

Depression - It's Cause and Cure

by Richard Siple

Richard Siple's sermon addresses the causes of depression and emphasizes the importance of biblical responses and community support in overcoming it.

Duration: 53:11

Scripture: Exodus 20:17, Leviticus 18:22, Numbers 11:10-17, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Depression"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of depression and the heavy burden it places on individuals. He describes the symptoms of depression, such as constant confusion, sorrow, and a lack of rest in one's inner spirit. The speaker emphasizes that this is not only a struggle for unbelievers, but also for many of God's people. He then shares the story of Elijah, a prophet who experienced a great revival but soon found himself running for his life due to the threats of Jezebel. The speaker highlights the irony of Elijah's reaction, running in fear despite his previous experiences with God's power.

Transcript

I'm just so touched by the kindness of God that he should give me the privilege to get to know so many wonderful Christians. I look at the Lord and I say, Lord Jesus, I don't know what to say to you, but I just thank you that you allow me the privilege of getting to fellowship with God's people in so many places and find them just so full of his love. And it's been wonderful last year and this year to be here with you folks who are brothers and sisters in the Lord and to fellowship with you and be in your homes and just sense your love for Jesus.

Isn't it great? I just, I don't think I'll ever get over it for all eternity. I hope not. So we're going to look to the Lord together this morning and just share together and trust that he will minister to us, that we'll be able to minister to one another.

Please open your Bibles to Psalm 38. Psalm 38. I sat here this morning listening to Dr. Matthews and I thought, my, I just want to get up and say amen, amen, and amen.

And God was just teaching us so thoroughly about this matter of the world and about denying self and taking up the cross and then following Jesus. And that's what this whole revival movement is all about. Someone says, is the revival still going on? You always hear that question, is revival still going on in your churches? And I'm not always sure what they mean by that question.

If they mean, are you still having your church packed every night in the week and are you still up praying until three and four in the morning and are you still living at a pitch of excitement that would kill anybody if you really were still living at that pitch? No. And probably the greatest revivalist of all modern times, Charles Finney, said God has no intention of leaving people living at that pitch over a long period of time because it would kill all of them. And when somebody says revival is still going on, I'm not sure what they're asking.

If that's what they're asking, of course that doesn't continue to happen constantly in the same church setting where it would exterminate all the people. That isn't even the purpose of revival, is it? The purpose of revival is to meet God at such a level that we start moving upward and onward and never stop till Jesus comes. And if that's what you mean, then hallelujah, the revival is still going on.

And if it isn't going on like that, it wasn't a real revival. Does that help you? It doesn't. Well, then you need to be revived.

And I'm just tempted almost to preach on that subject, but you're only going to let me preach one sermon, so I don't think I'll do that. Come back next year. Let's bow for just a word of prayer.

Dear Father, we are so thankful that we can meet together today. How I thank you for my brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. I thank you for what they mean to me as part of the body.

And they are part of me. I'm part of them. We are members of each other.

And they give me strength and hope and faith and correct me and teach me and encourage me. And I can sense the life of Jesus flowing from them to me. I pray this morning that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts and will teach us and will bring us to a place, whatever it may be for each of us, that we meet today.

In Jesus' name, amen. Is there anyone here who has never in your life been depressed? I can see I chose the right subject. Naturally, there are all kinds of depression and all levels of depression.

But today in the Western world, depression has reached epidemic proportions. And on every side, our doctor's offices and our psychiatric wards and our mental hospitals are jammed with people who in one way or another are suffering from what is called, I suppose for a better word, depression. I'm sure that everyone, if they've lived very long, has felt some degree of depression at some time or another.

The fact that we are depressed is not really very serious. But when depression continues over a long period of time and reaches a point of frustration, of defeat, and of hopelessness, then we are certainly in a condition where we need God to move into our lives and to put his finger on the problem and to show us the way to victory and to peace and to freedom in our life. You say, what is depression? Give us a definition.

And so I want to give you a Bible definition this morning. And if you will look with me, please, at Psalm 38. And I'm going to read a number of verses from the 38th Psalm.

Now, David is the man who expresses human emotions probably better than any other writer of the Bible. And if you wish to see human emotions at all their extremes, from the depths of depression to the heights of exhilaration and joy, you want to read the Psalms. And you can actually pray the Psalms right out of your own heart.

And I've wept the Psalms to God, and I've laughed the Psalms to God, and rejoiced as I sensed all the depths and heights of emotion in the life of David as he walked with God. Psalm 38, verses 3 and 4. There is no soundness in my flesh. And in this instance, he says, because of thine anger.

That might not always be so. Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as in heavy burden.

They are too heavy for me. No soundness, a dis-ease within the man, no rest. Heaviness, a burden, a sense of a crushing load upon the life.

As I have talked with literally hundreds of people who were depressed, all of them expressed this heaviness, this burden, this something pressing down on their life, on their emotions, or on their spirit. Verse 6, I am troubled. I am bowed down greatly.

Ever experienced that? I go mourning all the day long. Oh, how I've seen that in plenty of people. Constant sense of mourning, complaint.

Verse 8, I am feeble and sore broken. I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Ah, now David, you're getting to the problem.

The problem is in the heart. Verse 10, my heart panteth. My strength faileth.

As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. Verse 17, for I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. This is the cry of a person who is suffering from an unusual degree of depression.

No rest in his inner spirit. Constant confusion. A sense of heaviness and burden pressing down on the life.

A crushing load too heavy to bear. Bowed down, stooped under the burden. Continually with him, a sense of sorrow and unhappiness filling the life.

This is the picture of many, many of God's people today. If this were a description only of unbelievers, if this were a description only of people who did not know Jesus as their personal Savior, we would probably not speak on it. But even in a revival rally, it becomes almost an imperative that it be dealt with.

Because there are many of God's precious children, and many who have made deep decisions with God, who are still suffering from this kind of a malady. Now, there are at least four things that can cause depression, and I doubt there are more than these four. So I'm going to hit the first three very quickly, and then go to the main burden of my message.

Depression can be, first of all, just plain burdens, ordinary burdens of life, and burdens that are handled biblically. Anyone here never have any burdens? How many of you have burdens? Let's see your hands. Come on, up high.

Wonderful. I knew I was talking to the right crowd. Burdens.

We all have burdens. But I want to know this morning, how do you handle your burdens? Paul had burdens. Paul expressed it, and I haven't time to talk on it this morning, but I hope if you've never heard it, you'll get the sermon on tape, Faith or Feeling.

Because we all have burdens, we all have problems, we all have sorrows, and we all have heartaches. And they come into our lives, and temporarily they cause us different degrees of emotional pressure and load and even depression. Temporarily.

And Paul said that he was in continual sorrow in his heart over some burdens that he had. In fact, it was a burden for the lost. Jesus was exceeding sorrowful.

He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Will you pray with me? Amen. That's a good answer.

And there are many burdens that come into our lives that cause a temporary state of pressure and a crushing load, but they can be handled biblically. And when they're handled biblically in the context of God's Word, with surrender and faith and total commitment to Jesus Christ and obedience to his Word, they are usually of a temporary nature or a nature over which we can have total victory. Amen? Those are the ordinary burdens of life.

Sometimes depression is caused by physical problems. And let me just mention these for a few moments. Thyroid disturbance can cause people to be depressed.

And there are certain types of people that when they come into my office as a pastor for counseling, and they say they are depressed, I always look at their face, and you learn to kind of pick up the symptoms. I'm not a medical man, but you know, after a while, you can start to almost put your finger on it, and you can tell those who have a physical problem. I remember a woman who came into the office about a year ago, and she sat down, and she said, I'm depressed.

And then she burst into tears. So I did as I usually do. I just hand her some Kleenex and let her cry for a while.

And then I hoped that she would get stopped. And she finally got stopped and started telling me about her depression. She started crying again.

She said, see, I do this all the time. I can't do anything but cry. I said, how long since you've had a complete physical examination? Well, she said, I'm sure I'm all right physically.

And I said, well, I'm not. And so she went to the doctor, had a complete physical, and she had a problem with her thyroid gland. When she got it straightened out, her depression was gone.

There's no sense in giving somebody any lengthy spiritual counseling if that's the problem. Of course, God can heal that too. So it may be a physical problem.

I remember one night about, oh, I guess it must have been about 1230 that someone pounded on my door. And I woke up with a start and heard this pounding. I guess he was so upset that he didn't ring the doorbell.

He was just beating on the door. And I ran to the door, and there was one of the young men from the church. He said, Pastor, can you come quickly? He said, my uncle is going out of his mind.

Well, his uncle was one of our church elders. And I knew him to be a very spiritual man. In fact, he had stood in the pulpit of that church and preached.

So I got dressed very quickly and went over to the house. And this man was walking all over the house. Now, it's interesting how your spiritual life will come out.

Here was a man who was losing his mind. He really was temporarily. And he was walking all over the place from one end of the house to the other saying, praise the Lord, praise the Lord.

And you say, well, how could you lose your mind over that? Well, he wasn't losing his mind over the Lord. He was losing his mind over something else. I'm going to tell you in a moment.

But his inner spiritual life came out anyway. And he ran up and down the stairs, and he came and fell down at my feet and grabbed me by the feet and said, praise the Lord. Well, by then I started to get a few chills.

Because he weighed about twice what I weigh. And he was a great, big, strong man. And I could see everybody in the house was scared half to death.

And I began to get a little scared. And the next time he ran up the stairs to the second floor, I grabbed his wife and I said, call the police. I'll never be able to handle him.

And she called the doctor too. And fortunately, the doctor got there before the police did. And he put enough stuff in a hypodermic to put a horse out.

And he got him out in the kitchen and let him have it. And then the police arrived with two police cars full of policemen. And I didn't know they're going to have to carry him out.

And then I called him by name. And I said, you know, I think you should go with him. And he said, if you say so, Pastor.

And he went and got in the car and away he went. I followed him to the hospital. They took him to the mental hospital.

And he was in the examining room and a doctor went in there. And the next thing I heard was the doctor go up against the wall. And then another doctor ran in and then an orderly ran in.

And pretty soon there were five men in there and he was throwing them all over the room. And after a little struggle, he come out strapped down on a stretcher and they had all strapped down. And he saw me sitting there and he said, praise the Lord, Pastor.

Boy, what's inside will come out, I'll tell you. I'm ashamed now to think I didn't say praise the Lord, brother. You say, well, what was the matter with him? Well, what was the matter with him was really quite simple.

A doctor had misdiagnosed a problem that he had in his brain. They gave him a great big dose of insulin that he didn't need. Most doctors don't do that, but there are mistakes made.

And on top of that, he had developed a very serious bodily infection that had gone through his bloodstream and had gone through his brain. And he had the two things combined together so that he had a chemical, physical reason for his problem. And in 24 hours, he was a perfectly normal man.

Just right back to normal. Now, that's why I'm saying there can be physical problems for a depression and where there are physical problems, they need to be taken care of. I'm not going to preach about that.

That's something else. But that needs to be handled as such. Number three, depression can be caused by demonic oppression.

And if I had time for two sermons this morning, I'd preach one on that and then one on what I'm going to preach on. But you don't want me to do that, do you? Do you? Don't lie right in the middle of a revival rally. Acts 1038 says how that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with a Holy Ghost and with power, who went about healing all that were oppressed of the devil.

And there are times when people are depressed when they are under demonic attack. Do you believe that? Absolutely. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenly.

And it's a real battle. And sometimes depression is caused by demonic problems, demonic attacks, satanic oppression. And where that is the cause, and may God give us spiritual insight and sensitivity by the Holy Ghost and knowledge of the Word to recognize when our brothers and sisters are under satanic attack.

They need our help, not our criticism. They need our prayers. They need us to stand with them and plead the blood of Jesus over them and defy Satan in the name of Christ and see them delivered from the oppression of the enemy.

Amen? They need that. So may God help us to be able to deal with that as it ought to be dealt with. The fourth thing that causes depression, and this is what I want to talk about for a few minutes.

The fourth thing that causes depression is S-I-N. Sin. Now, there are lots of forms of sin.

But I want to give to you what I think is a biblical formula of what causes depression. And in most cases, and I've counseled hundreds of people, and in most cases, among Christians and also among the unsaved, depression is caused by what I'm going to talk to you about this morning. Many, many people are telling us today that our emotional problems are not our own fault, that they are someone else's fault.

And there's a peculiar, twisted-up philosophy that if we can only be convinced that our problems are not ours, that they really belong to our father and mother or our grandfather and grandmother or the boss or the schoolteacher or the neighbor or our employer or our husband or wife or someone else, that just to know that we're not to blame will relieve us and we'll be free from our problem. Well, the only problem with that is it doesn't work. I know because I'm getting all the fallout.

They've been to two or three psychiatrists and they've been in two or three psychiatric wards and they've had shock treatments and they've been through all that can be done for them, and then they finally end up where they should have started, with someone who knows God and the Word of God, recognizing they have a spiritual problem. Amen? I came across the poem, and some of you have heard it, and I just can't resist the temptation to read it. I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed, to find out why I killed a cat and blacked my husband's eyes.

Well, none of you would do that. He laid me on a downy couch to see what he could find, and here is what he dredged up from my poor subconscious mind. When I was one, my mommy hid my dolly in a trunk, and so it follows naturally that I am always drunk.

When I was two, I saw my father kiss the maid one day, and that is why I suffer now from kleptomania. At three, I had a feeling of resentment for my brothers, and so it follows naturally I poison all my lovers. But now I'm happy, for I've learned the lesson this has taught, that everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault.

Hmm? But the problems that are dogging our lives and defeating our spiritual victory and robbing us of the blessing and power of the Holy Ghost, and the freedom and joy that there is in Jesus, are our own problems. They are spiritual problems, and they stem usually from extremely simple causes. The longer I'm a Christian, the more convinced I am that Christianity is simple, it just isn't easy.

Right? Christianity is simple, it just isn't easy. What is the formula that brings us into the area of depression? Let me give it to you very simply. As a Christian, or maybe as a non-Christian, we come up against a problem or a temptation in our life.

You want to put that down? A problem or a temptation? A circumstance in our life that produces a problem that we must face and that we must handle. All kinds of problems. Or a temptation, a circumstance in life that produces a temptation.

And in that circumstance of life, that problem or that temptation, we respond to that circumstance in an unbiblical or sinful manner. Did you get that? In the problem or temptation that we face, in the circumstance of life in which we find ourselves, we respond to that circumstance in an unbiblical or sinful manner. They are the same thing.

Unbiblical is sinful. What happens? When we respond to the circumstance, to the problem, to the temptation in a sinful or a non-biblical way, the result is that our emotions are put out of balance, out of kilter, and we begin to suffer emotionally. We either begin to suffer anger or resentment or fear or guilt.

And in the suffering of our emotions, we eventually become frustrated and full of self-pity. Have you ever felt sorry for yourself? Thank you. One honest man.

Where were you? Yes, self-pity. And from self-pity, we slide into depression. You say, well, is that really biblical? Yes, it's really biblical.

I want you to turn with me right back to the beginning of your Bible, to Genesis chapter 4. Genesis chapter 4. Let me read to you from Genesis 4, beginning with verse 1. And as I read, I'm going to stop and comment as I go along, so you follow me very closely, please. And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel.

And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.

Now watch. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering.

And if you read the words of Jesus, you'll find that Abel was a prophet. Go back and read the words of Jesus. Jesus said that Abel was the first prophet.

Apparently he was a proclaimer of truth. Not only did he offer the proper blood sacrifices unto God for the cleansing and forgiveness of sin, but apparently he preached the truth of blood atonement. He was the first prophet.

So he was a man of truth, a preacher of truth, a prophet of God. He offered blood and he preached the blood atonement, the message of salvation from sin. But unto Cain, verse 5, and to his offering, he, God, had not respect.

And Cain was what? He was very wroth or he was very angry. And notice the next statement. And his countenance what? His face fell.

In another translation it says that he was very depressed. Do you see the pattern of depression? Here is a man. Somebody says, if I could just get my emotions straightened out, I could live right.

No. What does God say? God says if you live right, you'll get your emotions straightened out. Amen? That should have been twice that loud.

Somebody says, I can't really live for Jesus and I can't really be a soul winner and I can't really be a witness. And I can't do what Dr. Matthews said, adorn the doctrine of Christ. Because you see, I have all these emotional problems and I've prayed and I'm a little angry with God because he won't deliver me.

And if, you know, I could only just get free from my emotional problems and my depression and all this heavy burden, then I could adorn the gospel of Christ and I could be a soul winner and I could really serve the Lord. And all the time the Holy Spirit is trying to whisper sweetly to your heart, if you would only come back and deal with God in a biblical way and take care of the sin and the resentment and the bitterness and the guilt and get it all washed in the blood of Jesus and go and make restitution with your brother and forgive those people that you are so bitter against. If you would do right, you would feel right.

I'm preaching revival. Amen? What happened? Well, you know what happened. He went and talked with his brother Abel in the field.

And if you read a very careful translation of that passage, you'll find that it says that he went and told Abel. Abel was a prophet of God and he went to him for counseling. But he wouldn't listen to the counsel.

And he became so angry not only at God, but he became angry at his counselor. And he killed him. That's where it can lead you.

Your problem is that you're materialistic and you've set your heart on material things and you're determined to have them at any cost and so you're messing up your own life and your husband's life and you are depressed and you're almost out of your mind and what you hope is that I'll send you to some hospital and tell them to give you tranquilizers and you tried that before and it didn't work and that's why you're here. Now, do you want to hear that or don't you? She said, I don't want to hear that. And I said, why are you here? And she said, I don't know.

I'm going to leave. And I said, go ahead. Oh, you say, you're mean.

No, I'm not. I love that girl. It's just time to stop playing games with people about sin.

Right? Charles Finney said one great problem in the church is that Christians are trying to comfort people whom God has made uncomfortable. Huh? We put our arm around and we say, oh, it's too bad, honey.

You know, I'm sorry you're so depressed.

I'm sure the Lord Jesus is really sorry for you. Nothing of the kind. The Lord Jesus is the one who's making you miserable.

You don't believe that, do you? Oh, what Dr. Matthew said this morning is so true that when a person is a Christian and they've been born again and they have the Lord Jesus living in their heart and yet they're determined not to deal with their sin and not to be right with God and not to be right with their brother, then they get all out of kilter and frustrated and angry and resentful and depressed and everything is wrong. And God wants to bring us back. By the way, she got up and walked out.

And then her husband sat there and looked at me for a few minutes and he said, I guess I better go too. And I said, well, it's up to you. He said, I love you both and when you're ready, come back and I'll help you.

And he said, all right. He got up and walked out of the door and my secretary called me and I started to do some business and five minutes later somebody knocked on the door of my office and I said, come in and he walked back in. He said, I gave her the keys and let her go home.

I need help. And he sat down and he said, you know, I've been doing this whole thing wrong ever since I got married and it's time for me to start doing it right. I said, amen, let's go.

I believe God's going to straighten that out. He said, you think I ought to turn her over my knee and spank her? And I said, not literally. He said, well, I wondered about that.

I tried it once and it didn't work. You say, well, you just don't have compassion for people that are suffering. Oh, yes, I do.

Oh, yes, I do. If I didn't, I wouldn't wear my body out and exhaust my life almost to the point of not being able to stand on my feet counseling with people hour after hour after hour, sometimes dealing with people. I could counsel people 24 hours a day because the world is so full of troubled people.

You believe that? And I care, but I have come to the point where God has said to me, stop sinning against my people by giving them comfort instead of giving them the truth. You say, the Bible says, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem. Yes, but you read the rest of it.

Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished. Yes, God has provided. He's made full provision.

The blood still cleanses. The Holy Spirit still liberates. There's still victory and freedom in Jesus Christ.

But only when we deal faithfully and lovingly with sin and with self and with pride and with covetousness and with sensuality and when we bring it to the cross of Calvary and when we're willing to pay the price of letting our pride be broken and go back and deal with our sin thoroughly and then experience the flow of freedom and cleansing and liberation that there is in Jesus Christ. You believe that, don't you? Let me give you just one or two more examples. I want to take you now to a wonderful man of God.

You say, well, that was Cain. Yes, but let's go to one of the greatest men of God of all time. Will you turn with me to Numbers chapter 11? Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers.

The Old Testament. Numbers chapter 11, verse 10. Now Moses had quite a burden.

He had about three million stiff-necked, carnal Christians. And he was supposed to be their pastor. Oh my.

I sure do respect him. Numbers 11, verse 10. Now these people, they were lusting after the world and they got so upset because God wouldn't give it to them that they started to cry.

In verse 10 it says, Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly. Moses also was displeased.

Now there's nothing wrong with that. Did you hear the sermon on anger? The Lord was angry at their carnality. And Moses was too.

Amen. Just deal with it the right way. But this time he didn't.

And Moses said unto the Lord, Now I don't know if you've ever said anything like this, but all you pastors look at this now. And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found fever in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Oh God. You're not treating me fair.

Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them? That thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father, Beareth the suckling child. And that's exactly how God wants us to carry them. Pastors, are you listening? Moses knew how he was supposed to do it.

But he was getting a little resentful about the whole thing. Verse 13. When should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat.

I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal'st with me, What's those next two words? Kill me. Boy, you talk about depression.

Kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness. Depression. You know what the problem was? It was twofold.

It was alright for God to be angry at their carnality, and it was alright for Moses to be angry at their carnality, but there were two things he needed to do, and God had to teach him. He wasn't responding biblically. Number one, he should have just gone to the people and said, No, you can't have it.

Amen? Amen? No, you can't have it. If you want to cry, go ahead and cry, I'm not going to give it to you. And neither is God.

Ever treat your children like that? You don't. I thought you loved them. And the second thing he should have done was not, he shouldn't have been bearing the burden alone, he should have been sharing it with the people of God, who were leaders among the people of God, and that's what God taught him to do.

Do you see what Moses did? Have you ever been so depressed that you wanted to die? I have. I can remember flying to the annual council of the Christian Missionary Alliance one year, and I can't believe that I prayed this prayer because it was so selfish that it was hideous. But I said, Lord, Lord, if there's any of these planes that are going to crash on the way to Minneapolis, make sure that I'm on the one that's going to crash.

Hmm? I was serious. Depressed. Oh, you say you must have been going through terrible burdens.

Yes? Yes, there were some real burdens, but you know what the problem was? I was responding to the burdens and the circumstances and the temptations of life in an unbiblical way. And God had to show me my sin and myself and take me to Calvary. I can remember a dear lady whose husband was going through a terrible trial and he'd had his leg amputated and the doctors told her he would never live to come home from the hospital.

By the way, he did. God touched him and healed him. And he's the only case in medical science that's ever been healed of that.

So the doctor was right when he said he's never coming home alive, but God reversed it. That lady was so depressed that when she went to bed at night, she hid the butcher knives from the kitchen in places where she would probably not think to look in the night. That's true.

I could give you her name and where she lives. A Christian lady. I had a leading minister who has preached not only all over the American continent, but all over the world, literally.

Tell me, sitting in my living room one night, that there was a time in his life, as a pastor, when he was going through deep waters, that every time he crossed a street he used to close his eyes and pray, Lord, let me get hit with a car and killed crossing this street. That's depression. There were lots of men in the Bible who suffered like that.

Isn't that right? I'm saying that to encourage you today, that you're not alone, and that there have been great men of God who have made the same mistakes and have failed the same way you and I have failed, and that God had the grace to meet their needs. Remember about Elijah? How he went out on Mount Carmel? Some of you want a good sermon title? Why don't you name, preach a good sermon on that and entitle it, Showdown at Mount Carmel Pass. Be a good sermon title.

All the cowboys would come. And you know the story how that he stood out there all alone, I mean really alone, and lifted his hands and prayed, and the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice, and licked up the water and burned up the stones, and the people fell on their face and they cried, The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God! One of the greatest revivals of all time. And 24 hours later, the leader of that revival was running for his life.

Right? Oh, you say, I went through a revival? God did so much for me, what's happened? He reacted in an unbiblical way. Jezebel said, Oh, so you've killed the prophets of Baal, have you? Well, I'll tell you what. The Lord do so to me and more also, if I don't make your life like one of them by this time tomorrow, within 24 hours you're going to be dead, Elijah.

Now here's one of the funniest things in the Bible. I mean literally, it's one of the funniest things in the Bible. She said, I'm going to kill you.

And he ran for his life. He ran, how long? Anybody remember? Huh? Yeah, he ran way, way, way back into the desert. I'm not even going to tell you.

You go back and read the story. Because you won't believe it unless you read it. And he got way back in there, and he sat down, and he said, It is enough, O Lord, I am no better than my fathers, which wasn't true.

Now watch him, he's oozing with self-pity. He said, I'm no better than my fathers, and I'm the only one left in the world who believes in you and loves you and serves you. Oh, brother.

I'm the only spiritual person in my church. Even the preacher's not as spiritual as I am. And he said, It's enough.

Now this is really funny. Let me die. Boy, that's going to a lot of trouble.

Why didn't you stay home, Jezebel? The world was going to take care of it. That's incredible. Aren't we funny? You think God's crying all the time.

He's laughing sometimes. The only thing was that his prayer was what he really needed. Right? You see, he thought that if God's blessing was on his life, and he got thoroughly right with God, and he called down fire from heaven, and he produced a great revival, that everybody would just accept him and follow him and love him and pat him on the back, and everything would be wonderful from then on.

Boy, he's been through revival. He's going to have smooth sailing right on through eternity. Huh? The devil told some of you the same lie, didn't he? It didn't work that way.

And then he said, Let me die. And that's what he needed, was to go back to Calvary for another dose of the cross and let that pride and that selfishness that wants to be exalted and accepted and loved and received and let it be crucified at the cross. Amen? He said, Let me die, and he didn't know that's what he needed.

See, Jonah did the same thing. God said to Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh. He said, I won't go.

And God said, Look, I want you to go to Nineveh and preach to them 40 days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed. And Jonah said, Yeah, but if I go down and preach, Lord, I'm such a good preacher that I know they'll have a revival. You don't think that's true? That's true.

Go back and read the account. That's the only man I ever heard of besides Paul who knew exactly what would happen when he went to preach. Paul said, I know that I will come in the fullness of the blessing of the Lord when I come.

That's fabulous. And Jonah said to God, Now, if I go and preach to them, they'll repent. Because later, Jonah said, Isn't that what I told you? You read the story.

He said, That's what I told you before I ran away. So he went and he got on a ship, and you know the story how he ran away and how God prepared a great fish. Now, don't call it a whale.

The Bible never calls it a whale. God prepared a great fish, and I believe God could create a great fish if he needed it to swallow a runaway preacher, don't you? That's right. And I'll tell you, a backslider is so nauseating that he even made the fish sick to his stomach.

Well, it's true, he vomited. No, really, he vomited him up when he repented, didn't he? And then what's interesting, now I want you to get to the end of the story. This man finally, when he got vomited up on the shore and he got all seaweed off him and got a good shower and on his best Sunday suit, the Lord said, Now you go to Nineveh and do what I told you.

And by this time he was saying, Yes, sir, yes, sir. Oh, it's too bad, isn't it? How God has to deal with some of this. And so he went and he entered in one day's journey.

I mean, the opening night of the revival. And he preached judgment. And the king got off from his throne and said, I believe it, I believe it.

Now you talk about a powerful preacher. And that whole kingdom city of Nineveh repented from the king on his throne to the least one. And they put on sackcloth.

The king said, Put on sackcloth and cry unto God that he doesn't destroy this city. And they all repented. And then Jonah went up and sat down on the side of the hill and dug in to see if his prophecy would come true.

And he watched and he watched and God didn't destroy the city. And then he got full of self-pity because his pride had been hurt because he had such a reputation as a prophet and his prophecy hadn't come true. And his pride was hurt and he sat down and got depressed.

And the Lord came along and he said, Is it right for you to be so angry? And he said, Yes, I do well to be angry. And God tried to talk to him a little more and he wouldn't listen. And finally Jonah said exactly what Elijah said.

He said, Let me die. And he didn't know that that's what he needed. That poor back-slidden Christian who needed to die, who needed the self-life to be crucified so his pride would be broken and so the glory of God and the salvation of souls would be more important to him than what people thought of his reputation.

He was so pitiful that he was more concerned about his reputation than he was about the salvation of a whole city. I can hardly believe it, but that's true. And he would have rather that God had destroyed them and sent them to hell than to let his reputation be hurt.

And he needed to respond biblically, humbly, at the cross. And I want to ask you this morning, my dear brother and sister in Christ, whom I love you, believe me. I sat on this platform this morning and I looked at you and I said, Oh, Jesus, these are my brothers and sisters.

I really want to help them this morning. Lord, let me help them. Help me to help them.

I mean that. Are you suffering from depression? Are you willing to let God take you back to the cause of your depression, back to the place where you went astray biblically? Back to the place where there's sin, where there's not a proper conformity to God's laws? Are you willing to forgive that person you've been bitter against since you were a child? Are you willing to get right with that person that God wants you to get right with? Or you say, if you had been injured like I've been injured, you don't know how I've been injured. I want to ask you a question.

How would you feel if somebody that you love with all your heart, one of the closest people in the world to you, hated you and hit you in the face until the blood ran down your face? Listen, I have heard so many stories of injury and wrong over these past years, I can't hear anything new. You know what I found? I found the grace of God is sufficient for every one of them. Amen? I don't care what's in the past.

I don't care what sin it is. I don't care what guilt you have in your life. I don't care what bitterness you have in your life.

It doesn't make any difference. The blood of Jesus and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the death-dealing power of the cross are sufficient to give you liberty and freedom and deliverance and peace and joy in Jesus Christ. Let us bow in prayer.

Our heads bowed and our eyes closed. You say, well, it's late and you've preached overtime and we have to hurry. But my friends, I'm certain that there are people in this auditorium this morning and your whole future is at stake this morning.

Your whole future is at stake. You can go into one of these prayer rooms this morning and get down on your knees before God and deal with your pride and deal with your bitterness and deal with your guilt and your sin and you can be delivered this morning and you can have victory in Jesus and you can have joy and blessing the rest of your life. Or you can walk out of this place this morning more defeated than you came in and your whole future as a Christian is at stake.

And while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed and we're in deep prayer, we're just going to wait a moment. It may be that some of you, right now, while everybody is seated and no one's looking around and we're in quiet prayer, you'd just like to get out of your seat and come forward and go through one of these doors and make your way into the prayer room very quietly. Just, we're going to wait a moment.

And you'd just like to go in there for a time of quiet prayer. Everybody just praying quietly before the Lord. You say, well, I certainly don't want, I know it's late, but I don't want to leave this place and go home the way I came in this morning.

I want victory. I want deliverance. I'm going to be honest with God at any cost.

I'm going to let that self die this morning in that prayer room, that pride and that bitterness and everything, that determination to get even and to make it all right. I'm just going to give it all up to God and I'm going to get free. Just a moment more.

We're not going to prolong it, but just to give you an opportunity to meet God.

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