

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

Sept 24th

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

1. If you could go spend a week at a favorite previous vacation destination, where would it be? What do you enjoy about that place?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Jeremiah 7:1-29
 - What do you notice in this chapter?
 - What is God's charge against the people?
2. The people lived with the belief that religious observance at the temple shielded them from judgment.
 - a. Why did they believe this?
 - b. What are some of the things that rely on today that give us a false sense of spiritual security?
3. What specific sins does God expose the people committing during the week?
 - Why does God care so deeply about these sins?
4. Read Jeremiah 7:21-23, John 14:21, Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:17-20.
 - What is the relationship between God's grace and acts of obedience?
 - In your own words, how would you describe someone who truly walks in obedience to God during the week? How about a church body?
5. Pastor Michael shared about the large number of Americans who have left the church. One reason is that due to the actions of Christians, many people don't believe that the church really believes the words that they are teaching.
 - How do you react to that news?
 - How have you seen this to be true?
6. Is there anywhere in your life that you need to repent and allow the Holy Spirit to help you better walk in obedience?

Sept 24th: Live What You Believe

In Jeremiah 7, God sends Jeremiah to preach an important message at an important location. He is supposed to stand at the gate of the temple and preach to people who are arriving for worship. At this point, the people have a new found fascination with the temple. Originally designed as a place for people to encounter God, previous kings had desecrated it with idols. King Josiah had cleaned it out and it had been at the temple that the people had renewed their covenant with God. The doors were reopened for worship and people joyfully responded. But while outward appearances looked good, all was not good with their day to day lives.

- I. **The people lived with the illusion of spiritual safety:** They assumed that God was happy with their worship. What more, they were confident that God would never bring judgment to the city that featured his temple. Yet the good luck charm of the temple was an illusion. Jeremiah tells the story of Shiloh, which served a similar purpose and had been destroyed in God's judgment (v.12)
 - a. **They believed that weekly devoted worship covered for daily disobedience:** Even though they regularly worshipped, their day to day lives were marked by oppressing the poor and following other gods (v. 6). Jeremiah also accuses them of murder, stealing, adultery, and perjury (v. 9). They claimed to believe in God, but lived as if he didn't exist.
 - b. **God viewed their religion as a sham:** God is not fooled by this act. He finds it insulting that they walk into his presence while openly living in disobedience. He refers to his own temple as being treated as a "den of robbers" (v. 11)
- II. **Restoration is found in walking in obedience to God's commands:** God specifically addresses Jeremiah in verses 16-29. He sums up what he wants in verse 23 with this command, "*obey me and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, and it will go well with you.*" As Christ followers, we are called to live as Jesus did (1 John 2:6). Salvation is the gift of God, but for his followers obedience isn't optional

Conclusion

. It needs to be noted that our disobedience doesn't just impact our walk with God, but our ability to witness to others. In the last several decades, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of Americans who consider themselves to be affiliated with a church. Studies have shown

though that most who leave still maintain their faith. They leave because they have observed Christians, both in leadership and in the pews, who live disobedient lives during the week. They leave with a sense is that the church doesn't believe what they are teaching. This is a stark reminder that the world is watching to see if the church will truly reflect the beauty of Jesus, or just go along with the rottenness of the world.

This message is stark reminder that we need be asking ourselves, do we really believe what we are teaching? Are we people who are walking with God, or people who like the Jews, view God as an unserious God who can be conned by outward appearances.