How You Can Be Sure You'll Never Be Happy & What You Can Do About It (Jeremiah 2:13)
Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion:
- Name, discuss, and reflect on (un)happiness.
- Name, discuss, and reflect on the cultural (broken) cisterns we pursue.
- Discuss and reflect on Jesus, the true and better source of happiness.

Sermon Refresher: Keith reminded us of a simple yet profound truth - we're all unhappy. All of us have a felt sense of living on the island of Alcatraz looking out on the beautiful cityscape of San Francisco, dreaming and longing to experience the happiness of life in the city. But it's a farce. Happiness eludes us at every turn. Whether it's money, accomplishment, marriage, family, beauty, or approval - none of those cultural cisterns fully delivers on their promise of happiness. Where should we go in the face of such unhappiness? We look to Jesus, the happiest person in the world.

Icebreaker: How would you say our culture defines happiness? Unhappiness? Why do you think that is?

Discussion:
1. We just discussed the culture's definition of (un)happiness. Now let's bring this a little closer to home. Where/how are you unhappy? Where/how do you sense that you are imprisoned on Alcatraz island and looking out at the happiness of others? What does your unhappiness *feel* like?

2. Where have OTHERS been responsible for your unhappiness? Where have YOU been responsible for your own unhappiness?

3. Keith gave us 5 common cultural (broken) cisterns that all of us look to for happiness in some way or another: money, accomplishment, marriage/family, beauty, approval.

-Which of these do you look to *most* for your happiness?
-How does that search contribute to your own unhappiness?
-How does that search contribute to the unhappiness of others?
-How does/has this search affect(ed) your relationship with God?

4. Life can be extremely unhappy. And yet there is still hope for ultimate and lasting happiness because the happiest person in the world, Jesus, is still alive. Though he lived a seemingly very unhappy life, he was happy. Which of the following Keith mentioned in the sermon about Jesus stuck with you the most and why?

-Jesus was poor (Matthew 8:20)
-Jesus was unaccomplished (Acts 1:15)
-Jesus was single, and did not have a supportive family (Mark 3:21, John 7:5)
-Jesus was not beautiful (Isaiah 53:2)
-Jesus was despised by others (John 15:18)

5. The following three verses remind us of Jesus, the true and better source of happiness. Which of these do you most need to hear, think about, and/or feel and why?

John 4:13-14 – Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Psalm. 16:11 – (Acts 2:28 tells us this verse is about Jesus) You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

John 6:35 – Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Sharing and Prayer:
Close your time together by praying with and for one another. Go around and have everyone share the following two things. When everyone is done sharing, pray for the person on your right.

1. Which broken cultural cistern do they feel most tempted to find their happiness in?
2. Where and how do they want to experience the happiness of Jesus in that area?

Digging Deeper (optional):

Take time each day this week to consider/journal what it could look like to start, or continue, looking to Jesus to for happiness. If you can, meet up someone else (especially in the group) to talk more about these:

-What do you need to think about more (head)?
-What do you need to feel more (heart)?
-What do you need to start, or stop, doing (hands)?
-What have you done in the past that has worked for you?
-What have you seen or heard others do that might work?