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Presentations at Greenville College, Greenville, IL
February 12, 2014

9:30 A.M. Chapel Talk:

Can We Trust God in the Midst of Radical Disappointment?

Chapel Talk Description:

Making sense of our own suffering by grappling with Jeremiah's audacious prayer to God in the midst of his deepest faith crisis (Jeremiah 20:7-18).

3:30 P.M. Mannoia Lecture:

Does God Come to Praise Job or to Bury Him? The Significance of the LORD's Second Speech from the Whirlwind (Job 40:6-41:34)

Mannoia Lecture Description:

The book of Job is an artful, complex, polyvalent text, whose meanings have exercised interpreters for millennia. Among the oft-debated hermeneutical issues is the divergence between the perspectives found in the poetic dialogues and the prose framework of the book. One particularly egregious divergence between the dialogues and the framework is the tension or contradiction between 1) God's explicit approval of Job's abrasive complaint, in contrast to that of his friends' speech (stated twice in the prose epilogue) and 2) God's implicit rebuke of Job's arrogance at daring to question divine justice (found in the speeches from the whirlwind), a rebuke that is followed by Job's "repentance."

Without claiming to provide any definitive resolution of the tension between dialogue and prose framework, this presentation will engage in a close reading of God's speeches and Job's responses, with a focus on the second speech. My purpose will be to explore the wild possibility that God's intention in the speeches might actually cohere with the explicit approbation given Job in the prose epilogue. Central to my reading of the second speech will be three questions. First, what is the status of God's appeal to the primordial monsters, Behemoth and Leviathan? Second, of what does Job "repent" in his response to the second speech? And, third, why is there a second speech at all (why didn't the first suffice)? In answering these questions it will become clear that God greatly values both Job and Leviathan in their untamed wildness.