

## Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

### -A study through D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon series-

#### Chapter 2-The True Foundation

*“As we face the modern world with all its trouble and turmoil and with all its difficulties and sadness, nothing is more important than that we who call ourselves Christian, and who claim the Name of Christ, should be representing our faith in such a way before others, as to give them the impression that “here is the solution”, and “here is the answer”. In a world where everything has gone so sadly astray, we should be standing out as men and women apart, people characterized by a fundamental joy and certainty in spite of conditions, in spite of adversity.”*

In beginning to look at the particulars of this issue, Lloyd-Jones starts with the very foundation of Christianity. We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ that the fundamental truths of the faith are truly understood by all. All sorts of problems will arise if we simply assume that all Christians really know, not simply intellectually but experientially, the essentials of the faith.

*“There are so many people who never seem to arrive at the true Christian position because they are not clear in their minds about certain primary matters, certain fundamental things that should be dealt with at the beginning.”*

What Lloyd-Jones discusses in this chapter, he found, from his own pastoral experience, is a problem that is more common for those who have \_\_\_\_\_ in the Christian faith.

*“The particular trouble with which we are dealing tends, I find, to be common among those who have been brought up in a religious manner rather than in those who have not been brought up in a religious manner. It is more likely to affect those who have been brought up in Christian homes and families and who have always been taken to a place of worship than those who have not.”*

*“There are large numbers of people in this unhappy situation. The Christian life seems to them to be a constant problem, and there are always asking the same question. ‘Why cannot I get there? Why cannot I be like that?’ They read books which are meant to give instruction about the Christian way of life, they attend meetings and conferences, always seeking this something which they do not find. And they are cast down, their souls are cast down and disquieted within them.”*

As he diagnoses this problem Lloyd-Jones sees that the essential problem is that there has been a lack of understanding about the fundamental Christian truth of \_\_\_\_\_. While Christians will talk about how they believe in justification by faith alone, their reliance on works shows that they have not truly understood “faith alone” and this lack of understanding inevitably will lead to spiritual depression.

This is \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ battle. Luther wrote, *“Those who know how to tell the difference between law and gospel should thank God and consider themselves true theologians. In times of temptation, I certainly don’t know to do this as I should.”*

*“They (struggling depressed Christians) often concentrate on the question of sanctification, but it does not help them because they have not understood justification. Having assumed that they were on the right road, they assume that all they have to do is to continue along it.”*

*“I am suggesting that this is the case with large numbers of people still. They have assumed that they are right about the first things, but they never have been right about their justification, and it is just here that the devil causes confusion. It suits him well that such people should be concerned about sanctification and holiness and various other things, but they can never be right until they are right here, and that is why we must start with this. It is no use going on to deal with the superstructure if the foundation is not right. We therefore start with this great doctrine. This confusion is an old trouble. In a sense it is the masterpiece of Satan.”*

*“We have to realize that there are certain things about which we must be perfectly clear before we can really hope to have peace, and to enjoy the Christian life...There is no happiness finally, there is no peace, there is no*

*joy except we be right with God. Now that is agreed by all, that is assented to by the miserable Christian as well as the assured Christian."*

So, what is the correct understanding of salvation? What is the right teaching that we must understand here? How ought we to view God's Law and our works? The first truth that we must acknowledge if we ever want to depart from the turbulent sea of confusion and despair is to acknowledge our utter \_\_\_\_\_. Joy comes after a right sense of despair. In fact, Christian joy and despair over sinfulness are often seen holding hands.

*"You must be made miserable before you can know true Christian joy. Indeed the real trouble with the miserable Christian is that he has never been truly made miserable because of conviction of sin...There is no rising again until there has been a preliminary fall. This is an absolute rule, and yet this is the thing that is being so sadly forgotten by so many today, and assumed by as many more."*

*"Ultimately, the only thing which is going to drive a man to Christ and make him rely upon Christ alone, is a true conviction of sin. We go astray because we are not truly convicted of our sin."*

Echoing the great teachings of Luther, Lloyd-Jones discusses how the real issue here is a lack of understanding about what sin is. We so often look at sins simply as \_\_\_\_\_. Since many Christians think of sin all wrong, they begin to struggle with even seeing themselves as sinners and even, with a twisted carnal logic, wish that they had been engaged in more heinous sin before salvation so that they would feel more confident about their salvation (they desire a more spectacular conversion experience).

*"That kind of person thinks of sin only in terms of action, in terms of sins. Not only that, but in terms of certain particular actions only. So their tendency is to think that because they have not been guilty of these particular things, that they are not real sinners at all...They have heard it preached that Christ has died for our sins and they say that they believe that; but they have never really known its absolute necessity for themselves."*

*"The same is true today, and if we are concerned about a conviction of sin, the first thing we have to do is stop thinking about particular sins. How difficult we find this. We have all got these prejudices. We confine sin to certain things only, and because we are not guilty of these we think we are not a sinner. But that is not the way to know conviction of sin."*

*"The essential point is, that the way to know yourself a sinner is not to compare yourself with other people; it is to come face to face with the Law of God...Forget about all the drunkards and their like, forget all the people you read about in the press at the present time. Here is the test for you and me: Are you loving God with all your being? If you are not, you are a sinner."*

*"Man is meant to know God. So the question is: Do you know God?...*(John 17:3)*...So the test we apply to ourselves is that. Not, 'Have I done this or that?' My test is a positive one: 'Do I know God? Is Jesus Christ real to me?' I am not asking whether you know things about Him but do you know God, are you enjoying God, is God the center of your life, the soul of your being, the source of your greatest joy?"*

*"The essence of sin, in others words, is that we do not live entirely to the glory of God. Of course by committing particular sins we aggravate our guilt before God, but you can be innocent of all gross sins and yet be guilty of this terrible thing, of being satisfied with your life, of having pride in your achievements and of looking down on others and feeling you are better than others...If you have never realized your guilt or guiltiness before God you will never have joy in Christ. It is impossible."*

To understand justification, you must know the conviction of sin. Secondly, you must know that in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ is salvation to be had. Outside of Christ is only guilt before God but in Christ there is peace with God.

*"Forget yourself, forget all about yourself. Of course you are not good enough, you never will be good enough. The Christian way of salvation tells you this, that it does not matter what you have been, it does not matter what you have done...I say, therefore, that this is the test, that you acknowledge readily and say clearly that you look to Christ and Christ alone and to nothing and no one else, that you stop looking at particular sins and particular people. Look at nothing and nobody but look entirely to Christ."*