

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **Oct 22nd**

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

1. Hunting season is coming up soon. Do you hunt? If so, then what do you like to hunt for?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. Describe a time in which you felt discouraged. How did you work through that?
  - What more causes discouragement in your life now?
2. Read Jeremiah 30, 31:1-6, 31-34
  - In verses 12-15, God talks about the Judah's incurable wound. What is that wound? Why was their situation so hopeless?
  - What all does God promise to do for his people?
  - In light of their current situation, why do these promises from God seem irrational?
  - What do these promises teach you about the character of God?
3. There is a reoccurring theme in these promises in which God is the one who acts, not the people. Why is this important?
4. Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Why is the human condition a hopeless situation?
  - How does Jesus become the answer to that problem?
5. Read Hebrews 8
  - How does God's promise to the Jews of a new covenant relate to Christians today?
6. Read Psalm 32:1-15
  - Why was buying this land so irrational?
  - What point is God making by having Jeremiah do this?
  - Pastor Michael talked about the difference between saying words of hope and acting on them. What does it mean for us to act on what we believe about our Christian hope?
7. Right now, what promises from God most give you hope?

## Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>: Floodlights of Hope

In Jeremiah 32, we find Jeremiah locked in prison as the Babylonian army surrounds Jerusalem. His cousin offers to sell him a field, land which is currently occupied by the enemy troops and which will be useless once the people are taken into exile. It is a horrible investment. But to everyone's surprise, God tells Jeremiah to buy the land. Why? Because it is a symbol of hope.

Most of Jeremiah is warnings to repent or face judgment. It concludes with the story of judgment that falls on the people of Judah. In the middle, we have chapters 30 to 33 that have a different tone. People often refer to it as the "book of consolation". These chapters are full of hope to a nation in a hopeless circumstance.

### I. The hopelessness of the situation

- **The sin of Judah had created an incurable wound:** In 30:12-15, God talks about the sickness of Judah. Physically, they are about to be destroyed by Babylon. Spiritually, they are lost and distant from God. All of their political alliances and strategies have failed them. Like a cancer patient in hospice, there is nothing that they can do to stop the advance of the disease. This echoes what we read in the 1<sup>st</sup> three chapters of Romans, in which every one of us is guilty of sin and deserving of God's judgement.
- **No human effort could provide salvation**

### II. God's acting on behalf of his people:

Chapters 30-33 contain promise after promise of God's acting to restore his people. The term "I will" shows up more than 25 times, declaring things that God is about to do for his people. **Note:** There is something that we need to remember about Biblical futuristic prophecy.

- Predictions often have several layers to it. Sometimes it is describing a "near view" which are events that are to happen in the near future. Other times is as "far view" that envisions events in the far future, including events that haven't happened yet. Sometimes the two are blurred together.
- **A physical restoration:** God promises that the people will be restored (30:10, 17, 18). They will return to the land, enjoy prosperity, and will have a righteous king. These prophecies are mix of being fulfilled in the return from exile, the coming of Jesus, and future events that are yet to take place.
  - **A spiritual restoration:** God promises that the people will once again serve him (30:22 and 31:33). There will be a complete spiritual renewal as the people become devoted to

God and fulfill their original purpose as a kingdom of priests for God. While there have been many Jews who have embraced Jesus as Messiah, the complete fulfillment of the spiritual renewal of Israel is yet to come.

These promises are made to the Jews, but they reflect God's promises to each of his people. Romans 5:8 reminds us that when we were helpless, Jesus died for us bringing us salvation. What more, Hebrews 8 teaches us that those who believe are included in the new covenant that God proclaims in Jeremiah 31:33.

### III. Don't just believe in hope, act on hope:

In Jeremiah 32, he buys his cousin's field. The reason that God tells him to do so is because God promises that the field will once again belong to the Jewish people and bear fruit. Current events make the investment look foolish, but it is based on the promises of God. What is remarkable is that Jeremiah didn't just talk about hope, but he acted on it by buying the field. In the same way, we should back our hope by investing in the things that matter: relationships both with God and people. We back our hope by not getting bogged down in despair, but living with the confidence that God in his timing will act.