Immanuel = God’s Grace Can Flow Through Us December 10, 2023

*1 Samuel 16:14-23 Series: God With Us at Christmas*

If I look at Bach, I cannot be an atheist. Then I have to accept the way he believed. His music never stops praying. – György Kurtág

Intro: Composer can’t escape the power of the music

1. A person with their back to God faces the darkness
2. We need God to carry out God’s will

v. 14 *the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul*

Psalm 51:11 *Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

John 15:5 *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

1. Saying yes to temptation gives power to the tempter

v. 14 *a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him*

v. 15 *a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you*

v. 16 *the harmful spirit from God is upon you*

Ephesians 4:26-27 *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.*

* What do you think György Kurtág meant when he said that Bach’s music “never stops praying”?
* In what sense can we do nothing apart from Jesus?
* Why would sitting with anger or bitterness give the devil an opportunity in our lives?
* What are some ways that people can feel “tormented” by the darkness today?

1. A person who is gripped by God reflects the light
2. He didn’t need to tell people that the Lord was with him

v. 18 *Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.*

1 Samuel 18:14 *And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him.*

2 Samuel 5:10 *And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.*

1. When you have God’s light, you can drive out the darkness

v. 23 *And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand.*

v. 23 *So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.*

* How do you think people would have recognized that the Lord was with David?
* What does it mean to be “successful” biblically speaking?
* Why would God both send Saul a harmful spirit that tormented him and also send him a person who was able to refresh him and drive the harmful spirit away?
* Have you ever experienced God refreshing you and lifting your spirits through Christ-centred music?

1. With God with us, God can work through us
2. “God with us” is how God has always done God’s will

Genesis 28:15 *Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*

Genesis 39:2 *The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.*

1 Samuel 3:19 *And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.*

1. Jesus is “God with us” in lasting fullness

Isaiah 7:14 *the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*

Matthew 28:20 *I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

* Why would God delegate His work to people instead of carrying out His plans directly Himself?
* How is the promise of “God with us” different in the new covenant compared to the old?
* What is the promise of power about in Acts 1:8? i.e. How does God empower our witness as believers?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Psalm 46:1-11.

Notes