

## GUEST SPEAKER: "The Battle Against Depression"

### INTRODUCTION: *Christians Can Struggle with Depression!*

- ✓ Great figures in church history have struggled with depression!
  - **C.H. Spurgeon** – "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever gets to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to."
  - **William Cowper** – "I feel unutterable despair."
  - **Martyn Lloyd Jones** wrote a book entitled Spiritual Depression. He called depression a "very common condition."
- ✓ **Depression has been called "the black night of the soul"**
  - It can lead to other problems – "When I get depressed, I go shopping" (Mallory from *Family Ties*)

### THE DESCRIPTION OF DEPRESSION (Psalm 42)

- ✓ There are **vivid word pictures** describing the Psalmist's battle with depression.
  - **"Despair" (v. 5, 6, 11)** – pictures a person being crouched down or bowed down.
  - **"Disturbed" (v.5, 11)** – pictures a person who is deeply groaning and in great sorrow.
  - **"Weeping" (v.3)** – The Psalmist says "*My tears have been my food day and night,*"
  - **"Waterfalls" / "Waves" (v.7)** – pictures a person who is being *drowned by sorrow*.

Why is the Psalmist depressed? It may have something to do with his circumstances. The inscription says this is "A Maskil of the sons of Korah." The Psalmist most likely came from a family of musicians, the "sons of Korah". Verse 2 indicates that he was far away from the temple, the public place of worship. Verse 6 indicates that he was in the "land of the Jordan" which would have placed him far away from the capital city of Jerusalem. He may have been taken captive by enemies, for he is being taunted and mocked in verse 3. In the midst of these circumstances, he is experiencing a lack of intimacy and fellowship with God (v.1). **Both external and internal factors were influences in his depression.**

### THE BATTLE FOR JOY (Psalm 42:5, 11)

- ✓ The Psalmist **battled** in order to overcome his depression.
- ✓ He **talked** to himself, instead of **listening** to himself.
  - He questioned himself – "*Why are you in despair, O my soul?*" (v.5, 11)
  - He reminded himself of who God is – "*Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him*" (v.5, 11)
- ✓ **The cure was not immediate** – The dialogue is repeated (v.5, 11). The Psalmist **vacillated** between *hope* and *despair*.

# Shepherd Group Study Questions

November 4, 2018

## REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

1 "Even a true Christian can struggle with depression." What do you think about this statement? Why do you think this statement might be difficult for people to understand or accept?

2 Pastor Steve spoke of how both external factors and internal factors can lead a Christian to experience depression.

Which of the two do you think are more influential in leading a person to be depressed?

Can you think of any factors (internal, external) that might be a cause for a Christian's depression?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1 The Bible speaks in many places of how the emotion of sorrow is a normal part of living in a fallen world. How do the following passages help us to understand sorrow? How do they teach us to express sorrow in a godly way?

**Psalm 13:1-2** *English Standard Version (ESV)*

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

**Romans 9:1-3** *English Standard Version (ESV)*

I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit – that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** *English Standard Version (ESV)*

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

Why is it important for a Christian to understand **the place of sorrow** in this life? What happens if this truth is not understood?

When does **godly sorrow** become something that is **ungodly and sinful**? What are some characteristics of ungodly sorrow?

2

Read **Genesis 50:20** and summarize the truth of that verse in your own words.

How does this truth help us understand our own circumstances?

How does this truth shape how we relate to those who do evil against us?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

1

In the sermon, Pastor Steve challenged us to **focus on God and His unchanging character** rather than on our own circumstances. What are three specific truths about God that you can praise Him and thank Him for this week?

➤

➤

➤

2

Looking back on the sermon, are there any goals you'd like to work on in the next few days/weeks that could help you grow in the three areas below?

➔ *Expressing sorrow in a godly way*

➔ *Speaking to yourself the truths of God's Word even when life is hard*

➔ *Seeing God's sovereign hand over the trials in your life*