

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **Oct 1st**

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

1. What is something that you recommend people see or do when they visit your town?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. How would you define the word “truth”?
2. Read Jeremiah 28
  - Why was Hananiah’s message so appealing?
  - Imagine that you were in the room during this conversation. How would you determine what prophet truly had come from God?
3. Read Jeremiah 6:13-14, 8:10-12, 14:14-16
  - God accuses the prophets of dressing the wound of the people. What does this mean?
  - What popular truth claims exist in our culture today that “dress the wounds” of our people?
  - Are there any prominent messages in the church that do this?
4. In Jeremiah 28, there was a time period of 2 months in which the truth was not apparent. When was a time in your life that you encountered a situation in which the truth was murky? How did you navigate that?
5. Christians are bearers of the greatest truth of all, the salvation offered through Jesus. If a Christian has that belief right, why does it matter the position that they take on lesser truth claims?
6. Pastor Michael said that truth does not care about either your feelings or about what you want to be true.
  - How does that impact the way that you pursue truth?
  - Has there ever been a time that you believed something that you now know to be false because it corresponded with your feelings or desires?

7. God is our ultimate source of truth and he has revealed himself through his Word. How has the Bible guided you in your search for truth?
8. Pastor Michael said that when it comes to non Biblical truth, we need to approach it with a sense of humility. Why is this important?
9. What have you learned in discerning truth from non truth? Are there any of the points that Pastor Michael mentioned that have challenged your approach?

## Oct 1st: Nothing but the Truth

One of Jeremiah's biggest challenges was the messages of competing prophets. In Jeremiah 28, Jeremiah is telling the king to submit to the Babylonians. A man named Hananiah came claiming to be a prophet and he prophesied that there was nothing to fear and that Babylon would be destroyed. Conflicting truth claims were nothing new for Jeremiah. Jeremiah constantly dealt with prophets who were preaching what the people wanted to hear in order to gain an audience and applause (Jeremiah 5:1-3, 6:13-14, 8:10-12, 14:14-16).

### I. Why truth matters

- a. **Deception blinds people from addressing spiritual sickness:** In 6:14, God says that these prophets are dressing the wound as if it were not serious. The people were dealing with spiritual sickness, but due to inspiration of these false prophets, the people didn't see a need to deal with their issues. They continued down a path that led to destruction. In the same way, many tell people today that God will save everyone and just wants them to be happy. As a result, they don't address the sin in their lives or their need for a savior.
- b. **Lack of credibility in small things destroys credibility in essential things:** In 28:9, Jeremiah states that a prophet will only be recognized as coming from the Lord if their prophecies come true. This means that even small predictions that don't happen then the prophet's credibility is shot. Today, Christians have the most important message of all, the salvation offered through Jesus. Yet when we share false information about the news, science, or history we lose our credibility to share the gospel.

### II. Nature of truth

- a. **Definition of truth: that which corresponds with reality:**
- b. **Truth does not care about your feelings:** Something is not true because it resonates with us or makes us feel good. In fact, truth may make us very uncomfortable.
- c. **Truth does not care about what you want to be true:** In politics, we can easily embrace news that assumes the worst of people that we don't like. We can easily discard truth that is negative about our candidates. However, just because you want it to happen doesn't mean that it corresponds with reality.
- d. **Truth is not always apparent:** Jeremiah predicted that he would be proven right by Hananiah's death. Yet it took two months for that to happen. During that time, people did not

know who to trust. In the same way, truth is not always apparent in the here and now.

### III. Discerning truth

- a. **God is the only source of unbiased truth:** God is the creator of reality. That is what Jesus could rightly claim that he is the "way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We regard the Bible as being authoritative because it contains the words of God. The Bible therefore should be the starting point for a pursuit of truth.
- b. **Engage with a sense of humility:** We all have our own biases and blind spots. Consider that when you take a position on non Biblical truth.
- c. **Don't be too quick to share news:** News stories are often reported before all of the facts are known. Therefore, it is good to take some time to before running to rash conclusions.
- d. **Consider the incentives of your news sources:** News networks depend on their audience for financial support. Therefore, there is an incentive to give their audiences what they want. This can work with relationships also, where we gravitate toward those who affirm us. This is worth considering before you fully place your trust in them.
- e. **Follow the Jeremiah 28:9 rule: Not fulfilled? Not from God:** Consider one's track record. If someone claims to have a message from God about the future and it doesn't happen, then don't trust them. Don't give credence to someone who is always wrong because you hope that their predictions come true.
- f. **Expose yourself to different points of view:** Studies have shown that when people surround themselves with communities who think like them, they tend to become progressively radical in their views. There is great benefit in having relationships and conversations with people who think differently. It can also be beneficial to read sources from different points of view.

### Conclusion

Discerning truth was hard in Jeremiah's day and difficult today. We will not know everything until Christ returns and clears it all hope. But with what we do know, let us cherish that truth and be good guardians.