

Bible Study on Lessons for November 27-28

Sermon theme – When ET came to town.

Let's begin by reading the Old Testament lesson from Job 19:2, 21-26. The book of Job is the story of innocent suffering. We meet this good man Job and then we see how his world falls apart all around him. Everything he has is taken from him. All his children die. He loses all his crops, animals and land, and wait there's more! He is struck by a loathsome disease and we find him in a garbage dump scraping at the sores on his body with a broken piece of pottery. The rest of the book consists of a running dialogue/argument between Job and three so called friends who come to bring him comfort in his time of suffering but instead they do nothing but judge and condemn him.

Now when we reach chapter 19 Job has been defending himself against the accusations of his friends. In verses 1-2 Job pleads with his tormentors to stop what they are doing. He then goes on to tell them how it is God who is doing all these things. However in spite of this horrible situation Job still believes that some day God will come and save him. He says: "But I know there is someone in heaven who will at last come to my defense. Even after my skin is eaten by disease, while still in this body I will see God. I will see him with my own eyes, and he will not be a stranger." What an amazing statement of faith! Here is Job a man who has lost everything and being verbally abused by his friends, and yet he still believes that God, in a very personal way, will come to defend him.

Questions: Has anything like this ever happened to you? How did you respond? Do you admire Job for his faith or do you think he is being foolish?

Now read Psalm 49:5-15

In this Psalm we hear the writer warning against the foolishness of trusting in wealth. In verse five he declares that he is not afraid in times of danger, or enemies and even evil men who trust in their riches. He goes on to tell that there is not enough money in the whole world that can ever be used to get a person right with God. In verses 10-11 we see the Psalmist declaring that “you can’t take it with you.” Then he goes on to remind us all that no matter how great we are – no matter how famous we are – no matter how much wealth we acquire - in the end we will all die. Finally in verse 15 he declares that no matter what happens to him God will save him.

Questions: Do you agree with the Psalmist when he declares that you can’t take it with you? He makes it very clear that wealth is not all that important; so why do we spend so much of our lives trying to acquire it?

Now read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 in this chapter Paul is describing a life lived in faith. It is a life that does not depend on the condition of our physical being. No, instead we are to fix our attention on things that cannot be seen. We are to judge life not by human standards but rather by a new dimension. We are to be joined to Christ who is a new being and with him the old is gone and the new has begun. Then Paul tells what we are to do. We are to tell others as if God is speaking through us! We are to plead on behalf of our Lord. No longer are we enemies of Christ, but rather we are his friends all because of what he has done for us. Question: do you believe that you are an instrument that God will use? I hope so!

Now read the key text from John 1:14

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So why just one verse? Well in this verse we have it all! We have the amazing- the unbelievable- the stupendous- announcement from God to humankind that God became one of us. Now that is something to chew on. I just saw a brief bio on Tom Landry the first and greatest coach of the Dallas cowboys. He coached that team for 29 years. He was an icon among coaches and his players. One of his former players, in describing coach Landry, told how from the first moment you walked into that locker room coach Landry made in clear that he was the man in charge. He was up here and the players were down there. From the beginning of time all religions saw their Gods as being up there. Clearly there was a separation between the gods and human kind.

Now in this single verse all of this is swept away. God becomes one of us. Fully and completely. This is not play acting on the part of our God. Our Lord does not become human for a day. He does not try on humanity like you try on a pair of shoes to see if they will fit. God – the Christ became a human being in order that we might see his glory.

Question: Now what do you think of that!?