

Small Group Study Spring Semester Week Eight

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.

Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- 1) What is the most unusual pet that you have ever had, or that someone you've known has had? If you've had no unusual pets, are you a cat person or a dog person?
- 2) If you could have an unlimited supply of one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? If you had to never eat one food again for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Passage and Discussion

Read Psalm 22

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) As Cam taught on Sunday, David uses strong language and metaphors in this Psalm to be honest about his feelings with God. Why do you think it's important for us to be honest with God, even if what we are experiencing is difficult or uncomfortable? Do you find it difficult to be that honest?
- c) As Cam explained, sometimes we read words in the Psalms that reflect the author's raw emotional state, but do not reflect theological truth (v. 2: 'God does not answer my prayers'). Though we are invited to be fully honest with God, why is it important for us to weigh our emotions/feelings against the truth of Scripture? How do we do that in our own lives?
- d) Although you may not have used these words, have you ever felt like David felt when he cries out "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me"? If you feel comfortable, share about that experience with the group - what happened? Do you feel that way in this season of your life?
- e) In verse 19, David calls out to God for help during this difficult season. Can you think of other people/places/things that you tend to turn to for hope and peace during hard times in your own life? What happens when we turn to these things instead of turning to God?
- f) In verses 4 and 5, David reminds himself about hard times in the past where God was present in the lives of those who were struggling. In your own life, or in the lives of your loved ones, what are a few examples of times where God was present during a difficult season?
- g) When you are overcome with grief and feeling abandoned by God (as David, and later Christ describes), how is it helpful to know that others in Scripture have felt this way as well? Why is it important to remind ourselves of God's faithfulness in the past? How can our community help us to be reminded of past examples of God's faithfulness?

- h) There is a significant change in tone in this Psalm between verses 1-21, and verses 22-31. What do you think causes this shift (from struggle to praise) in our own lives? How do we move from struggle to praise in our own relationships with God?
- i) As Cam taught on Sunday, what David wrote centuries before Christ was born was fulfilled by His death on the cross. How does this prophecy affect your belief in God's Word? Can you think of other Biblical prophecies that were fulfilled in a similar way?
- j) Work through the Psalm as a group, looking for the prophetic statements about Christ's death on the cross. Point out what sounds familiar, or parallels the accounts of Christ's death. (The crucifixion narratives are: **Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19**).
- k) Read the 2nd half of the Psalm again (**v22-31**). What do these verses say (prophecy) about the future for the world, and God's people?
- l) This Psalm reminds us of the simple truth of the Gospel - Christ was crucified for our sins, and His death and resurrection has given us reconciliation with God. As a group, share about the first time that you heard/understood this truth. Share your testimonies!
- m) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging? Did you learn anything about the Psalms that you didn't know before?

Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)

- a) This week, continue reading through the Psalms! Over the next few weeks, we will be exploring a new Psalm each week, so begin reading them to have them in your mind as we learn them together as a church community.
- b) This week, plan to spend a few minutes each in prayer. In particular, be encouraged to be fully honest in your relationship with God, and express to Him what you are experiencing during this season.

Optional Ideas for Prayer Time

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.
- b) As a group, plan your prayer time in the same structure as this Psalm - begin by being honest with God about what you are walking through during this season, and then end by praising Him for all He has done and will continue to do.