

The Gospel and Mental Health

Goals of the Series

- To submit fully to the teaching from God's Word
- To discover what God's Word says about modern controversial topics
- How are we as Christians to engage with each of these topics
 - Christians do not get to pick and choose what is and what isn't sin. We also don't get to pick and choose which causes we stand behind. Over the next few weeks we'll be talking about some lots of different topics. Some of them thankfully, are still celebrated in our culture. If you stand up against racism, or human trafficking, you will be celebrated in our country. But if you stand up against the LGBT movement, or abortion, you have to be prepared to ostracism
- Become equipped to take the Gospel in the culture
 - If your goal tonight is for more information, then our goal is far too small. Let our goal be transformation to let God's Word transform our hearts and be equipped to teach others

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17

"I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church's history, and [you] will find a little marginal note [that says]: 'In this age [people] could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.' Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another." Charles Spurgeon

The Word is my only source of authority.

- A preacher's authority is NOT personal. (*Not based on who I am. Something isn't right just because I said it*)
- A preacher's authority is NOT organizational. (*There are some organizations and/or religions that place their teaching at church above God's Word*)
- A preacher's authority is NOT intellectual. (*Sometimes a preacher will elevate his studies and because he has some letters after his name, suddenly his thoughts mean something more*)

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- A preacher's authority is NOT psychological. *(This isn't Dr. Phil, this isn't self-help hour. We believe the Bible is sufficient for everything in life)*
- A preacher's authority is NOT experiential. *(a danger we have nowadays is that the best person to help us in our problems is someone that has already experienced and overcome that problem. That's ridiculous, cause if that's the case, then Jesus would be of no help to anyone here. Praise God that He didn't once give into a single sin, and that is why we look to Him and Him alone)*
- A preacher's authority is ONLY biblical.

Goals of this particular night

- ❖ Understand what the Bible says about mental health, mental illness, and mental diseases **This is no way will be an exhaustive study on any such, and we would be foolish to think we can cover every circumstance and issue regarding this, but I want us to at least start to scratch the service**
- ❖ Understand how the Bible responds to psychology, therapy, and counseling **If you ask ten people to define these words, you may get ten different responses. Did my best to discern how do medical experts define some of these terms leaning on the American psychiatric association, and obviously we will not be exhaustively every aspect of these things, but looking at the foundation. Consider a pyramid of psychology. After studying and researching, although there are bricks at different spots that are good and have Biblical overlap, many of the foundational portions of psychology are not Biblical and if that's the case, the whole pyramid will ultimately crumble**
- ❖ Determine if God's Word is sufficient in dealing with mental health issues
- ❖ Discover how the Gospel relates to those struggling with issues of mental health **For some of us, "can the Bible help me despite what's happened in my past... or currently..." YES!**

Questions/concerns/challenges we face regarding this issue

- ❖ According to American Psychiatric Association, nearly 1 in 5 US adults experience some form of mental illness
- ❖ According to American Psychiatric Association, Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a medical problem, just like heart disease or diabetes.
- ❖ The suicide rate has increased in the past twenty years
- ❖ According to the CDC, in the past ten years, 7.6% of Americans have had depression. That's 23,100,000 people
- ❖ Sins such as substance abuse, gambling, are gender dysphoria are now being classified as mental disorders.
- ❖ The top selling Christian books of 2019 were majorly "self-help" books

This discussion will no way be exhaustive. There is no possible way to address every single person's experience, emotion, past, and feelings in this short amount of time. We will do our best to have an honest approach to how God's Word addresses this topic, and no matter where we stand, let us humbly submit to God's Word and not let our thoughts, emotions, and experiences triumph over the Word of God.

Gospel Foundations

- ❖ God is our gracious Creator and we belong to Him

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Colossians 1:16 - For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through him and for him

- ❖ He is holy and He is our Judge, which makes us accountable to Him

Revelation 4:8 - Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.

Psalms 7:8 - The Lord judges the peoples; vindicate me, Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity.

Romans 2:6-11 - He will repay each one according to his works: eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness. There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. For there is no favoritism with God.

- ❖ God's Wisdom is far superior to that of any human being

Isaiah 55:8-9 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways." This is the Lord's declaration. "For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

- ❖ God made man and woman wonderfully and uniquely

Genesis 1:26-27 - Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

- ❖ Men and women became morally evil and corrupted by sin

Genesis 3:6-7 - The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

John 8:34 - Jesus responded, "Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

- ❖ Men and women became corrupted in their wisdom and knowledge

Romans 1:21-23 - For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

- ❖ Men and women became separate from God and deserve death

Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen.

Romans 6:23a - "For the wages of sin is death..."

- ❖ We are spiritually dead (Do not miss this)

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned

"What would you do if you met a really modern man on a train and you just had an hour to talk to him about the gospel?" He replied, "I've said over and over, I would spend 45-50 minutes on the negative, to really show him his dilemma – that he is morally dead – then I'd take 10-15 minutes to preach the Gospel. I believe that much of our evangelistic

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and personal work today is not clear simply because we are too anxious to get to the answer without having a man realize the real cause of his sickness, which is true moral guilt (and not just psychological guilt feelings) in the presence of God.” - Francis Schaeffer

How can God express His holiness without consuming us in our sin?

How can God express His love without condoning us in our sin?

How can God judge sin and justify the sinner at the same time?

How can God satisfy Himself and save us at the same time?

❖ Jesus alone is able to remove our sin and restore us to God

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

❖ Jesus lived a life we could not live

1 John 3:5 - You know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, and there is no sin in him.

❖ Jesus died the death we deserve to die

1 Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

The essence of sin: Man substitutes himself for God. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be.

The essence of salvation: God substitutes Himself for man. God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be.

❖ The Gospel does not end here, but we must give a personal response.

❖ God calls all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins

Luke 24:45-47 - Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third

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day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

- ❖ This involves turning from all sin, and submitting to the Christ's Lordship

Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- ❖ All who have faith in Jesus will be reconciled to God forever

Ephesians 2:4-7 - But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

- ❖ In Christ, we experience a new life, with a new heart, mind, and attitude through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

Titus 3:4-7 - But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

John 16:8-14 - When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

- ❖ Gospel-centered faith will lead to a Gospel-centered lifestyle

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Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

- ❖ Heaven is a glorious reality for those who trust Jesus, and hell is a dreadful reality for those who die without Christ

Phil. 3:20-21 - Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself

Rev. 20:11-15 - Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

- ❖ Will you turn from Jesus?
 - Live without Christ now.
 - Die without Christ forever.
- ❖ Will you trust in Jesus?
 - Die with Christ now.
 - Live with Christ forever.

There is more at stake tonight just having a little Bible study. Eternity is on the line. I pray that if you are someone who is unsure in your faith, that you would make the greatest decision of your life and give your life to Christ fully tonight. And for those who are in Christ., **I pray tonight would open your eyes to the reality that the world's stance on mental health, illness, and disease often times not only tries to add things to the Bible, but often contradicts the Bible. Mental health has become a topic that not only our Western world has embraced but many churches, Christian colleges, and organizations have embraced as well. May we submit to God's Word alone**

The Gospel and Mental Health

- ❖ God created men and women with a specific design and purpose

Psalm 139:13-16 - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

- ❖ The Lord understood man's needs prior to his knowledge of them

Genesis 2:18 - Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him."

- ❖ Despite God's perfect Creation, men and women decided not to trust God's design

Genesis 3:6 - The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

- ❖ Because of the first sin, all human beings are born into sin and are inherently evil

Psalm 51:5 - Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me

Ephesians 2:3 - We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

- ❖ Our hearts, minds, and desires are ultimately evil and incurable

Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?

And now, we have come to a huge problem in modern psychology.

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- ❖ Modern psychology makes claims to understand the mind, and yet the Bible says otherwise.
- ❖ Modern psychology claims to be the cure for life's many psychological problems, yet the Bible says otherwise.
- ❖ Modern psychology ultimately claims humans are born good but have been corrupted by evil environments, and the Bible claims otherwise

"Psychologists traditionally study both normal and abnormal functioning and treat individuals with mental and emotional problems. They also concentrate on behaviors that affect the mental and emotional health and mental functioning of healthy human beings....Indeed, many of the problems facing society today are problems of behavior—for example, chronic health conditions or disease, drug addiction, poor personal relationships, violence at home and in the street, and the harm we do to our environment. Psychologists contribute solutions to problems through careful collection of data, analysis of data and development of intervention strategies—in other words, by applying scientific principles, the hallmark of psychology." - American Psychological Association

- ❖ God's Word is sufficient with dealing with our deepest psychological and emotional needs

2 Peter 1:3-4 - His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

- ❖ God's Word is sufficient in equipping us for every good work

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- ❖ The fruit of the Spirit (what comes out of following Christ) describes an emotionally, balanced, psychologically stable person

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- ❖ Therapy and counseling that centers on problems invariably results in conversations that violate Scripture. This could include...

➤ Gossip (one-sided stories)

Proverbs 20:19 - The one who reveals secrets is a constant gossip; avoid someone with a big mouth.

➤ Sharing false information about someone

Psalm 101:5 - I will destroy anyone who secretly slanders his neighbor; I cannot tolerate anyone with haughty eyes or an arrogant heart.

➤ Speaking bad about others

Titus 3:1-4 - Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

➤ Blaming the past

Philippians 3:13-14 - Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

➤ Dishonor our parents

Ephesians 6:1-3 - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land

➤ Disobeying Christ's design of church discipline

Matthew 18:15-17 - If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell the church. If he

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doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you

- Playing the victim (*"This is a result of racism, sexism, parents, social class, economical class, addiction, illness, etc."*)
 - God is sovereign over all

1 Chronicles 29:11-3 - Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. Riches and honor come from you, and you are the ruler of everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we give you thanks and praise your glorious name.

Romans 8:28 - We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

- ❖ Christ ultimately is the healer for all wounds

Isaiah 53:4-5 - Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds.

"BUT WHAT IF ALL THIS ENDS UP HELPING US/HEALING US?"

- ❖ If psychology, therapy, or counseling "heals" us, we will ultimately be robbing God of His glory He deserves

Isaiah 42:8 - I am the LORD. That is my name, and I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

- ❖ The Bible warns us against fully relying on the "wisdom" of the world, since much of it opposes the wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:25 - because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Can God's Word heal me?

❖ God is the ultimate healer

Genesis 15:26 - He said, "If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

Can He heal my anxiety? My stress?

Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

➤ Easier said than done... BUT... the Bible explains how to do this

❖ What we think determines how we live

Proverbs 23:7 (NASB) - For as he thinks within himself, so he is.

❖ We are to take every thought captive if we are in Christ

Matthew 22:37 - He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

❖ Wrong thinking led the world into sin

Genesis 3:1 - Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

❖ The remedy against anxiety and stress is right thinking

Philippians 4:6-8 - Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which

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surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things

- ❖ Jesus commands followers not to worry by telling them to stop and think

Matthew 6:25 - Therefore I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they?

- ❖ God gives mercy and grace to each believer for each day, and not a moment too early

Lamentations 3:22-24 - Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness! I say, "The Lord is my portion, therefore I will put my hope in him."

Matthew 6:34 - Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- There is no sense in worrying about tomorrow, but God will grant you the grace and mercy you need in that day

- ❖ The ultimate cure for anxiety is taking your mind off the problem and onto Christ

Matthew 6:31-33 - So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7 - Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.

Romans 12:1-2 - Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true

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worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- We don't always have a choice in our circumstances, but we do have a choice in our thoughts amidst those circumstances.

Can He heal my low self-esteem?

- ❖ Much of modern Christianity has been saturated with the idea that in order to love something, one must first **learn** to love themselves. The Bible speaks against this

Luke 14:25-27 - Now great crowds were traveling with him. So he turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Acts 20:22-24 - "And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there, except that in every town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me. But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

- ❖ The mark of biblical love is self-sacrifice, not self-esteem

Mark 9:33-35 - They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest. Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."

"Satan tells me I am unworthy; but I always was unworthy, and yet God has longed loved me." - Charles Spurgeon

***Our self-worth is not found in how we or others see us, but only in how God sees us.
And we see His love for us. This is what gives us confidence***

Can He heal my depression? "Can a Christian get depressed?"

- ❖ Consider Elijah (after fire falling from heaven on Mt. Carmel, after miraculously outrunning a chariot...)

1 Kings 19:1-5 - Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!" Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

❖ Consider Psalm 88

Psalm 88 - Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out before you day and night. May my prayer reach your presence; listen to my cry. For I have had enough troubles, and my life is near Sheol. I am counted among those going down to the Pit. I am like a man without strength, abandoned among the dead. I am like the slain lying in the grave, whom you no longer remember, and who are cut off from your care. You have put me in the lowest part of the Pit, in the darkest places, in the depths. Your wrath weighs heavily on me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves. You have distanced my friends from me; you have made me repulsive to them. I am shut in and cannot go out. My eyes are worn out from crying. Lord, I cry out to you all day long; I spread out my hands to you. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do departed spirits rise up to praise you? Will your faithful love be declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Abaddon? Will your wonders be known in the darkness or your righteousness in the land of oblivion? But I call to you for help, Lord; in the morning my prayer meets you. Lord, why do you reject me? Why do you hide your face from me? From my youth, I have been suffering and near death. I suffer your horrors; I am desperate. Your wrath sweeps over me; your terrors destroy me. They surround me like water all day long; they close in on me from every side. You have distanced loved one and neighbor from me; darkness is my only friend.

❖ Understand that God's goal for our lives is not our happiness. God's goal is that we be more like Christ

Romans 8:28-29 - We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

❖ Through our trials, we grow in holiness

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James 1:2-4 - Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

“Depression is not a disease. While there are some organic malfunctions that may trigger feelings of depression, many symptoms and maladies defined as depression (whether short-lived or chronic) are the consequences of unbiblical habits and/or sinful reactions to circumstances and other people. Depression that stems from unbiblical living can be overcome as you deal biblically with your sins and purposefully live in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.” - John Broger, author of Self-Confrontation Manual

“Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see Thee in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold Thy glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Thy stars shine; let me find Thy light in my darkness, Thy life in my death, Thy joy in my sorrow, Thy grace in my sin, Thy riches in my poverty, Thy glory in my valley.”

What moved on Haratio Spafford's life after the death of his two year old son in a fire, losing four of his daughters on a shipwreck and becoming financially ruined to turn around and write the poem “it is well it is well with my soul.”

What moved on William Cowper's life after numerous suicidal attempts and going in and out of asylums to write down the words “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains”

It was the very fact that maybe our trials and hardships that cause so much and pain, hurt and loss ultimately bring us closer to God than we ever possibly realized

Can He heal my suffering?

- ❖ Consider Job (lost his family, his wealth, his status, his health)

Job 1:20-21 - Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

- ❖ Amidst all of our questions, we eventually realize that our greatest need is not an explanation from God.
- ❖ Our greatest need is ultimately an encounter with God.

Job 42:1-5 - Then Job replied to the Lord: I know that you can do anything and no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, "Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?" Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know. You said, "Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform me." I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes have seen you.

- ❖ Our greatest need is not an answer for the "why" of suffering.
- ❖ Our greatest need is ultimately a glimpse the One "who" reigns over suffering

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me so that I would not exalt myself. Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Can He heal my past relationships? Past abuse?

- ❖ Cling to Christ

Luke 4:18-19 - The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

- ❖ Cling to your True Father

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may

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be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

- ❖ Our response to those who cause suffering
 - Bless them

Luke 6:27-29 - "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either.

- Love them

Luke 6:35 - But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High.

- Pray for them

Matthew 5:44 - But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

- Forgive them

Matthew 6:14-15 - For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

Luke 23:33-34 - When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."

- Do not seek revenge on them

Matthew 5:38-42 - You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to the one who asks you, and don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Remember, Christ can heal all wounds! His word is sufficient

Objections/Questions:

- ❖ If we use modern medicine, why can't we use modern psychology?
 - The Bible does not claim to be sufficient for dealing with medical problems

1 Timothy 5:23 - Don't continue drinking only water, but use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

- The Bible does claim to be sufficient for dealing with problems of the heart, mind, and soul
 - All of Psalm 119

Psalm 119:71-72 - It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn your statutes. Instruction from your lips is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

- ❖ Should I stop taking my medication for psychological problems?
 - This is where we rely heavily on doctors and those that practice medicine
 - There probably is an overlap between the physiology of brain function and the realm of the soul or personhood.
 - There are some situations where medication can even out a person's brain chemistry so that they become more "normal" or rational. In such cases, we should gratefully use modern medicine, just as we take antibiotics to get over infections.
 - Even if medicine restores normalcy of the brain, this person still has to deal with sinful thoughts and habits
- ❖ Don't certain complicated psychological problems require the expertise of a professional therapist? **It absolutely requires the expertise of a professional. This is why we have God's Word**
 - God made us and knows us (Psalm 139)
 - Learn under Godly men and women, rather than the counsel of worldly practices

Psalm 1:1-3 - How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

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- ❖ I tried bible study, prayer, and obedience, but it didn't work in terms of bringing me relief from the pain from my childhood. If psychology helps resolve this pain, why not use it?

- Goal of Christianity is not to be free from pain, but to become like Christ

Romans 8:29 - For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- If God's Word didn't "work," then God would be proved to be a liar
- Examine your spiritual life

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.

- Commit to Christ more than ever before

Philippians 1:6 - I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- ❖ So are you saying all counseling is wrong, should be avoided, and not necessary?

- Absolutely not!
- Lean on the wise, Biblical counsel of those more mature in the faith

Romans 15:14 - My brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

Galatians 6:1-2 - Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

- Christ created the Church for the exact purpose of helping one another

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 - For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we

were all given one Spirit to drink. Indeed, the body is not one part but many. If the foot should say, "Because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as he wanted. And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" Or again, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that are weaker are indispensable. And those parts of the body that we consider less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor, and our unrespectable parts are treated with greater respect, which our respectable parts do not need. Instead, God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the less honorable, so that there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same concern for each other. So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

- Understand that Christ's command to transform the world is ultimately not counseling, but discipleship

Matthew 28:18-20 - Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Practical Takeaways:

- ❖ God understands you better than anything else in the world
- ❖ A few years ago, Time Magazine conducted a poll on what makes people happy. The things in life that make people happiest are:
 - Close relationships with others
 - contributing to the lives of others,
 - listening to music
 - religion
- ❖ Science just announced what Christians have been proclaiming for 2000 years
 - Close relationships

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John 13:34-35 - "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

➤ Contribute to the lives of others

Acts 2:42-47 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

➤ Listen to music

Psalm 150 - Hallelujah! Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty expanse. Praise him for his powerful acts; praise him for his abundant greatness. Praise him with the blast of a ram's horn; praise him with harp and lyre. Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and flute. Praise him with resounding cymbals; praise him with clashing cymbals. Let everything that breathes praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

➤ Religion

Matthew 22:37-38 - He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command.

❖ If currently struggling with your mental health...

❖ Pray

Philippians 4:6-7 - Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

❖ Meet with an older, wiser Christian in your church (Not a psychologist, counselor, therapist, etc.)

➤ A parent

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- Parents: take an interest in your kids's problems and teach them in the ways of the Lord

Proverbs 22:6 - Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4 - Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- Children: be open to talking to your parents
 - A pastor
 - A youth leader
 - An elder

James 5:14-16 - Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.

- ❖ Look for help from the same gender

Titus 2:2-7 - Older men are to be self-controlled, worthy of respect, sensible, and sound in faith, love, and endurance. In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered. In the same way, encourage the young men to be self-controlled in everything. Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching.

- ❖ Seek out others in church to help

1 Thessalonians 5:14 - And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

FINALLY: THREE THINGS

- ❖ Remember: God's Word is sufficient

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2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

❖ Meditate: God's Word is powerful

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

❖ Proclaim: God's Word is to be declared to all people

Acts 19:8-10 - Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Recommended Reading

For further study on the topics covered in tonight's sessions, see the resources listed below. Please note, however, that Hope Chapel Youth ministry does not endorse everything contained in these resources. As always, we urge you to examine these resources and the topics covered in this study in light of the truths of God's Word.

- ❖ Martin & Deidre Bobgan, *Christian Response to Mental Illness*
- ❖ Martin & Deidre Bodgan, *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!*
- ❖ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*
- ❖ John Piper, *Desiring God*