

Emmanuel - Sermon 27 December 2020

Leaders' Guide

Read Exodus 33:9-23

1. How might we reconcile our understanding of the omnipresence of God with Moses' fear that God might not go with him and the Israelites to the promised land?

There is a difference between the omnipresence and the sovereign presence of God.

"There are and always have been people to whom God is present, but whose presence remains unacknowledged. God is the unknown lover, wooing, imploring, seeking, but from the outside: knocking, knocking, but never gaining entry. The presence about which Moses speaks is that of sovereign and shepherd, after whom the people are named and by whom they are formed."

- a. How do Judas and John the Beloved highlight the difference that can exist in the ways God is present to different people?

Jesus was "with" both for the same amount of time. But he was with them in very different ways. John was devoted to Jesus and Judas betrayed him.

2. God being with a people in the sense of sovereign and shepherd will mean that people will be different from the world around (see vs 16). What two core distinctives were mentioned in the sermon?

Holiness and Love.

3. It was suggested in the sermon that holiness is not primarily abstinence from people and things. If not abstinence, what then is holiness?

Holiness is the abandonment to God, not the abandonment of other people and things.

Read John 13:31-35

4. Why did Jesus need to give a new love commandment?

The old commandment to love others as we love ourselves (Mark 12) is inadequate because our love for ourselves can't be relied upon. "the painful fact of the matter is that most of us love ourselves - and treat ourselves - quite badly. Out of an underlying sense of not-enoughness we either create a delusionally high narrative of ourselves and our worth, or alternatively we create a self-deprecating or even self-hating narrative. Either way we usually treat ourselves quite badly, with vain deceits and conceits and wildly

unhealthy self-indulgence, or with harsh and cruel self-recrimination and condemnation.”

5. What does this new love look like?

“It is self-sacrificing, and it is self-sacrificing before the other has earned that kind of love.”

a. *Also read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 8.*

“A love like that does not gossip, it does not think poorly of the other, it does not disparage or demean, it does not say cruel and hurtful things, it does not return pain for pain, it is not impatient and intolerant, it is not self-centered but rather God and other centered.”