**Notes for “Dealing with Depression” -Jeremiah 20**

February 23, 2025

1. God’s people are not immune to emotional distress, difficulty, and depression.

* Church’s unfortunate history of dismissing or vilifying those that battle emotional and mental health issues.
  + “It’s just the sin of selfishness”
  + “It’s incompatible with the Fruit of the Spirit”
* Difficulties are presented by biblical narratives that show God’s people suffered
  + Jeremiah, Elijah, Moses, Job, Hannah, Naomi, and more
* Difficulties come through history of God’s people that have suffered
  + Charles Spurgeon
  + Me

1. God’s plan and purpose can contribute to emotional strain.

* Church’s current love affair with dangerous prosperity gospel
  + Complication of “if I do what God wants, I’ll be extra blessed!”
* Jeremiah blames God for his trouble.
  + Asserts that God tricked him through His superior intellect
* Jeremiah is adamant that serving God has made him a laughingstock of the land.
* Jeremiah given task of informing priests of God’s judgment.
  + The respond with abuse, arrest, and attacks.
* Similarly, faithfulness to God’s plan can lead us to places that are complicated, painful, and difficult.

1. Our perception can be altered by our emotional state.

* Jeremiah asserts that God has done him wrong and he is completely isolated.
  + Is he really?
  + What about Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael?
  + What about every other time that prophets asserted this same thing?
* It is difficult to discern truth from altered perception with depression.
* Our altered vision impacts our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
* Art even acknowledges the can in vision. Consider the words of Eeyore.
  + “Could be worse. Not sure how, but it could be.”
  + “I was so upset, I forgot to be happy.”
  + “I didn’t notice you were there…That’s alright. Nobody ever does.”
  + “Sure is a cheerful color. Guess I’ll have to get used to it.”

1. Retreat and abandonment are common aspects of depression.

* Jeremiah determines that since serving God is the problem, he will simply refuse to speak.
* He will not deliver the message or speak in God’s name.
* In deep depression, it is customary to retreat from things that we commonly do and find pleasure in.
* But that is complicated by the “fire in his bones”

1. Proper actions don’t always alleviate the pain.

* Jeremiah bounces back to a recognition of God’s faithfulness and justice.
* He recognizes that truth is not altered by his feelings.
* His rebound is short-lived.
* We too may find some hope and help in doing certain tasks.
  + Making a bed means you’re not in it.
  + Going for a walk or physical exercise can be helpful.
  + Determining to be social can help.
  + Seeing a doctor or counselor can provide assistance.
* Doing the right thing is not a genie that makes everything better.
* Look at what comes next.

1. Depression can be deep, bitter, irrational, and despondent.

* Immediately after calling his soul to worship God, Jeremiah pens some of the darkest words in Scripture.
* His wishes that he was never born. He is angry that God didn’t kill him in the womb.
* Our pain in depression can lead us to depths and actions that we thought unimaginable.
* That depth, bitterness, irrationality is not reserved for unbelievers.
* Often, those that are battling thoughts of self-harm are so impacted by the depth of their pain and the alteration of their perspective, that they don’t see it as an escape. They see it as a relief for everyone around them.

1. While you may not feel it, God cares…and we do too.

* Our task is not to tell you what is wrong, but to offer help and hope where God finds you.
* Three truths:
  + God offers hope and help, not around your problems, but through them.
  + Our perception of God’s silence doesn’t mean that He isn’t working.
  + Church should be a place where you find help and healing through God’s people.