

Book Study questions for Chapter 5 & the Conclusion

1. Women, too, struggled to maintain faith in God in the midst of so much suffering and injustice. Many Blacks, both male and female, identified strongly with biblical figures like Job and Jeremiah.
 - a. Do you think that such identification is limited to one particular race or group?
 - b. What character in scripture do you identify with? Have you changed your affinity to bible stories over time or in response to different situations in your life?

2. On p. 125, we read, 'The faith of Black women gave them courage to fight, patience when they could not, and the hope that whatever they did, God would keep them 'from sinking down.' 'Various faith declarations are mentioned like: 'God may not come when you want but God is right on time' or 'making a way out of no way'...
 - a. Do you have a favourite faith declaration or saying?

3. On p. 139, the theologian Howard Thurman is quoted as saying, 'a person has to handle...suffering or be handled by it.' Traditional atonement theory can be problematic because it seems to lift up suffering as redemptive. Cone says, 'What is redemptive is the faith that God snatches victory out of despair, life out of death, and hope out of despair, as revealed in the biblical and black proclamation of Jesus' resurrection.' (p.150)
 - a. Have your thoughts about the Cross and its meaning changed over these past few weeks? If yes, how?

4. The last chapter is a pithy summary of many of the themes from the previous sections. Especially, Cone returns to the paradox of the meaning of the cross and 'salvation'. He says, 'The real scandal of the gospel is this: humanity's salvation is revealed in the cross of the condemned criminal Jesus, and humanity's salvation is available only through our solidarity with the crucified people in our midst. (p. 160)
 - a. Discuss the ramifications of this statement.

5. Over and over, we hear that the cross is 'an opening to the transcendent' – something that is available to all. And yet, we also need 'the imagination to relate the message of the cross to one's own social reality...'
 - a. What are some of the social realities of today that reveal the cross?