

Identity in darkness: how our identity as people united to Christ affects our experience as we walk through depression

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What are we trying to achieve in this seminar?

Discussion:

When is the right time to bring Scripture into a conversation with someone who is depressed, or feeling extremely low? How much do we need to know first?

How can we offer Scripture?

- God's word is where the power to change comes from.
- He knows all the details of someone's struggle, even if we don't yet.
- We need to bring hope that change is even possible.
- But we need to bring it in a way that connects with where they're at.

Painting a Picture

- Using Scripture to help someone see that their experience is seen and known by the Lord
- Building an image that they can connect to and say *'That's me. That's what it feels like!'*

Discussion:

Would you use Psalm 23 with someone who is deeply struggling? Why, or why not?

Why Psalm 23?

3 Biblical categories that are elements of depression:

- A deep sorrow – the soul is aching
- A deep despair – the absence of hope
- A profound sense of meaninglessness – an emotional experience of ‘What’s the point?’

Addressing Hopelessness:

..Hope returns when we choose to believe what we know to be true about God..

Do you agree with that sentence?

Psalm 23 is not just conceptual, it's personal

What is Biblical hope?

“Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is the present assurance of some future good based on the true nature and character of God. Remember, our hope is in God, not in humanity and the circumstances of life. His word is true. His promises can be counted on and claimed with confidence. He cannot break His New Covenant that assures us of His presence with us and the forgiveness of our sins.” (Neil and Joanne Anderson)

Using Psalm 23

- How does the Psalmist find hope?
- What does he do while feeling lost in a dark place?
- Does this mean he doesn't struggle anymore? Does the struggle mean there's something wrong with his faith?
- Depression and hope can exist side-by-side.

Connecting Psalm 23 to our union with Christ

- How has God's big picture story developed since this Psalm was written?
- What difference does that make?

Union with Christ means I'm known in my depression

Sam's story

- The Shepherd has given us language because He knows what it is like. Nobody knows darkness like Jesus

Union with Christ means I am not alone in my depression

Melissa's story

- I couldn't be more connected to Jesus. He couldn't be any closer as He enters into my experience and walks me through it

Discussion:

How could you help Sam or Melissa formulate this into a prayer of repentance and hope? What would you be wanting them to say to the Lord about what He has been saying to them?

Who can we offer this assurance to, and how?