

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 12/03/2023

Psalm 103 Loyal and True: PEACE

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Posted on Monday)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Highlights

- **Peace** – Pastor Janine’s definition: no fighting, quiet and calm, when I’m not suffering
 - **What words describe Peace for you?**
 - The Biblical definition of **Peace = Shalom**: to be made whole or complete
- The Psalms – written to people who are waiting
 - Waiting can feel very far away (Jesus’s return) or very close (a diagnosis) or somewhere in between.
 - **What are you waiting for today? Is it far away or close?**
 - Written with the tension of lament and praise
 - Can help us find the words to express pain, heartache, doubt and grief so we can give our pain, etc. to God.
 - Then God steps into your pain with you and gives you Shalom.
- **Psalm 103** The first 5 verses are an introduction: character of God as holy and good
 - Verse 6-19 show us his disposition toward us: He is loyal (faithful) in love – even when we’re not.
 - Verses 20-22 close in praise
- **Verse 1-2** An invitation to praise
 - Praise is not just an exclamation, but it’s a call to action
 - You can actually command your soul to praise God.
 - Calls us to step into your pain; to anchor yourself to God’s character that doesn’t change – this is praising God.
 - It’s not a “Praise you Jesus,” or “I’ll praise you in this storm (an exclamation)
 - When I command my soul to praise I am reminding myself my pain get’s second place
 - My anchor is God and who He is: loyal and true, and not my pain.
- Pastor Janine’s story: She’s a minimizer, often saying “I’m fine…” when experiencing pain
 - At some point, she prayed, telling God who He is and she experienced shalom
 - She was right in the middle of her pain and experienced shalom, but not until she praised Jesus for who He is
 - No matter what you’re going through, God is enough. He sustains you.
 - **What’s your story? Have you experienced Shalom? Are you waiting for Shalom? What do you have to do to experience it?**
- **Verse 3-6** The LORD forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies and works righteousness and justice
 - Obedience matters to God, but really cares for you. **Have you seen this in your life?**
 - What moves God to care for me? His character which is loyal and true, unchanging and good.
 - God hears your cry, even when you turn away from Him: **compassion**
- **Verses 8-9, 13 Compassion:** Hebrew: rakhum = deeply moved
 - When He is moved, He is compelled to create shalom in your life.
 - When He hears your cry, He responds, just like the children of Israel
 - **Exodus 34** – God responds, “I need you to know who I am”
 - **Ex 34:6-7** the first word God uses to describe Himself: compassionate

- **How has God shown you compassion? What in your life compelled Hi to create shalom in your life?**
- Rakhem = womb. A similar word to rakhum (compassion)
 - Helps us see compassion like a mother has for her child: Mary and Jesus
 - **When Jesus came, God says, “I see your pain and I will send show compassion and send you Shalom – the Prince of Peace – I will make you whole/complete.**
 - Isaiah 49:15
- When Jesus creates shalom in our lives, He changes us.
 - We become peace makers; shalom changes the way we see suffering of ourselves and others.
 - **How have you been changed by Jesus’s shalom?**
 - Don’t avoid your pain, step into it as Jesus has already done. Wrap the words around it and give it to Him, praise Him.

Is it time to command your soul to praise?

Are you being moved by compassion to create shalom in others?

SHALOM!