

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides
March 24th , 2024

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

1. Easter is coming up. Do you have an Easter traditions?

Bible Study Questions

1. Think about things that you have seen in the news. Make a list of things reported that cause fear?
2. How is a secular society ill equipped to deal with fear?
3. Among Christians, what does a fight or flight response reveal about our beliefs in God?
4. Read Psalm 46
 - What are some of the threats identified in this chapter?
 - How is God a response to those threats?
5. What does it mean to you for God to be our refuge?
 - How do you explain the presence of pain and even death for those who are under God's protection?
 - Pastor Michael talked about the difference between security and certainty. How are those different? Why does God not give us certainty in the details of our future?
6. Read Matthew 11:28-30
 - How does Jesus describe the refuge that he offers?
 - He says that we are to take up his yoke. What does that mean?
7. How does trust Jesus as our refuge free us from fear and anxiety? Is there something that is causing you fear that you need to entrust to God?

March 17th Is a Refuge for the Weary

If you turn on the news, you will find many different reasons for fear. Economic collapse, war, AI, and sickness all dominate headlines. We have an election coming up in which we are told that if the other person wins, then America as we know it will end. It is a terrifying thing for a secular culture that has no foundation for morality or identity. But even for Christians, the way that you respond to fear says much about your view of God.

I. A fight or flight response reflects a belief in a absent God: One response to fear is to fight back and use the tools of the world to defeat evil. The ends justify the means in order to bring God's good rule to earth. A flight response is to abandon the culture and withdraw into a place of safety. Both responses though assume that God is either not present or able to care for his people.

II. Character of God: Psalm 46 will be our guide.

- **A refuge for his people:** The psalm refers to a world full of chaos. But begins by declaring that God is our refuge. He is an ever present help in times of trouble.
 - **God's refuge does not mean the absence of pain:** God promises to protect his people. But they still experience pain and death. The promise is that this all happens under the protective direction of God who uses them for the good of his people. There is also the promise that pain is short lived only to be replaced with a resurrection and eternal prosperity.

- **God provides security instead of certainty:** God does assure us of his presence and future resurrection. However in the midst of fear, he doesn't detail what will happen next. We find great comfort in knowing the details of our future. Yet God tells us to trust that even though we don't know what will happen, we are secure under his care.

- **God becomes our strength to withstand the pressures of the world:** Psalm 46:1 tells us that he is our strength. He fills us with his power to endure the threats of the world.
- **God is able to do this because he alone is greater than the threats:** Psalm 46 goes on to remind us that God alone is the one who can melt the world with his breath and can bring peace. Verses 10 tells us to simply be still and know that he is God. All of our fears are small in comparison.

III. Our response is to come and take up his yoke: In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus observes a culture beat down with fear. They are working hard trying to gain God's protection. Jesus calls out inviting them to come to him and to take up his yoke. Yoke refers to a way of life that is fully submitted to the lordship of Jesus. He promises that his yoke is easy and brings rest. That is true. When we submit ourselves to Jesus and place ourselves under his refuge, we find rest. We are free from fear knowing that God is in control.