen God at work caring for those who honor him (23-26). God has also promised that those who serve him will inherit the earth (11, 29).
- IV. **Our response**
 - a. **Persist in doing what is right:** The Psalm begins with commands about committing ourselves to God (v.5). After contemplating God's care for his people, David tells us to do good (v. 27) and to keep his way (v. 34)
 - b. **Wait on God with confidence:** As we obey, we are to hope in the Lord (v. 34). It ends with the promise that God will care for those who place their refuge in him (v. 40).

Conclusion

Christianity presents a vastly superior alternative to karma. It recognizes that the world does seem unfair. The truth is that every one of us is sinful and deserves destruction. But instead of giving us what we deserve, God takes that punishment upon himself and offers us mercy. It is because of his mercy, that those who hope in God's salvation and eternal reward.

This psalm teaches us to make the most of our present moment. Our life is but a dot in the timeline of eternity. The decisions that we make now, to either commit ourselves to God's way or to focus on ourselves, will decide what eternity looks like.