



FEAR OF THE FUTURE.

“FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS BLESSED YOU IN ALL THE WORK OF YOUR HANDS. HE KNOWS YOUR GOING THROUGH THIS GREAT WILDERNESS. THESE FORTY YEARS THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS BEEN WITH YOU. YOU HAVE LACKED NOTHING.”

DEUTERONOMY 2:7

Tonight, we'll continue in our series *Hope in God: A Study on Spiritual Depression*. Why we've chosen to study what God's Word has to say about this issue is fairly self-explanatory. I've spoken to numerous Christians in this room and in other areas of the church who would say that their lives are marked by sadness, apathy, fear, and shame. These are Christians! Brothers and sisters who claim the name of Christ, who cling to him, and yet, they are in ruts, devastating pain. A definition of spiritual depression that we'll work with is this: **a severe sadness and darkness of soul linked to a crisis of faith**. As always in this series, my aim tonight will be to direct you to Scriptures in order to determine a significant cause of spiritual depression and anxiety as well as provide its cure.

BIG IDEA:

I can walk into the future with confidence since
God is in control and cares for me.

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION'S CAUSE: FEAR OF THE FUTURE

- Christians feel paralyzed today, because they fear the future.
 - The future is unknown or holds something unexpected.
 - By definition, we cannot control the unknown and unexpected.
 - We can't even properly prepare for it.
 - Since we can't control the future, we fear it.

REMEMBER

In this series, we are specifically addressing Christians. Though the immediate future is just as uncertain for Christians, we have access to peace that is not available to non-Christians. A Christian suffering spiritual anxiety and depression due to a fear of the future can stand up and preach to himself: “Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God! For I shall again praise him, my salvation, my God.”

Often, though, we find ourselves listening to the self instead of speaking to the self. This self whispers doubt into God's goodness. He whispers doubt into the tightness of your relationship. And he whispers doubt into his love for you. This can be crippling to a Christian, because not only do you find yourself standing at the brink of the unknown, but you worry that you are facing it alone.

However, that is not the case. God's careful care and provision in the unknown—a place where he holds just as much control as today—is evidence of his care and love for you.

DEFINING THE WILDERNESS:

The places where we realize control is out of our hands.

REMINDERS FOR THE WILDERNESS

1. I'm not in control... God is.
2. We may walk through things we would never choose for ourselves.
3. The only thing I can control is my faithfulness to God.
 - Persistent obedience
 - Persistent pursuit

THIS IS HOPE:

1. God's people experience blessing in the wilderness. (v. 7a)
2. God knows his people are in the wilderness. (v. 7b)
 - You haven't escaped God's sight.
 - He has not abandoned you.

3. God is with his people in the wilderness. (v. 7c)
4. God's people lack nothing in the wilderness. (v. 7d)

“Faith is a refusal to panic... Faith is unbelief kept quiet, kept down... That is the first thing, but it does not stop at that. Having taken that first step, having pulled yourself up, you then remind yourself of what you believe and what you know... That is faith, it holds on to truth and reasons from what it knows to be fact. Whatever the circumstances, therefore, stand, wait for a moment. Say: ‘I admit it all, but-‘ But what? But God! But the Lord Jesus Christ! But what? The whole of my salvation! That is what faith does. All things may seem to be against me ‘to drive me to despair’, I do not understand what is happening; but I know this, I know that God has so loved me that He sent His only begotten Son into this world for me, I know that while I was an enemy, God sent His only Son to die for me on the Cross on Calvary’s Hill for me. He has done that for me while I was an enemy, a rebellious alien. I know that the Son of God ‘loved me and gave Himself for me’... Faith says: ‘I cannot believe that He who has brought me so far is going to let me down at this point. It is impossible, it would be inconsistent with the character of God’. So faith, having refused to be controlled by circumstances, reminds itself of what it believes and what it knows.”¹ – **D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. (1965). *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure.*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 143-145.