

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

**Oct 8th**

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

1. Finish the statement: A movie that I think that everyone should watch once in their lifetime is \_\_\_\_\_

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. When was a time that you really wanted to quit either a project or a relationship? What did you do?
2. Read Jeremiah 11:18-23:
  - Remember that Anathoth was his hometown. Put yourself in his shoes. What emotions would you have in discovering the betrayal of your family members and friends?
  - God promised judgment, but it didn't happen right away. Did Jeremiah have a valid reason to be upset with God? Why or why not?
3. Read Jeremiah 12:1-4:
  - What does Jeremiah charge God with?
  - Have you ever had some of these same frustrations with God?
4. Read God's response in 12:5-17:
  - What do you notice in his response?
  - What does he mean by Jeremiah not being able to compete with horses if he can't run with men? What is God preparing Jeremiah to do?
5. Pastor Michael talked a bit about "grit" and how Americans have a habit of quitting when things get tough.
  - What are some of the great gifts from God that only come through long hard perseverance? What are some of the things that Christians often miss because they don't persevere?
  - Do you consider yourself to be someone who sticks with things or who easily quits?
  - How does one develop "grit" when it comes to pursuit of God and holy living?

6. What do you notice about the language that God uses to describe his people in verses 7-10? What does tell you about the way that God views the people of Judah?
7. Jeremiah is focused on his own hurt and story. What story does God seem to be focused on? How does this impact our perspective on our own struggles?
8. How does this story help you walk along side of someone else who is struggling and ready to quit? (You can take into account the psalms where God invites us to bring our struggles before him.)

## Oct 8<sup>th</sup>: Run with Horses

Jeremiah 11:18-23 tells the story of the first opposition to Jeremiah's message.

### I. Jeremiah's charge

- a. **Jeremiah is has been betrayed by his closest friends and family:** Anathoth was Jeremiah's hometown and populated with his family and those that he trusted the most. Yet they secretly hatch a plot to murder him unless he stops prophesying. Jeremiah is very shaken by this experience and prays asking God for justice. God responds by promising that disaster would come on them in the "year of their punishment (Jeremiah 11:23)."
- b. **God has not delivered his promised justice:** Jeremiah assumes that justice will come quickly, but it doesn't. This prompts him to make a charge against God accusing him of ignoring justice (12:1-4).

### II. God's response

- a. **He is using Jeremiah's suffering to prepare him for greater challenges:** God starts by asking how he will manage to "compete with horses" if he can't race with men (12:5). God's point is that while Jeremiah looks at his situation as a major obstacle, God sees it as a training ground to prepare him for greater things. This no time for Jeremiah to throw in the towel.  
It could be said that God is developing "grit" in Jeremiah. Grit can be defined as resolve to move in a direction regardless of the obstacles. This can be a struggle in America. We are used to instant gratification and often quit when things get hard. However, some of the best things take long and difficult work. Even our walk with God requires persistence in spiritual disciplines. Many of us settle for a shallow walk with God expecting God to transform us in short time intervals dictated by our schedules. Others find investing in a church community too difficult, so they exit looking for an easier version of spiritual input. The result is that many miss out on the transformation that God wants to do in teaching us how to love others.
- b. **Reminds Jeremiah of the bigger picture:** In verses 7-17, God talks about the big picture of what he is about to do to Judah. Even though they are priceless to him, he is going to allow them to be destroyed. Yet in the end, he will show compassion and restore them, as well as any other nation that

chooses to follow him. The point is that the story isn't about Jeremiah's struggles. God is doing a greater act of redemption and he is inviting Jeremiah to be a part of it.

### Conclusion

Following this conversation, Jeremiah continues in obedience. But the struggles are not over. In Jeremiah 20, he is beaten and put in stocks. Again, he tries to quit and stops talking. But he finds himself unable to avoid God's calling and is reminded that God's power is with him.

This story should speak to any of us who are struggling in both following God and doing what is right. We have an enemy who always on a mission to discourage and disable God's people. When we struggle, God welcomes out prayers and complaints. But he does not leave us there. He wants us to allow him to use that situation to strengthen us so that we can better partner in the grander mission of redeeming this world.