

**TIME OF REFLECTION**

“To rejoice is a command, yes, but there is all the difference in the world between rejoicing and being happy. You cannot make yourself happy, but you can make yourself rejoice, in the sense that you will always rejoice in the Lord. Happiness is something within ourselves, rejoicing is ‘in the Lord’.

Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?”

~Martin Lloyd-Jones, 20<sup>th</sup> Century preacher and author of a classic of pastoral care, *Spiritual Depression*

“Our self help culture is preoccupied with ‘self-talk’, with your inner-monologue. Does what you say cheer you up or tear you down? Are you consciously self-affirming or obsessively self-critical?...But [God’s Word] gets you out of the monologue business entirely. It gets you about the business of a living dialogue with the person whose opinion finally matters.”

~David Powlison, Pastoral theologian and author with CCEF (Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation)

“Causeless depression cannot be reasoned with, nor can David’s harp charm it away by sweet discoursings. As well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness.

I note that some whom I greatly love and esteem, who are, in my judgment, among the very choicest of God’s people, nevertheless, travel most of the way to heaven by night.

No sin is necessarily connected with sorrow of heart, for Jesus Christ our Lord once said, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.’ There was no sin in Him, and consequently none in His deep depression.”

~Charles H. Spurgeon, 19<sup>th</sup> Century English preacher and longterm struggler with depression

[Notes from a senior demon to an apprentice tempter in the novel, *The Screwtape Letters*] “Do not be deceived...Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy’s will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.”

“Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about him. The conclusion I dread is not ‘So there’s no God after all,’ but ‘So this is what God’s really like. Deceive yourself no longer.’”

~C. S. Lewis, 20<sup>th</sup> century Oxford professor and author (his works include *Narnia* and *Mere Christianity*)

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## *Worship through the Word*

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**SERMON** – “The Paradox of Faithful Depression” – *Alasdair Groves*

**SERMON PASSAGE** – *Psalm 88 (NIV)*

- <sup>1</sup> LORD, you are the God who saves me;  
day and night I cry out to you.
- <sup>2</sup> May my prayer come before you;  
turn your ear to my cry.
- <sup>3</sup> I am overwhelmed with troubles  
and my life draws near to death.
- <sup>4</sup> I am counted among those who go down to the pit;  
I am like one without strength.
- <sup>5</sup> I am set apart with the dead,  
like the slain who lie in the grave,  
whom you remember no more,  
who are cut off from your care.
- <sup>6</sup> You have put me in the lowest pit,  
in the darkest depths.
- <sup>7</sup> Your wrath lies heavily on me;  
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.
- <sup>8</sup> You have taken from me my closest friends  
and have made me repulsive to them.  
I am confined and cannot escape;
- <sup>9</sup> my eyes are dim with grief.  
I call to you, LORD, every day;  
I spread out my hands to you.
- <sup>10</sup> Do you show your wonders to the dead?  
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?
- <sup>11</sup> Is your love declared in the grave,  
your faithfulness in Destruction?
- <sup>12</sup> Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,  
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?
- <sup>13</sup> But I cry to you for help, LORD;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
- <sup>14</sup> Why, LORD, do you reject me  
and hide your face from me?
- <sup>15</sup> From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;  
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.
- <sup>16</sup> Your wrath has swept over me;  
your terrors have destroyed me.
- <sup>17</sup> All day long they surround me like a flood;  
they have completely engulfed me.
- <sup>18</sup> You have taken from me friend and neighbor—  
darkness is my closest friend.