

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

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

Chapter 6 - Vain Regrets

One of the reasons that spiritual depression is such a common struggle for the saints is because the _____ of our souls seeks to keep us in a state of despair so that the glory of God will not shine forth from us to others.

“He (Satan) is most subtle and most dangerous when he comes as ‘an angel of light’ and as a would-be friend of the Church and one who is interested in the gospel and its propagation.”

“In view of this we must prepare ourselves for him and for such attacks; and the way to do that is to study the Scriptures. There alone are we given an insight into his methods...He puts things to us in such an attractive manner that we find that we have fallen almost before we realize that anything has happened at all. There is only one way to deal with all this and that is to study his methods, and to study the various teachings of the Scripture itself with regard to this condition of spiritual depression.”

In this chapter, Lloyd-Jones addresses those people who fall into spiritual depression because they are stuck regretting the time they have wasted. Those who are saved later in life may look back at all of their years living in and for sin and begin to feel an overwhelming guilt over it all. Or maybe those who have been saved for a while feel that they have not been as productive as they ought to have been may also struggle with these _____ thoughts of regret.

“This is again an extremely common cause of spiritual depression. These people are depressed by the fact that they have wasted so much time, wasted so many long years...Missed opportunities!... ‘If only’- that is their cry.”

Feeling _____ for wasted time is not necessarily a bad thing. However, it can become a bad thing when it becomes crippling.

“It is perfectly right for such people to regret the fact that they have been so slow to believe, it is quite wrong to be miserable about it. You cannot look back across your past life without seeing things you regret. That is as it should be; but it is just there that the subtlety of this condition comes in and we cross the line of distinction that lies between a legitimate regret and a wrong condition of misery and dejection.”

Before jumping into the spiritual remedies for this situation Lloyd-Jones calls upon Christians to first manifest the wisdom of _____. Everything does not always have to begin with a spiritual solution. There are times when the basics of common sense need to be applied to a situation.

“There are some people who seem to think that it is wrong for a Christian ever to use common sense. They seem to think that they must always do everything in an exclusively spiritual manner. Now that seems to me to be very unscriptural. The Christian is in no respect inferior to the unbeliever; he is always superior. The Christian can not only do everything that the unbeliever does, he can do even more. That is the way to look at the Christian. He is a man who is to apply common sense to situations, and it is right and legitimate that he should do so. If you can conquer the devil at that level, conquer him at that level.”

“I often find that people are in difficulty about this matter and are spending their time in praying about a matter instead of doing something that is perfectly obvious from the standpoint of common sense.”

Common sense tells us that spending all of your present time feeling depressed about something from the past, that is _____, is a waste of both your time and energy. You cannot do anything about your past. All you have is the present and if the adversary can keep you focusing on the past so that you are unfruitful in the present he has won.

A believer not only has common sense to apply to this situation but also has the _____ of God's Word. That again is why he says, *"The Christian, I say, is never less than the unbeliever, he is always more."*

The parable of Jesus in Matthew 20:1-16 shows us the _____ that must be applied to the mind of a person struggling with this sort of spiritual depression.

"What matters first of all if you are a Christian is not what you once were, but what you are...It is not the time of your entry into the Kingdom that matters but the fact that you are in the Kingdom...and if you are in, rejoice in it, and forget that you were ever out."

This doctrine must be applied to the situation and the one struggling in this way also needs to see that their thoughts have been too focused on _____. Their focus is on themselves, whereas, the Christian is to keep his focus outside of himself upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I suggest that this particular manifestation of spiritual depression is due to the fact that this person is still morbidly and sinfully preoccupied with self...They are still judging themselves instead of leaving judgment to God...As Christians we must leave our judgment to Him. He is the Judge and you have no right to waste His time or your own time and energy in condemning yourself."

"This trouble is due to this morbid preoccupation with self in the matter of judgment. Not only that, it is indicative of a proneness still to think in terms of what we can do."

"They are not sufficiently occupied with Him. It is our failure to know Him and His ways as we should know them-that is the real trouble. If we only spent more of our time in looking at Him we should soon forget ourselves."

"This is the Christian. He spends his time in looking at Christ, in gazing upon Him. He is so enraptured by the sight of Him that he has forgotten himself. If you were to feel more interest in Christ you would be less interested in yourself."

The _____ of God in Christ must be our focus. When we take our eyes off this and put them anywhere else we will eventually run into problems. The work of grace in our hearts is what matters not what we have done.

"Learn that in His Kingdom what matters is not the length of service but your attitude towards Him...He does not count service as other people do. He is interested in the heart. We are interested in time, we all clock in and count the time we have spent, the work we have done...Our Lord is not interested in our work in this way. It is the widow's mite He is interested in. It is not the amount of money, it is the woman's heart."

"Nothing matters in the Kingdom but the grace of God. That is the whole point of the parable. God has a different way of looking at things. He does not see as men do; He does not compute as they do; its all grace from beginning to end...We have to cease thinking in this carnal, human, fleshly manner. In the Kingdom of God and of Christ the standpoint is that of grace, and of grace alone; and it cuts across all other regulations."

"If you think of it in terms of what you can do with your strength and power, then time is of the essence of the contract. But we are in a realm in which that does not matter...Praise God for the fact that you are what you are, and that you are in the Kingdom."