

Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death - Nicodemus

Genesis 12:1-9; Romans 4:1-8, 13-17; John 3:1-17

Have you ever noticed how people _____ when walking “through the valley of the shadow of death?” There can be quite a wide variety of reactions to danger or death, sometimes from the same person!

Langdon Gilkey wrote a book about his experience in a Japanese internment camp in China during WWII. Almost everyone descended into a dark pit of self-centeredness. One man stood out as his focus on his _____ sharpened. His name: Eric Liddell. But he was just walking in the footsteps of his leader: Jesus.

“Coming down the mountain” with Jesus after his transfiguration, we follow him through the valley of the shadow of death to Good Friday, carefully observing his _____ on his mission and making it our _____.

To do that we are going to use language out of a book I helped write, “Open ARMS: Connecting People to Jesus.” Why? Because it’s _____, it’s _____, and it’s _____.

If you are only here because you enjoy this congregation for _____ then you are in the wrong place! Those aren’t bad things but they aren’t the _____ thing. Jesus’ disciples didn’t follow him because he made them feel good. He was kind of a downer! Always super _____! Weeping! They followed him because he was on a _____. “Y’all come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Over 20 people committed to reading this book and/or applying its principles to their lives. Let’s do it together!

ARMS is an acronym you will find explained on page 6. To connect people to Jesus we must be:

A - _____

R - _____

M - _____

S - _____

That’s it! Let’s see how our _____ passages illustrate this for us.

In Genesis 12, after the _____ of his father, Abram/Abraham makes himself _____ for a mission from God. It’s also relational. He’s moved to act. He’s supported. But he has to be open to it first!

In John 3, Jesus is on a mission to save even _____! Jesus was available at _____, for someone unwilling to be _____ with him, for a close friend of his _____, who was _____ yet oddly hard to teach.

Why? “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” And Jesus loved _____ his Father. It’s why he was on earth in the first place!

He also loves _____. He made himself _____ available for you. To the point of death. He sent his Spirit to work in the heart of a Christian to bring you the Good News in a personal way. Not a billboard. Not a flyer. A person. Who would introduce you to the Person, Jesus Christ.

In a world full of pain, suffering, and death, will you make yourself available for God's mission?

Will you make yourself available for a person in desperate need of Jesus?