

Worship: Psalm 104

(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. Edit, add, arrange as needed)

Leader:

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul.
LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

All:

⁵ He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.

Leader:

²⁴ How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

All:

²⁷ All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.
²⁸ When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

Leader:

²⁹ When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

All:

³⁰ When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

Leader:

³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works —
³² he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

All:

³³ I will sing to the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the LORD.

Passage for Discussion: Genesis 1:26-31

Why does God love the poor? Why should we serve the city? The Bible gives many answers, but they all stem from the way the whole story begins. The universe exists because God made it. Over and over again in this chapter God declares, "It is good!" This is God's world, it is good because he made it. And though sin and death entered the world through humans, God did not abandon his world, or destroy it, or give up on it. He chose instead to redeem it – to pay the ultimate price to rescue it. That's how much God cares for the world, for people. And that is why the city matters; that is why the poor are precious to God.

Questions for Discussion

(Here are some questions to get discussion going. Pick several that resonate with you, or you think would be helpful for your group)

Getting to Know Each Other

1. What is your favorite area in Los Angeles?

Looking at the Bible

2. Read Genesis 1:26-31. What sticks out to you about this passage?
3. This whole chapter is dotted with God's positive evaluation of his world: "it was good" (Genesis 1:4, 10,12, 18, 21, 25). This is summed up in verse 31: "God saw all he had made, and it was very good." How does this evaluation (which is not reversed, even after Genesis 3) shape the way we look at our world?
4. Look at verses 26-30. What do we learn about humanity from those verses? About their responsibility? About their value to God?

5. How does Genesis 1 fit with the gospel? In other words, how does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus connect with the picture of God's care for the world and humanity in Genesis 1?

Looking at Our Hearts

6. Looking at Genesis 1, how would you use it to answer the question: "Why do we serve the city?" How does Genesis 1 help us think about our goals in serving the city? What are we trying to accomplish?
7. How does God's care for his world affect how we care for the world?
8. How does the picture of humanity seen in Genesis 1 change how we look at people in poverty?
9. If this point of view should affect our whole lives, and not just one day a year, what would it look like to continue to care for God's world and people the rest of the year? How can we, both individually and as a group, serve the city all year long? (*Think about practical and attainable goals*)

Praying for Each Other

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests)

- Spend some time thanking God for his beautiful creation, and his commitment to save and redeem his world.
- Pray that we would see other people and the world in the same way God does.
- Pray for opportunities to serve in everyday life.