

Valley Living – part three
“Depression in the Valley”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
July 5th, 2009

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration. To grow...which is expressed in our Connection Groups. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Sermon Series Title: Valley Living

Series Synopsis: We’ve RESET our assumptions of Jesus Christ; climbed the mountain learning about the teaching of Jesus Christ; now...we’ll deal with the place we live the most..... The Valley. It’s in the valley that we learn the lessons we need to learn that enable us to climb that next mountain. It’s in the valley experiences of life that God meets us in ways we need Him the most. It’s in the valleys of life that Jesus Christ truly becomes personal to us. Without the valley, there would be no mountain to climb.

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Part One: “Macho Man in a Macho Valley”

Part Two: “Surviving Dark Valleys”

Part Three: “Depression in the Valley”

We were hoping to have Rick Warren with us today to preach this message, but he couldn’t make it; so you’ll have to put up with me one more time. Next week we’ll be in Jordan, so we’ll have a guest with us. We’re hoping for Rev. T.D. Jakes to speak on...

Part Four: “Giant Killing in the Valley” but we’ll see what happens...

Part Three: “Depression in the Valley”

Facts concerning depression:

- **Depression is the number one health problem in the world.**
It has been called the common cold of emotional illness.
- **Depression is not a sin.**
Everybody gets depressed from time to time. Some people are depressed all the time. Even great Christians, great saints get depressed.

Look at these examples...

- **Elijah He said, "Let me die!"**

1 Kings 19:1-13 Elijah was a tremendous spokesman for God. For years, he had been God's mouthpiece to the nation of Israel. All kinds of miracles had taken place. There was a spiritual awakening taking place in the nation from a nation that had been previously going after pagan idols and things like that. - But there was one person who did not like Elijah. That was the queen of Israel at this time. She was a very wicked woman. You have heard her name before -- Jezebel. Jezebel did not like Elijah because Elijah had so much influence. After a great miracle had happened in the previous chapter, Jezebel thought, "I've had enough of this guy!" and her husband Ahab, who was the king (v. 1) "*Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done.*" This made her very mad. V. 2 says "*Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow, I do not make your life like one of them.'*" She was saying, "If I don't kill you within twenty-four hours, I'm ready to kill myself." She was so upset she threatened Elijah's life. - Here's Elijah, who had been fearless for three years, and one woman threatens his life and he becomes frightened. He turns and runs out to the edge of the desert and gets depressed. v. 3 says "*Elijah was afraid and he ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah he left his servant there while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree and sat down under it and prayed that he might die.*" He was depressed. "*'I have had enough Lord,' he said. 'Take my life. I am no better than my ancestors.'*" Elijah was a prime candidate for depression. He was physically tired. He was emotionally exhausted. Somebody had threatened his life. He was a prime candidate, an emotional fruit basket at this point. He had all kinds of problems -- fear, resentment, guilt, anger, weariness, worry -- all six of those things are covered in this text. The interesting thing about it is in the book of James, in the New Testament, in...

James 5:17 "*Elijah was a man just like us.*" What does that mean? That means he had the same problems we do. He had a problem with depression.

- **Moses He said, "Kill me here and now!"**

The Greatest leader, handpicked by God! Known as the most humble man in the world. Had God's power on his life, but in Numbers 11:15 he said to God, "if thou deal thus w/ me, kill me, I pray thee!"

- **Joshua He said, "would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan."**

Greatest General, handpicked by God to lead Israel into the Promised Land...but in Joshua 7:7, he said, "would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan" (so this is what we get for serving God, he said, after a great defeat!)

He felt like quitting! He got over it, thankfully!

- **Job He said, "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?"**

We talk about his patience and faith, and he was truly a great man...he had a great beginning and a great ending, but in-between, when he lost everything, he wished he had not been born, became suicidal, extremely depressed for a period of time!

- **Jonah He said, “Kill me now God!”**

He wanted God to kill him, and was spiritually depressed and not even happy for the all the souls that just got saved in Nineveh!

- **Paul He said, “I was far from strong; but nervous and rather shaky!”**

In Acts 18 we find Paul in his 2nd missionary journey, arriving from Athens to Corinth experiencing a low time in his life (of depression)

I Cor. 2:3 Paul says of that time in Acts: “I was w/ you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling” (could be translated: “I was far from strong, nervous, and rather shaky!”)

-He was fatigued (53 mile walk) -He was alone -He was bi-vocational (v. 3: tentmaker)

-Stressed-v. 5 “pressed in the spirit” (spiritual stress) Had a sense of failure (not much success in Athens/called a “babblers” (bird brain) -Frustrated, leaving a city of idolatry and heading for the worst in the world for immorality! (Sin city! The Temple: Aphrodite, goddess of sex, and a thousand prostitutes sold their bodies in the temple in the name of religion!) -unappreciated...he later wrote to the people of Corinth:

2Co 12:15 - And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. At this point on this trip alone, he’s been beaten and jailed at Philippi, persecuted at Thessalonica and Berea, ridiculed in Athens, and now he has to face Corinth! He was at a low point, a crossroads in his ministry, and he was just about to quit! But the Lord came to Paul on this day, and showed him that trying times are not the time to quit trying! v. 11—he didn’t quit, he continued! Why? Because God told him in 9 and 10: “it’s too soon to quit!”

- **Peter He said, “Go away from Lord, I am a sinful man.”**

Peter experienced deep discouragement in his days of ministry. In Luke 5:8 the Bible says, "When Simon Peter saw this (the miracle of the great catch of fish so much that their nets began to break & their boat started to sink) he fell at Jesus' knees & said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Yet Jesus encouraged Simon by saying, "Don't be afraid, from now on you will catchmen."

- **David He said "Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?.... I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears." Psalm 6:2-3, 6**

Common Causes of Depression...

- Death or serious illness of a friend or family member
- Loss of love or attention from a friend or family member
- Breakup of a romantic relationship
- Family problems, especially parents’ divorce
- Isolation/loneliness (nursing homes are full of such people)
- Rejection
- Transitions, loss of a job, children leave home, etc.
- Physical, verbal, and/or sexual abuse
- Genetic vulnerability, particularly if a parent is/was depressed
- Chemical imbalance
- Hormonal changes, including PMS
- Substance abuse
- Opposition from the devil – our true enemy

- Separations, being separated from those we love
- Hospitalization, especially for a chronic illness

BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS! YOU CAN COME OUT OF IT!

It is true, in the valley's of life, we have to deal with depression; and it can feel like a true hole that we're living in. We sometimes don't even want to get out of bed we feel such pain and misery in our lives. Therefore, today, we're going to look at how to crawl out of the hole of depression. And... you might be saying, "This messages isn't for me, I'm not depressed." Well, the fact is, we all go through it in our lives. So, whether you're depressed now or not, you will be someday. And, we all know of others that are depressed that we can help them through it as well. It's valley living... and it's not easy.

How to Crawl Out of the Hole of Depression

1. Properly care for your body.

One of the first ways that I want us to see that God has given us to help Defeat Depression is one that people may not off the bat deem very spiritual. That is the fact that you need to Properly Care for your body. Our responsibility on this end would be to partake of the physical nourishment that God has provided. So often when we are depressed, we let ourselves waste away physically. We don't eat healthy. We may not be eating at all. We don't exercise. When we allow this to go on in our life, it deprives us of the energy we need to take positive steps toward seeing depression defeated in our life. God has created us as physical beings. If we are going to live for God and be useful tools in his hands, we need to take care of ourselves physically. - A positive step in exiting the pattern of depression is to Eat and Exercise so that you have the Energy necessary to be productive. When you recognize yourself feeling depressed, Ask yourself, Have I been eating? Have you been exercising? If the answer is no to either of these questions, then do something about it. Eat something. Go take a walk in the evenings. Join a gym. Ride your bike. Take some step toward Proper Care of your body to Defeat the Depression that has you down.

Psalm 119:73 *"You made my body Lord; now give me sense to heed your laws."*
I Tim. 4:8 *"For physical training is of some value..."*

2. Pray Honestly to God concerning your Pain

A second thing that we can do is Pray Honestly to God concerning your Pain. Sometimes, it is only as we verbalize what the situation is that we are able to understand what we are feeling and why. Sometimes that is the best thing we can do in our depression. Cry out to God in our pain. That is what many of the psalms are. They are cries to God in desperate situations.

Psalm 77:1-2
"I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted."

The author of Hebrews lets us know who it is that is able to help us. Hebrews 4:15-16 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. God is able to sympathize with us. When we are in pain. When we are tempted. When we need forgiveness, We can approach God and find mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. Pray and tell Him what you are feeling. Lord, things look so bleak to me. I don't sense that you are with me. I feel terrible. Help me! Pray and ask for wisdom and guidance so you can understand. Lord, help me to understand why these things are going on in my life. Pray and ask for peace. Lord, give me peace through this pain I am suffering. Help me to not only know that you are with me, but to feel your presence. It is possible to have peace when the world around seems to be falling apart. But when you find yourself without peace, in despair and in pain, you need to express that to God

honestly. That is when we will receive that peace and God will use our circumstance to help us grow.

3. Persist in Hearing God's Promises

Another thing that we can do is Persist in hearing God's Promises. We need to be persistent in hearing what God has for us. We need to be persistent in reading the Word of God so that we can know the promises of God and be encouraged and strengthened by it. So often when we begin a cycle of depression, one of the first things to go is our time with the Lord.

We need to persist in having that time and persist in reading His word so that we can know Him better and hear from Him more. When we are not in His Word and not spending time with the Lord in meditating and remembering His word, thoughts of God move to the back of our mind instead of the front of our mind where they are needed. His Word to us brings hope and healing.

Psalm 119:49-50

"Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life."

We can hang on to the promises of God to help us out of our depression. Be reading His word and meditating on His promises so that you can know His promises and they can give you hope and comfort in your suffering and preserve your very life.

4. Put Your History in the Past

Have you ever felt like a failure? Probably most of us at one time or another have. But just because we don't see the results that we expect does not mean that we are a failure. When we do what God wants us to, we have been successful. The results are God's business.

Don't let what appears to be failures in your past, bog you down in doing the things that God wants you to do.

Philippians 3:13b-14

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Don't let your past stop you from being used from God. Leave the past in the past. Be faithful to the Lord. That is our job.

5. Put on a Proper Perspective

We need to first put our past in the past and then put on a proper perspective. But to gain a proper perspective requires that we are challenged with the truth. Focus on the truth. That is what we need to do sometimes. When we have medical concerns, we need to focus on the truth that God is in control. We may not be seeing what is happening or understanding it, but we need to think back to the things God has done so that we are reminded that He is in control. I have had several situations in my life where I did not understand or see how God was working. It is only now, as I look back that I can see some of the ways He was working.

Maybe you are struggling through marriage problems or a job situation or a financial situation. Whatever the case, work at keeping the proper perspective that God is in control and it will help you to not see the lies that Satan is trying to tell you about your situation. Because Satan will be telling you lies. God doesn't care about you. If He did, this wouldn't be happening. Forget God, Forget Church, you can do fine on your own without them. Those are lies. You can't. I can't. Focus on the truth. Focus on what is right and proper. Paul tells us in...

Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things."

I will tell you. If it was not for God and the church, I don't know how I would have gotten through a few of the situations of my life. Think about that a second. You may be struggling through some situation right now. Ask yourself, would I be getting through this as well without my church family. If you are new to Christianity, ask yourself, is it possible that I could be strengthened to get through my situation if I was part of a church family? Put on a proper perspective of things and you will be much better able to get through and defeat depression in your valley life experience.

6. Put Yourself Into a New Assignment

Sometimes, when we are feeling depressed, when we have taken care to nourish ourselves by the hand of God, Pray to the lord and Remember and read his promises in His word. Put the past behind us. Put on a new perspective. We need to get busy pouring out into a new assignment. Maybe that would be taking on a new ministry. Maybe you see a need and need to step up and fill that need. Maybe there is someone who needs to be encouraged. Maybe there is someone that needs to be trained to take on the role you are currently doing. Whatever the case, look for what it is that the Lord would have you do, because this I know for certain, He would have you be doing something. When we have taken the steps we have talked about today, we need to step out and begin pouring into something or someone new. This will help us to take our mind off of the past, help us to maintain that proper perspective and help us feel productive again. There is no better way to get out of being depressed than being used by God. Allow him to do that.

That means make the best of a bad situation. Resist the temptation to do nothing. Take some action, any kind of action. If life gives you a lemon, you make lemonade. You try to think of creative ways to take advantage of the times of the seasons that you are alone.

2 Timothy 4:13

While in prison, Paul says, "Bring me the cloak I left with Carpus and bring my books, especially the parchment."

If I'm going to be alone I may as well be comfortable and productive. These are two things you ought to do in the phase of loneliness. Be comfortable and productive. You don't see Paul throwing a pity party. You don't see him complaining, giving up because he's here in his last days and all of his friends are gone. He can't just pick up a phone and reach out and touch somebody. They are hundreds of miles away and he's in a foreign country. He doesn't say, "Is this the reward I get for thirty years of ministry?" This is Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived next to Jesus himself. He won hundreds of thousands of people to Christ and in his final days he's all alone. What does he do? He makes the best of the situation. He utilizes his time.

7. Patiently Persevere

We need to persevere. God grows us through persevering. There is no substitute for time in the growth process. I wish there was sometimes, but I know this. If I hadn't gone through some of the things that I have gone through, I would not be as equipped to lead this church, do the things God wants me to be effective in His hands.

You may be going through some very difficult circumstances right now. I do not want to minimize what you are going through, but I do know this, God will grow you, God will strengthen you, and as you persevere, God will glorify Himself and use you in a mighty way.

Psalms 40:1-3

"I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD."

When people can see what God has brought you through, God can use that to bring others to Him. Rejoice in that.

We have a choice this very day. We have a choice to continue on and let depression beat us down or We can choose to Understand that God loves us in our depression and has Provided ways that we can exit this cycle of depression. And choose to apply those into our lives.

Conclusion:

Don't let the devil keep you down and make you ineffective. We all live life in the valley, and at times we have to deal with depression. And when you do, remember this message and let the Holy Spirit heal you and bring you up out of that hole, so that you can make an IMPACT for His Kingdom!

And as you do...

You watch... You wait... You'll See!