

Friday, February 16, 2024 - Day 3 of Lent

Open in Prayer:

Lord Jesus, Thank you for suffering for me. I am eternally grateful. Thank you for your gift of salvation. Guide me in the way I should go. Lead me on a journey of growth this season, and along this journey, fill my heart with abounding joy! May I never grow weary of rejoicing in your goodness, and may I never forget your love and sacrifice. Amen.

Read Genesis 15:7-12, 17-21 (ESV)

And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give^[a] this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

Answer the following questions:

In the wake of yesterday’s truth that apart from God, humanity is utterly depraved, today we see something awe-inspiring taking place. God offers an unbelievable gift to Abram. The gift of a homeland to a nomad would have been unbelievable! But God is not done there. God enacts a covenant with Abram.

In the time of Abram, a covenant was enacted with blood. Sacrifice was made...blood was shed...and a covenant was established as the parties walked through the center of the sacrifices and the blood. For a covenant to be enacted, there had to be sacrifice and blood.

But that was not the end. As the covenant is being enacted, Abram was encompassed by a great darkness and horror overcame him.

1. What is awe-inspiring today to hear that “For a covenant to be enacted, there had to be sacrifice and blood”? Why do those words reverberate in the heart and soul of a disciple?

2. What do you think of when you hear that in the midst of God enacting the covenant, great darkness fell upon Abram? Does that remind you of any other story in Scripture?
3. As Jesus hung on the cross, a great darkness fell over the land, and after finishing his mission, Jesus said to God the Father, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do...” In the midst of a horrible situation, God established a new covenant with His people through Jesus Christ. What do you know about this new covenant?
4. When I write, “Jesus died to give us life, became alienated to give us a home, experienced deep darkness to bring us the light of the world, and stepped out of heaven to welcome us in.” How do you respond? Do you experience the awe and wonder of what God did for you?

Read Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Close in Prayer

Father, today, please remind me that as Jesus suffered in darkness, you placed within me the Light of Christ. As Jesus experienced alienation, you offered me a home. As Jesus stepped out of the glory of heaven, he provided a way for me to enter eternity. And as Jesus died on the cross, he afforded me eternity with You! Thank you! For you are my reward. You are better than life itself! What a blessing I have received in Jesus. Amen!