

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

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

Chapter 4 - Mind, Heart, and Will

“The forms which this particular condition may take seem almost endless. It comes in such different forms and guises that some people stumble at that very fact. They are amazed that there can be so many symptoms or manifestations of this one disease, this spiritual condition; and of course, their ignorance of the problem in and of itself may lead to the very condition we are considering. The kind of person who thinks that once you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ all your problems are left behind and that the rest of the story will be ‘they all lived happily ever after’ is certain sooner or later to suffer from this spiritual depression.”

Christianity involves the _____ person. All three parts of the inner man (mind, heart, and will) are involved. If one does not understand this, they will be “lop-sided” and out of balance, with the result being spiritual depression. The type of teaching/preaching a person sits under will impact whether a person develops a “lop-sidedness” (also a person’s initial entrance into the faith can cause this issue).

“Lop-sided Christians are generally produced by preachers or evangelists whose doctrine lacks balance, or rotundity, or wholeness.”

“Spiritual depression or unhappiness in the Christian life is very often due to our failure to realize the greatness of the gospel.”

What is our understanding of the gospel? Do we really grasp the glory of the gospel? If we just focus on one part (or parts) of the gospel but _____ other elements it can lead to spiritual depression. Some people only think the gospel has to do with forgiveness. Others think just about the moral commands of the gospel. Maybe some simply focus on the aesthetic appeal of the gospel. Any such partial views of the gospel will leave one lacking and open to the attacks of spiritual depression.

“The gospel is not something partial or piecemeal: it takes in the whole life, the whole history, the whole world. It tells us about creation and the final judgment and everything in between.”

“There is no aspect of life but that that gospel has something to say about it. The whole of life must come under the influence because it is all-inclusive; the gospel is meant to control and govern everything in our lives.”

“We must realize the greatness of the gospel, its vast eternal span.”

The issue is not only a lack of understanding the gospel but also a lack of understanding that the gospel impacts the _____ person. The gospel does not just address one part of man but is meant to impact and change the understanding, heart, and will of a person.

What if only the understanding is “impacted” (only the mind)? This type of person will find theology very interesting and even exciting to understand. This person will know all of the right answers and may even simply enjoy the study of the Bible because it challenges them _____. However, the person who only has their mind engaged will never have a love for the Lord nor a life that is lived for God’s glory.

“I think you will agree that there are large numbers of people in that position at the present time. Christianity is to them a matter of tremendous interest and they believe and proclaim that if only this Christian point of view could be applied to politics, in industry, and in every other circle all our troubles would be solved. It is entirely the intellectual attitude and point of view.”

Others manifest the fruit of having only a heart “impacted” by the gospel message. They have experienced some kind of _____ escape in the gospel or in the church and this is their main area of focus. They are always only looking for the emotional side of Christianity. They will have confidence in their emotional responses to the gospel.

“There are others in whose case the gospel seems to affect the heart only. This is commoner today. These are the people who feel that they have had an emotional release; they have passed through an emotional crises. I do not want to disparage this, but there is a real danger in having a purely emotional experience only.”

“Or it may be that they are naturally interested in mysticism and the mystical phenomena...They are naturally mystical and they are drawn to something that seems to be offering a mystical experience. They come to the Scriptures because they feel that in them they are going to find satisfaction for this longing and desire for mystical experience.”

“Or it may be that certain people are in this position simply because they are moved aesthetically by the presentation of the gospel, by the atmosphere of the church...”

“Others again are in this one-sided position because they have responded to an appeal in a meeting.”

Others will have only the will “impacted” by the gospel message. The focus on having made a _____ for God. The whole focus is on a choice that they have made in the past.

“I think we should abolish this word decision. I do not like it...If a great bombardment is made upon the wills of men there are certain wills that are sure to respond. They will decide because they have been called upon to decide, because they have been pressed to decide. Pressure has been put on the will.”

“Let me sum up this point by putting it like this. These are the people who decide to take up Christianity instead of being taken up by Christianity.”

The whole person must be involved (_____, _____, and _____). Not just 1 or 2 but all 3 parts of a person.

“A great gospel like this takes up the whole man, and if the whole man is not taken up, think again as to where you stand...Christ has died that we might be complete men, not merely that parts of us may be saved; not that we might be lop-sided Christians, but that there may be a balanced finality about us.”

“These things must always come in the right order...We must always put these things in the right order, and it is Truth first. It is doctrine first, it is the standard of teaching first, it is the message of the gospel first. We are not concerned simply to attract people emotionally or in the realm of the will, we are concerned to ‘preach the Word’. The Apostles were not sent out simply to produce results and to change people. They were sent to ‘preach the gospel’, to ‘preach the truth’, to preach and declare ‘Jesus and the resurrection’-this message, this form of doctrine, the deposit! Those are the terms used in the New Testament and the Church is certain to produce these spiritual monstrosities when she fails to put that first.”

“The heart is always to be influenced through the understanding-the mind, then the heart, then the will...We must never approach the heart or the will directly. Truth is received through God’s greatest gift to man, the mind, the understanding. God made man in His own image and there is no question but that the greatest part of this image is the mind and its capacity for apprehending truth...it starts there, but it goes on. It then moves the heart and finally the man yields his will. He obeys, not grudgingly or unwillingly, but with the whole heart.”