



Pt I: The Air We Breathe

Pastor Tom Kang

Ice Breaker: Are you more likely to approach something new with curiosity or skepticism? Please explain.

1. Pastor Tom had us try out two physical postures: the skeptic (finger to the chin, tilted head, genuinely curious) and the cynic (arms crossed, leaned back, smirk loaded). Which posture felt more natural to you, and where in your life (work, relationships, church, politics, social media, school) does that default show up most?
2. The serpent's opening move wasn't atheism ... but cynicism: questioning God's generosity, not His existence. Where in your life right now are you tempted to doubt not whether God is, but whether He is good to you? What's the "Did God really say..." sentence your heart keeps finishing? (Genesis 3)
3. In Jonah 4:2, Jonah quotes one of the most beautiful descriptions of God's character in all of Scripture (Exodus 34:6-7) but he throws it in God's face as a complaint. Read both passages side by side. What does it reveal about Jonah's heart that the same truth that made Moses fall down and worship made Jonah sit on a hill and sulk? Is there a truth about God you once celebrated that you've quietly started resenting?
4. The greatest rebuke of the book of Jonah wasn't aimed at the godless city but the cynical man of God. Where have you caught yourself becoming a spectator to God's movement rather than a participant in it? What would it look like this week to uncross your arms and step back in?
5. The opposite of cynicism is not optimism – it's lament. Read Psalm 13 together slowly. Notice how David begins ("How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?") and where he ends ("I will sing the Lord's praise"). What movement do you see in those six verses? How is that different from a smirking "whatever" and which end of the psalm is harder for you personally to reach right now?
6. The Apostle Paul writes that love "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:7). Cynicism quietly attacks each one of those four. Which of the four has cynicism most damaged in you lately – your ability to protect, trust, hope, or persevere with someone? Whose name came to mind when you read that list?
7. Pastor Tom told the story of watching Artemis II with Erica – her eyes wide with wonder, his arms crossed with a smirk – and confessed that his wife, who has every reason to be cynical (having lost two sisters as a child), is the one in their house whispering, "Can you imagine?" Who in your life has real scars but has refused to let the hurt have the last word? What have you learned from watching them ... and have you ever told them?

This Week's One Assignment: Pastor Tom didn't give us five steps – he gave us one: **notice**. This week, pay attention to the moments your arms cross internally. The "must be nice" when someone shares good news. The "we'll see" when you hear about something God is doing. The low-grade smirk when a leader announces something new. Don't judge it yet. Just notice it. Name it. Then bring it to God in lament rather than bury it under a smirk.

Read Psalm 139:23-24. Close your time by praying Psalm 139:23-24 over one another, asking God to surface the smirks, the crossed arms, the ungrieved disappointments and for the courage this week to unclench.