

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

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

Chapter 5-That One Sin

Spiritual depression is a _____ struggle for the saints. The Scriptures never tell us that after salvation all of life will be only easy and happy. In fact, the Scriptures are honest with us and tell us that after salvation there are certain troubles that will increase (John 15:8-19).

“There are always Christian people who are in difficulties for various reasons, and you cannot read the New Testament Epistles without seeing the truth of what I am saying. If simply to believe and to accept salvation is everything, then these New Testament Epistles would never have been needed, indeed, in a sense, you would not need the Church at all. People would just be saved and go on happily for the rest of their lives as Christians. But there is abundant evidence that this is not the case.”

“The fact that you are unhappy or troubled is no indication that you are not a Christian; indeed, I would go further and say that if you have never had any trouble in your Christian life I should very much doubt whether you are a Christian at all.”

In this chapter Lloyd-Jones is going to focus in on another problem that will lead to spiritual depression. Many people have a _____ sin or struggle from the past that they feel is too great to overcome and the guilt of this specific sin torments them to the point of despair.

“The problem here is the case of those who are miserable Christians or who are suffering from spiritual depression because of their past...I would say that in my experience in the ministry, extending now over many years, there is no more common difficulty.”

“These are people who seem to be quite clear about the doctrine of salvation, except that they feel that in their case there is something-their sin, this particular sin or the form that sin has taken in their case-which somehow puts them in a different category.”

Lloyd-Jones gives two explanations for this problem. First, the existence and work of _____. Satan wants to keep Christians in a state of despair for multiple reasons. There is also a second explanation as well.

“I would again say that this condition is almost entirely due to an ignorance of doctrine-a failure to understand the New Testament doctrine of salvation clearly and this is the very essence of the treatment of the condition.”

_____ comes first. This is always the way it is and must be. People who are caught in this trap have forgotten or neglected several of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. People who think that this sin in their past that is so great or continues to haunt them cannot be forgiven have failed to remember 3 important truths.

Truth 1-There is no sin that is _____ than God’s grace and mercy in Christ

“Here are people who believe that sins can be graded and they draw distinctions between particular sins. They classify them saying that some are forgivable and some apparently are not.”

The apostle Paul recounts his former sins to prove this point that even he who sinned in ways that we would consider very great sins indeed, could and did obtain _____.

Truth 2-All sins boil down to the same thing-_____

“In a sense we must not differentiate between sin and sin...he (Paul) demolishes these grades of sin. Looking at it from one angle his sin was the worst sin conceivable, but from another angle it is the sum of all sins because finally there is only one sin and that is the sin of unbelief.”

“That is the great New Testament doctrine on this matter; it is the thing that these people have to grasp above everything else, that we must not think in terms of particular sins but always in terms of our relationship to God. We all tend to go astray at that point. That is why we tend to think that some conversions are more remarkable than others. But they are not.”

From our book club reading, “According to Luther, there is something much more drastically wrong with man than any particular list of offences which can be enumerated, confessed, and forgiven. The very nature of man is corrupt...the physician does not need to probe each pustule to know that the patient has smallpox, nor is the disease to be cured scab by scab. To focus on particular offences is a counsel of despair.” (Here I Stand, pages 55-56)

Continuing to discuss how “sins” are not the problem but our _____ to God Lloyd-Jones, writes, *“We must not think so much about the sin itself. That is what we tend to do.”* He then focuses on the accounts of Joseph and David and how both men realized the foundational and most important point was their sin being against God.

“He (David) was not minimizing the wrong he had done to others; he knew all about that; but that was not the worst thing. It was God-his relationship to God. The moment you think of it like that you forget particular sins, and you forget that one is worse than another. ‘My unbelief,’ says Paul, ‘that was the trouble’-not particular actions.”

Truth 3-The Scriptures declare that Christ died to save sinners from their _____ (all of them)

“If you do not believe that word, and if you go on dwelling on your sin, I say that you are not accepting the Word of God, you are not taking God at His word, you do not believe what He tells you and that is the real sin...Believe Him and His Word.”

“All the sins were dealt with there (at the cross) finally and completely, everything. Nothing was left undone-‘It is finished.’”

“Ultimately it all comes to this, that the real cause of the trouble is failure to realize our union with Christ. Many seem to think that Christianity just means that we are delivered in the sense that our sins are forgiven. But that is only the beginning, but one aspect of it. Essentially salvation means union with Christ, being one with Christ.”

“You and I must never look at our past lives; we must never look at any sin in our past life in any way except that which leads us to praise God and to magnify His grace in Christ Jesus.”