

Abounding in Thanksgiving - Study Questions

10 October 2021

1. What are you thankful for this week after Thanksgiving?

Read Job 19:1-27; Colossians 1:24 - 2:7

2. At first glance how appropriate are these passages for Thanksgiving Sunday?
3. The theme of the sermon was giving thanks in the midst of adversity. According to the sermon was Job's thanksgiving because of or in spite of his suffering?

What quality or characteristic marked Job's thanksgiving?

- a. In spite of.
 - b. "Like a spiritual bulldog, Job was gloriously defiant. Convinced that it was God himself who was afflicting him, stripped of everything but his life - and that only by a thread - Job grimly held on and declared to God: You can't make me stop trusting you!"
4. Paul saw his suffering very differently. Why did he rejoice in his suffering? How did James suggest that Paul's suffering filled up "what is lacking" in Jesus' suffering?
 - a. "Paul was convinced that his suffering played an important role in God's redemptive work in the world and he was convinced it was worth it - it was a small price to pay to further the Gospel of Christ."
 - b. "One thing that was 'lacking' is that not many people saw Jesus' suffering on the cross. The nature and quality of the suffering of Paul & the martyrs functioned as a witness to the suffering of Jesus. And as witness it can be said to be 'redemptive suffering.'
 5. How might our suffering "that is common to humanity in a sinful and broken world," suffering that isn't suffering for our faith, nevertheless participate in God's reconciling and redemptive work in the world?
 - a. The believer can suffer differently than those in the world around us. We can suffer with hope. We can go on in our suffering trusting that God's redemptive purpose for us and for the whole world remains unchanged. We can not be overwhelmed by the darkness to the point of despair.

6. What image did James use to explain how pain and adversity can tend to function in our lives? How does the spiritual discipline of thanksgiving help keep the darkness from swallowing up all the light in our lives?
 - a. Pain and adversity can function like a black hole that seeks “to swallow up all the light around it. It will insist that it is the only reality in our lives, it always has been and always will be. Nothing will ever change - this is permanent. There is nothing but darkness.”
 - b. The spiritual discipline of thanksgiving does not deny the darkness; it doesn’t pretend there is no pain, sorrow, loss or adversity. Rather, it is *embracing the light in the face of the darkness*. It exposes the lie that darkness is all there is.