

## Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

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

#### Chapter 11 - Looking at the waves

Matthew 14:22-33 gives us another passage that helps to show where and how we can go astray as Christians and cause \_\_\_\_\_ to become overwhelmed by the troubles of life. Just as in the previous lesson it is important for us to begin by acknowledging what this passage teaches us about the divinity of Christ.

*“We are not talking about any sort of faith, we are talking about the Christian faith, and the essential preliminary to any consideration of that is to be clear about the Person of our Blessed Lord. There is no Christian message apart from that which starts by saying that Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, that He is the Lord of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ; and here you see Him standing out in this effulgence of His glory, the Master of the Universe, the Lord of the elements...it is a failure in some shape or form to realize what He is that accounts for all our troubles.”*

In this passage we see how a person can start so well in the faith and then \_\_\_\_\_ into despair as they start thinking more about all that is going on around them instead of focusing on Christ.

*“Peter starts off so well, so magnificently. Then he gets into trouble and ends up so badly...How quickly it all happened!...the trouble was entirely in Peter. Our Lord gives us a precise diagnosis-it is little faith...it is little faith leading to the entry of doubt.”*

Peter, like many of us, was a man who would often talk and act without fully thinking everything through. His willingness to act and desire to lead were good things. However, those things which can be our \_\_\_\_\_ can also lead us into trouble. In those areas where we think we are most gifted we must be most on guard.

*“The things we have to watch most of all is our strength, our strong point. We all tend to fall ultimately at our strongest point. Now I believe that was very true of Peter. Peter’s great characteristics was his energy, his capacity for quick decision, his active personality. He was enthusiastic and impulsive, and that was the thing that was constantly leading him into trouble.”*

When Peter got out of the boat to walk to Jesus the storm was already raging. It was not a \_\_\_\_\_ trouble that arose that caused Peter to doubt and become troubled. The problem was already present when Peter initially walked by faith.

*“We ourselves sometimes produce our own doubts...He produced his own doubts by looking at the waves. He led himself into difficulties which need not have arisen. It was not as though our Lord had said to Peter: ‘Peter be careful! Do you realize what you are doing?’ No, not a word was said by anybody; Peter by looking at the waves himself produced the doubts. Let us be careful here. We often lead ourselves into depression, we lead ourselves into doubts by dabbling with certain things which should be avoided.”*

Peter because he looked at the waves began to sink. He became filled with doubt. However, his doubt did not disqualify him from being a disciple. Doubts are \_\_\_\_\_ to us all and we need not to fall into despair when doubts rise within us.

*“Doubts are not incompatible with faith...Though you have faith, you may still be troubled by doubts and there are examples of this not only in the Scripture but also in the subsequent history of the Christian Church.”*

Doubt is not a sure sign that we are outside of Christ. However, being controlled by doubts is a sure sign that our faith is \_\_\_\_\_. Doubts thrive when faith is weak. Growing faith means shrinking doubts. Faith

involves trust in God and His Word, and one cannot be trusting God more (increasing in faith) and at the same time doubting God more.

*“If doubts again control us, it is an indication of a weak faith. That was what happened to Peter. His faith had not gone, but because it was weak, doubt mastered him and overwhelmed him and he was shaken.”*

The cure for such doubts is, of course then, \_\_\_\_\_ faith. A growing faith will be less tormented by doubt. Remember, faith involves the whole person (mind, heart, will).

*“What are the characteristics of this great faith? The first is this-it is knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His power, with a steady trust and confidence in that.”*

*“The Christian faith begins and ends with a knowledge of the Lord. It begins with a knowledge of the Lord-not a feeling, not an act of the will, but a knowledge of this Blessed Person. There is no value in any feeling unless it is based upon certain things about Him and knowing Him...”*

Many people are tormented by doubt and depression because they do not adequately \_\_\_\_\_ Christ. A right knowledge of biblical doctrine (which all points to Christ) is therefore the starting point for curing spiritual depression.

*“The great antidote to spiritual depression is the knowledge of biblical doctrine, Christian doctrine. Not having the feelings worked up in meetings, but knowing the principles of faith, knowing and understanding the doctrines. That is the Biblical way, that is Christ’s own way as it is also the way of the apostles. The antidote to depression is to have a knowledge of Him, and you get that in His Word.”*

*“The tragedy of the hour, it seems to me, is that people are far too dependent for their happiness upon meetings. This has been the trouble for many years in the Christian Church, and that is why so many are miserable. Their knowledge of Truth is defective...it is the Truth that frees us-the Truth about Him, in His person, in His work, in His offices, Christ as He is.”*

Everything in you and around you will try to get you to doubt the way of faith but you must press on. We must keep our eyes \_\_\_\_\_ on Him and not listen to the voices of doubt that shout at us and try to have us turn back.

*“Doubts are very foolish...That is always the trouble with weak faith, it comes back again to questions which it has already solved and answered...Having believe on Him you must shut the door to certain things and refuse to look at them...it is of the essence of faith to refuse after-thoughts. Reject them, have nothing to do with them.”*

*“You and I can never doubt while we look at Him and are clear about Him. Without Him we are utterly hopeless. It does not matter how long you have been in the Christian life, you re dependent upon Him for every step. Without Him we can do nothing. We can only conquer our doubts by looking steadily at Him and not looking at them. The way to answer them is to look at Him.”*

*“You cannot live on one climactic experience, you must keep on looking to Him every day...you need Him as much on your death-bed as you did on the night you were converted; you need Him all the time...We will never need to cry out like that if we only keep on looking at Him. Believing in Him we shall never fall but keep straight on.”*

Even though our faith will at times be weak and we will doubt we must remember that His \_\_\_\_\_ is greater than our sin. He is a merciful Savior who saves weak and needy sinners.

*“He will never let you sink...Thank God for this consolation. He will never let you sink because you belong to Him.”*