

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

February 10, 2019

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Overwhelmed

PART

3

TITLE

Help, I'm Depressed

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 42



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well, it's great to see you Providence family. And for all of you who are new here with us, welcome. We are thrilled that you have joined us, and pray this time will be really a great encouragement to you. You already know that, just from ... Well, if you're new, you think, "He kind of has a funny voice." If you're not, you know I'm just a little bit sick. So, the last few day just been wrestling with that. There's only one thing worse than being in my place where I have to speak with a voice that isn't so great, and that's to be in your place, and actually have to listen to it.

So, if over the next 35 minutes you get discouraged, then this sermon is for you, right? It's, "Help, I'm depressed." So, if you feel downcast, I hope that this will truly encourage you. In your bibles, if you want to head over to Psalm, chapter 42. There's lots of bibles in the seats near you if you don't have one in your hand. If you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have your own copy. We're in a series that's called Overwhelmed. Every single one of us, we all carry burdens that threaten to bury us because of there extreme weight. That cause us to say, "I just feel overwhelmed in my life." We've looked at a few of them, in terms of just a lack of contentment, just a drive for more, burnout, exhaustion. We'll look at shame.

But what we want to do today is look at something that so many of us wrestle with among some spectrum of severity, and that is we are a people that struggle with being depressed. To be totally honest with you, I feel very small. This little shot is sort of how I feel. I feel like I'm crossing an ocean in one little canoe. I know that the sea of depression is deep, and it's dark, and it can be exceptionally heavy, and it can be what seems like it's absolutely endless. And yet, what's interesting is I find myself, even as I awoke this day, feeling hopeful. The reason I feel hope is because of the unsinkability of the canoe that we're in, which is the word of God.

You see, the bible says that it doesn't matter. Everything else will come down. Everything else will down. All flowers, all grass, all buildings, all mountains, but the word of God will remain forever. So, we have in our hands ... If you're holding a bible in your hands, you have something that is going to endure through heaven. So, that canoe is not going to sink. So, I have great hope in my heart. If you're here today and you have wrestled with depression for such a long period of time and you feel hopeless, let me invite you once again to consider hope.

So, let me pray for us as we get started. Father in heaven, we ask for your grace in each of our lives. We come to you believing that you have the power. You have the power to free. And I pray, father, for those who are in darkness that you would bring light. I pray, father, for those who are lost that you would bring salvation. I pray, father, for those who are simply discouraged at a level that they don't quite understand, I pray that you would give them encouragement today from your word. Would you speak through weakness and would you bring glory to Jesus Christ, we pray? In his name, amen.

So, we need to understand a little bit about what we're wrestling with when we talk about being depressed. The first thing that we know about it is it's exceptionally mysterious. It's as solid as it is liquid.

It's as tangible as intangible. It's like being in a dark cave or being enveloped by a dense fog, and yet, nobody, including you can see a cave or grasp or even acknowledge that there's actual physical fog. It's like the wind in some ways. We see its effect upon us. We see its effect in the lives of others. In their emotions, in their attitude, in their facial expressions, and yet, what's plaguing them is not something that you can hold. It's not something that you can grab.

David wrote this in Psalm 69, verse one, he says, "Save me, oh God, for the waters have come up to my neck." And yet, David wasn't in water. But that's what depression feels like. It's feel like you're about to be submerged by waves, and breakers, and water. You're like, you just need a breath. If I could just have one single breath, and yet, there's no water. In depression, you feel numb, and yet you also feel hurt. You feel empty and yet full of fear. You sleep all the time and yet you wake up absolutely exhausted. You look around and you see the blessings in your life, like children, and like benefits, and various memories and experiences, and your marriage, and your family, and for whatever reason, in that time, you can only interpret them as burdens.

So many people have tried to explain, put into words and even into art, what it's like to be depressed. So, thank God for Picasso. He has his blue paintings, where ... You look at all of his artwork that was actually born out of a failed relationship. He was depressed. He was hurting. When millions upon millions of people saw his artwork, people in blues and grays, with heads down, and facial expressions numb, they saw with their eyes what they had felt in their heart but struggled to explain with their mouth. It's mysterious. It's also complex. The causes of our depression are as wide as the spectrum of severity is high. Some of us in the room, you may feel spiritual darkness from time to time, but you may rank it in terms of a pain tolerance or a pain level of a one. You're not quite sure.

And yet, there's other people and they feel like they're literally under water. It's so dark, it's so black that they even despair life itself. The causes of depression are also why. For some, it actually has its roots in the physical. There's an actual imbalance of some hormone, some chemical. We know that there's certain medication that has side effects that leads many people to feeling depressed. We know that its linked to certain illnesses like hepatitis and lupus and Parkinson's. We also know that its tied in some strange way to women who, at a time when such joy is theirs in holding a baby, that they can feel post partum depression. It's complex.

For other people, though, it's interesting. All of their darkness, it has spiritual roots. It may manifest itself in physical ways, where you can look at someone and say, "I think that person is depressed." And yet, it's not an imbalance in terms of a chemical, and there's maybe no illness, and there may be no medicine, but what's happening there is its roots are dipping down into guilt, or grief, or spiritual attack, or stress, or burnout. Then it's interesting that society to society, culture to culture differs in the number of people who cite that they deal with spiritual darkness.

So, there are factors within our own culture that contribute, such as the transience of people that we can build friendships with people, and feel really close, and then they move to another part of the country because their job says so. We feel an overwhelming amount of weight because we have an overwhelming amount of free time to think about how life could be better in places like America, where there's affluence and you get off of work at a certain time, and yet, there's still time in the day to do something. You also ... We have this thing called social media where you get to see how wonderful everyone's life is in the world except yours.

This sorts of things contribute to what people call as depression. We also know that its widespread. Millions upon millions of people suffer, including believers, even strong believers. Calvin, Luther, Cooper, Brainer, Spurgeon. They all cited that they dealt with fits of depression, what they called melancholy. You see, spiritual darkness is normal in the Christian life. I want you to know that. In saying so, I don't mean that we shouldn't try to live above it. I mean that if we do not succeed, we're not lost and we're not alone because Christ will hold us fast.

So, what we find here in Psalm 42 is not only the fact that our depression has been felt by people for centuries upon centuries, but God is aware of it as well. And this is what he says starting in chapter 42. Even in the title, "To the choirmaster. A maskil of the Sons Korah. As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, oh, God. My soul thirsts for God. For the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night. While they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?' These things I remember as I pour out my soul. How I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise. A multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, oh, my soul? Why are you in turmoil within me? Hoping God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation, and my God.

My soul is cast down within me, therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and Herman. From Mount Mizar, deep calls to deep. At the roar of your waterfalls, all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. By day, the Lord commands his steadfast love and at night his song is with me. A prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock, 'Why have you for forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of my enemy?' As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?' Why are you cast down, oh, my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation and my God."

So, what I want to do this morning is I want to show you a path through the darkness that ultimately leads to Jesus Christ. I can attest to the power of this path because it has lead me out of more than one bout with darkness myself. In 2012, I mentioned last week was the last time to where for some un-reason, I have no idea why, I just felt dark and I felt dark for a prolonged period of time. I would say of myself because I speak to some many people at Providence that also deal with it, that in terms of that spectrum of severity is that mine was not as intense as most, and yet it was absolutely real.

What I want you to know is this path, it looks a little different for everybody. It includes many stops for you. It may include a change of your diet, what you consume in terms of food. It may mean a gym membership. It may mean that you need to go to bed earlier. It may mean that you need to see a medical doctor. It may mean that you need to actually attend a life group, where you're encircled by people who love you, and who can pray for you, and who can help you.

But I promise you that this path leads to Jesus Christ alone because he is the light of the world. You see, without Jesus Christ it does not matter what you have. It doesn't matter how much medicine, or rest, or exercise you have, there will still be a darkness because only Jesus is the light of the world. So, what I'm trying to say is this. You may need more than growing faith in Jesus Christ to battle your particular darkness, but you will not need less. You need Jesus Christ. And what you find when somebody is depressed is a need to actually elevate. To get above the darkness, to get above the clouds, so that they can have perspective. So, that you can see where things are at. You can understand really what's important. The only way to elevate is to actually follow Jesus's hand and see hand and see what he has done.

This is what we find in our text. This is what we find several hundreds of years before Jesus Christ came to this Earth. I want to show you three truths about God that we find in this text, and then I want to show you, if I have time, five applications. The first thing is this, God is attentive to our struggle for joy. This should give each one of us comfort. You are not alone. God does know what you're wrestling with. He is attentive. He sees, he feels. He feels your struggle and he still loves you. You see, the Psalms were songs. Songs to be sung. We sing because God made us, not just rational, but emotional. God gave us emotions and not just words. If you and I were not emotional creatures, we wouldn't sing. We would just talk to one another. But God made us emotional people. So, what happens is our words, they need emotional elements to communicate them, and that's what a song is.

It has highs, and lows, and runs. It has notes that stir the energy of our own emotions. What we find here is this, is that this Psalm was written, we're told. It says that it was written by the Sons of Korah. It says it was a maskil and it was supposed to be given to the choirmaster. Now, what's happening here? Well, the Sons of Korah were actually the worship leaders in the nation of Israel. They were called to shape the emotional life of God's people and they were supposed to do through song. A maskil is literally a song that makes one wise, or a song or instruction. This is what they saw to do. The Sons of Korah were wrestling with something themselves. They felt depressed and they put it to song in order to shape, and encourage, and steer the emotional life of God's people in Israel.

But the reality is sometimes singers don't feel like singing, do we? Sometimes we come in and we sit in these seats and we think, "I don't want to sing right now." So, we go through the songs. If we participate, it's half-hearted because we don't feel like singing. But did you know the people who are on the stage, sometimes they show up and they don't feel like singing either?

The Sons of Korah were the worship leaders and they didn't want to sing because something had happened. Something was so dark, something was so raw, there was so much sorrow within their heart that what is says in verse three and verse ten is that the Sons of Korah, at least one of them, their enemy had looked upon them and began taunting because they saw some tragedy befall the people. They were teaching them about how God is near, and how God is strong, and how God is personal, how he loves us, so he's going to protect us.

So, what do they say? They come and they say, "Where is your God? All this is bad that's happening to you, and you're the one who's teaching us how to sing about his nearness, and his strength, and his love for us. Do you still believe in God? Do you still believe he's near?"

So, the psalmist says that his emotional state becomes depressed. We find within this passage several markers that we look in our life when we're depressed and we think, "I know what they're going through." He says that he feels cast down. He says that his own enemies, that they're saying, "Where is their God?" Verse seven, it says that he feels like he's under the waves and waves keep crashing on top of him. Breakers and waves and so, all he wants is breath. All he wants to be able to do is to come up on shore, and yet he can't get his footing.

It says in verse three, it says the tears had become his food. He's lost his appetite. He gets time for dinner and he just can't eat. He leaves after and all he can do is he just cries. Morning and night, he finds tears rolling down his face. And it says in verse 10, it says that his sorrow is so deep, and it's so raw, that it feels like a deadly wound in his bones. The word "deadly wound" can also be translated "shattered." In other words, the core of who he is that keeps him upright, that keeps him standing, feels so weak, and so shattered that he can't stand up anymore. He feels like there's something that's wrong with his own skeletal structure.

Now, what I want you to see is this. God Almighty inspired Psalm 42 to be written. Not only did he inspire for it to be written, he inspired for it to be written and put into song, into a song that ends without a remedy. You notice that in Psalm 42, verse 12 ... Wait a minute. There isn't one. It's not like he says, "Oh, and guess what? I got better, so praise God." No, it ends with, "God, where are you?" Soul hope in God. There's no remedy. So, God not only recorded it, he not only put it to song, he not only taught it to the nation of Israel to sing, but think about this, he's preserved it now thousands of years. So, that you and I, people in different cultures, in different generations, can come and we can read it and go, "Wait a minute. Somebody understands what I'm feeling."

Now, why would God Almighty allow a Psalm to be recorded that doesn't end with the remedy of his grace, and his power, and his sovereignty at least at first glance? It's because God wants you to know that he is attentive to your struggle for joy. He sees what you're going through. He loves you. One of the very first things that comforts our heart when we are in the shadows, when we're in the darkness, is we think, "I am all alone. No one sees. No one knows. No one understands." Then Psalm 42 says, "God knows. He sees. He understands and he still loves."

The second thing we see though is even more lifting to our hearts. We see that God was willing to struggle for our joy. Not only is God attentive to our struggle for joy, but God Almighty was willing to struggle for our joy. You see in verse five and 11, the same words. It says, “Why are you cast down, oh my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation in my God.” You have to understand that when he says, “my salvation,” that is not a small piece. Even though it looks small in terms of the number of words in this Psalm, it is absolutely paramount in significance.

You see, the bible says that you and I, we’ve all sinned against God. When we sinned against God, we broke fellowship with him, and as a result it says that a tidal wave of brokenness not only crashed over our life and relationships, but over the entire world. When that took place, instead of God crushing us for our rebellion, the bible says that God made a promise to send a savior who would bring us salvation. That there would be a boy, there would be a man that would be born of woman. Even though Satan would strike at his heels, he would crush evil’s head and restore us, and bring us back into a relationship with God. What the psalmist is doing here in Psalm 42 is he is echoing God’s promise that began in the garden immediately after sin. And he’s echoing it as his battle cry. He’s saying, “You know what? My circumstances may change, but the ultimate thing that I need is for God to fulfill his promise to send his rescuer. To send the savior to this world.”

You see, the promise of God was like the lighthouse on the horizon for all the faithful of the Old Testament. They were waiting for the day. Like this picture. Life can be so dark. If you’re out at sea and you see a distant light way in the horizon, it doesn’t matter to you if it’s another boat, and it doesn’t matter if it’s a lighthouse, you’re just thankful that there’s light. This is what is taking place is throughout the Old Testament, this promise from God became the anchor. It was like a flag that was stuck into the ground, and no matter how far people left, the faithful could look back and say, “One day he’s going to pull this off. One day he’s going to rescue us. One day he’s going to save us.”

The psalmist in his sorrow, in his darkness is saying, “That’s the day that we need.” One day he is going to come through. But I also want you to see that the Psalms are actually strategically placed in order to point us to the promise of God that a savior would come. You see, Psalm 42 through Psalm 49, they’re all written by these guys called the Sons of Korah. Most of the Psalms were by David, a few by Moses, Asaph, but these were written by the Sons of Korah. Now somebody, they had all these songs and they had to place them. “Which one should be Psalm 42, and which one should be Psalm 43, and which one should be Psalm 44?”

What they did was strategically place them in order from sorrow to the savior and back to that we have a refuge, and we have a hope, and so we don’t have to give up in life. I want to show it to you. In Psalm 42 and 43, you notice three times he says, “Why are you cast down, oh, my soul? Why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation and my God.”

We see that in Psalm 42, verse five, Psalm 42, verse 11, and Psalm 43, verse five. So, the theme of these two Psalms is this: Our soul is broken, so hope in God. It's a personal lament to where they're speaking to their soul. They're not speaking to God. This isn't a prayer. They're wrestling with themselves. They begin at that core level where we're sitting on the bed all by ourself, and we can't get up, and everything's dark, and the light's are off, and we have the shades down. And yet, he's saying, "This is where I'm beginning, but this is not where I'm going to end. I need to hope in God. I need to wrestle with my heart right now."

Then you get to Psalm 44 and in Psalm 44, it changes from speaking to ourself to speaking to God. At the end of Psalm 44, he actually begins to pray, and he says ... Verse 23. He says, "Awake. Why are you sleeping, oh Lord? Rouse yourself. Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust. Our belly clings to the ground. Oh, rise up. Come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of our steadfast love."

So, the Psalms of these Sons of Korah, they begin with "our soul is shaken, so hope in God" and they move to "our world is broken, so rise up, oh, God." It moves from talking to myself to talking to God. Then you get to Psalm 45, and suddenly, the Sons of Korah, they start talking about a king. He says, "My heart overflows with the pleasing theme and I address my verses to the king." In verse two, we're told that he's the most handsome of the sons of men. In verse four, it says that, "In your majesty, he rides out with victory." Then notice what it says in verse six and seven. He says, "Your throne, oh God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

So, in 42 and 42, the theme is "our soul is shaken, so hope in God." In 44, it's "the world is broken, so rise up in God." But in 45, it's "our king will rise, so rest in God." And who is this king? See, what we just read in Psalm 45, verse six and seven is also recorded in another place, and it's Hebrews, chapter one, verses eight and nine. And there, we see the exact same words, "Your throne, oh God, is forever and ever." He quotes in Hebrews one, eight, and nine exactly what we just read in Psalm 45. And do you know who he's talking about in Hebrews? He's talking about Jesus Christ. He is the king. Jesus Christ rose from heaven and came to this Earth in order to struggle for our joy, for our salvation.

When you think about what the psalmist is going through, and what he explained, each one of those elements of sorrow was perfected in the person of Jesus Christ. Think about this. In verse two it says that this man's soul is thirsting for God, and yet, there's never been anyone but Jesus Christ who woke up early to be with God. Who went to bed late because he wanted to be with God. Who left the crowds and the multitudes to be silent before God. Who stood up and he said, "I don't do anything of my accord, but only what I see and hear my father doing." He wanted to be with his father. He wanted to be in heaven. He loved God. There's nobody who lived a life of righteousness and love and relationship like Jesus Christ.

Verse three, though, he talks about tears. Isn't it true that there's nobody who's wept over the fallenness of this Earth like Jesus Christ? Coming into Jerusalem the very last time, it says that he comes up on a ridge, and he sees Jerusalem, and there he begins to weep. His heart is full of sorrow over the lostness of the world and what he came to do and to bring. He saw the vast unbelief of the people. He saw the sin and he wept over them. He lost his appetite. He said, "This is not the food that I need. What I need is with God." And there, in the garden, the night that he was betrayed, no food, sorrow, tears, wrestling with God to the place to where he sweat blood, wrestling for us. He knew the darkest night, so that we could know the light of day. This is what Jesus did.

When he was on the cross, scoffers said to him, "Where is your God?" This was said twice. In Psalm 42, where the taunters of the Sons of Korah, they said, "You sing about his nearness, and yet, this has happened to you." And here, Jesus, the only perfect man who's ever walked the face of the Earth is on the cross and his taunters are saying, "You said God has power and you say that he can save you, so call him down right now. Tell him to save you." Only Jesus has known that kind of scorn. Only Jesus has known the kind of abandonment when not only his disciples, but his father, turned and ran from him. He felt the turmoil of our guilt.

The breakers of the father's wrath that should have been towards us swept over his head. Do you know why he did all this? Hebrews chapter 12, verse two says, "For the joy, the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross." His joy, your joy. He endured the darkness, so that you can enjoy the light. This is what he's done. He rose from the dead. He conquered the grave. And now, he calls us to live in light of this resurrection. You see, Jesus Christ tells us that when we're in the darkness, we have to elevate to the place to where we can get perspective. The two things that the psalmist does for us here is that he reminds us that God is attentive to our struggle for joy, and he reminds us that Jesus Christ wrestled to the point of death and then resurrection to struggle for our joy. This is what Jesus has done. It's supposed to lift us up. It's supposed to give us perspective in life.

But then, what he does is this. The third thing is this is that God calls us to lean on Christ as we struggle for our joy. There is still a battle. There is still a battle for your day, even if you know Christ. You know that those of you who struggle with depression. You see, the psalmist's hope in Jesus Christ is turning him into a fighter. He doesn't resign himself to the darkness. No, he fights for his heart, and in doing so, he shows us how to fight for ours. So, let me give you some applications. For those of you who are here today and you're struggling with darkness at some level of that spectrum of severity, what can you do? The first thing is this. It's the most important. And it's this. Let's place our faith in Jesus Christ.

I want you to know that you may feel guilty, and if you feel guilty, it's because you are. We are all guilty. The bible says we've all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God, and that has created a debt load before God that we cannot repay. People ... It does not matter what you attempt to fill that hole within your heart, if Jesus Christ and that relationship with him is missing, everything will fall short.

Everything you attempt to fill that hole will disappoint you and you'll go through another round of despair. You have to trust in Jesus Christ. You see, when we sinned, we incurred a debt we could not repay. Some people think that they're living their life as though God is keeping notes of all the good things to outweigh the bad they've done, and that maybe if they've done enough, he won't condemn them when he gets there.

But you know what Jesus said in John, chapter three? In John, chapter three, verse 18, Jesus says that, "Anyone who doesn't believe in me as savior and lord is already condemned." In other words, that court is heaven has already been adjourned. He's already written on the paper. It doesn't matter what you do now. You are guilty. You're guilty. And you need to understand something. As you think about all the roots of our despair, there are many of them, but the deepest is our guilt before God. Until that root is severed, there is no hope. But Revelations 1:5 says, "Jesus loved us and has freed us from our sins by his blood." See, when we trust Jesus Christ as our savior he does several things, but two of the most amazing.

We come into this relationship and we have a debt load. We are way in the hole. The first thing he does is forgives us, so that we come up to a zero sum. But then, he doesn't end there. Jesus is not a god of second chances because you would need more than one more chance. So would I. No, what does he do? It says that he imputes or he gives Jesus righteousness to us and he justifies us so that in the darkness of our own imperfection, we can stand before him and know that there is nothing that we can do today that can add to our righteousness. Or nothing that we can do today that can take away from our righteousness because Jesus is our righteousness, and he's the same yesterday, today, and forever more. He's forgiven us of all of our sin and he's given us our righteousness, if you've trusted in Jesus.

And some of you are here today and you've never done that. You say, "Where do I start?" You start at the best place for those who are depressed. Despair. Despair your good words. Despair religion, morality, and everything you think you can do to that table. Everything you can add to that equation. You have to despair yourself, so that you can come to him and you say, 'I admit that I cannot save myself. I admit that I have a debt load before you that I cannot pay off. I am stuck in a trap and I cannot open the door, but I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe that he died on a cross, he was buried in grave, and he rose from the dead to pay for my sin, and to give me his righteousness, and I confess him as Lord of my life.' This is the very first thing that must be done.

Before we move on, I just feel compelled. I want to just pray. I want to give you an opportunity. So, if you would, would you bow your head? If you are here today ... I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand or do anything else. This is between you and the Lord. Would you take a moment? I'm going to say a prayer. If you believe in Jesus Christ and you believe those things, you can trust him right now. You can pray to him something like this. Father in heaven, I am a sinner. There's a lot in life I do not know, but what I do know is that I have fallen short, and I feel guilty before you. I am looking for something to satisfy my soul and I haven't found it yet. I believe that I cannot save myself, but I believe the bible. I believe that Jesus Christ came from heaven to Earth, and I believe that Jesus Christ lived a righteous life, and I believe that he died on a cross for my sin.

I believe he was buried and he rose from the dead on the third day. I confess him as Lord of my life. Would you forgive me? Would you take away my guilt and would you give me the righteousness of Jesus? And I pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

Friends, if you just prayed that prayer, the bible says that you have been forgiven of all of your sin, and that leads us into the very next application. That's this. Let's keep looking God-ward. Salvation is not a box to be checked in life, where we then go on and keep living our life. It's the beginning of a relationship. A relationship where you, just like a deer panting for streams of water, where your heart daily pants to be near God. You see the good thing about the psalmist, his pain has not turned his attention from God, but to him. He knows that God is sovereign. In fact, sovereignty is the ballast of his little boat of faith. He says that, "Your breakers and your waves have gone over me." In other words, he's not denying God's sovereignty, he's saying, "Because you are sovereign, I know these waves are coming over me."

I promise that to deny God's rule over storms, and winds, and waves only creates another storm. He is the sovereign God of the universe. This man is hurting, he's asking questions, but he's looking God-ward for the answer. This is why I say frequently, "Keep your bible open when you're going through pain." Is it hard? Yes. Sometimes it feels like eating Saltines with no water. Is it initially gratifying? No. Sometimes it's like planting seed into the ground and you have to wait forever to see anything actually come to a harvest. But it will come. It will come. I attest to it. It will come. Keep your bible open. See, you cannot allow dark thoughts to wisp around your mind like partially welcome house guests. You have to kick them out.

That's why Paul says, "We take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ." See, when we're depressed, we spend so much time listening to our fallen heart instead of speaking to it. But the psalmist here says, "No, no. No." You've got to grab your soul, look it in the face, and say, "You need to stop talking and you need to start listening." Let me tell you what I know is true. The third thing is this. Let's think holistically as we seek help. The fall touches all of us in some way differently.

Romans, chapter eight, verse 23 says, "Not only creation, but we ourselves grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies." God has woven a body, a soul, and a mind together into one. To disrupt any of those is to disrupt all the rest. Some people, they put things like medicine and prayer, and they make them enemies of each other. But I want you to know, things like rest, things like exercise, diet, medicine, and prayer, they're all friends because they're all applications of God's grace. He made food nutritious. He help scientists to be able to identify medicine on the Earth to actually take care on imbalances in chemicals. His grace has also given us prayer and power. So, what I want you to know is simply this. I want to encourage those of you who are struggling do not run to medicine as your savior, and do not run from it in fear.

Jesus is your savior. Medicine is not the savior, but medicine can blow away some of the fog, so that you can see the savior, get out of bed, and interact in ways that contribute to greater healing. So, seek help.

The fourth thing is let's refuse to struggle alone. One of the psalmist's hopes that you see here in verse four is to go with God's people to the house of God to sing songs of praise. Every one of us, we need people in and around our life to pray for us, remind us, stand with us, and tell us to stop looking at our faith, and instead looking at Jesus. Listen to me. When you put money in a bank, the surety of that money, the security of that money is not your confidence in the bank. It's the bank's ability to hold it. It's the same with Jesus.

Sometimes when we're depressed, we look at our faith and it feels weak. So, we need people to say, "It's not about the weakness or the strength of your faith, it's about the strength of Jesus Christ the savior." You need friends in your life. And Providence, as we surround ourselves with people who are hurting, I want to just encourage you to remember one thing. Job, chapter six, verse 26 says, "The speech of a despairing man is wind." What that means is this, is that what people say when they're depressed isn't always the purest form of their theology. It's wind, so let it go.

Sometimes Sunday night for whatever reason ... It happens more times than not. I get home and I'm just discouraged. I don't even know why I'm discouraged. What I say to her, "Things are falling apart. The church is falling apart." She's like, "It's just wind. Just shh." You know? What you say when you're hurting shouldn't be written in the book. When you're despairing. So, what people say in your life group when they're absolutely without despaired, don't hold it against them. The last thing is this, is let's stay active as we wait. Redemptive activity is like a backup generator when the lights go out. That's why in verse eight he says, "He's singing a song." The song that he's singing is not a song of hope. It's a song that's seeking hope. There's something about activity, redemptive productive activity that pulls us out of the pit. That's why I say, "Come to worship when you hurt."

Second Corinthians 6:10 says, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." You see what he's saying? He's saying, "I'm full of sorrow, yet I'm going to rejoice again." When you come here, instead of arguing with me in your mind or someone else who's preaching, take notes. I know some of you are saying, so you're in depression, you're like, "This guy doesn't know what he's talking about. This guy doesn't know what he's talking about." And so, this time has been a total waste. Find something redemptive to do with the time. Take notes. Be grateful. Go to work. Go to the gym. And when you get to the gym, don't mosey around depressed, and lift five pounds, "I think I'm done." Get in there and sweat. Sweat hard. These kinds of things are important to us. Tell people about Jesus. Serve people in need. There is hope for you.

There is hope for you, primarily, because the bible says there's hope for you, and secondarily, because of what God has done in the lives of people. I want to show you one right now. A story. A story of a lady in our church who's gone through depression. You're going to hear several of these applications in her life. So, watch this video.

Speaker 2: My experience with postpartum depression was actually very unexpected. We don't have any history of mental health issues in my family or personally for myself. So, it was something that was not on the radar at all. Our first child was born. Everything went generally as you would expect. We didn't really have a lot of issues. I was very happy. I used to describe it as "rainbows and unicorns." But when my second son was born, everything was much different. He was born three months early. So, he was due in June and he was born in March. We had absolutely no notice. I went to the hospital just not feeling quite right and expecting them to maybe put me on bed rest. They said, very quickly, after a few checks, "You're going to have your baby today."

And then, everything went expected in the NICU. He was in the NICU for eight weeks. My husband and I were actually were surprised at how well we coped. So, we brought our son home and I didn't have a book that I could look at to say, "Okay, he's two months old. This is what to expect." So, I felt very overwhelmed at having this child in my home. I was not a first time mom, so I wasn't expecting to feel that way, but I felt very overwhelmed. I felt scared and I felt completely incapable of taking care of this child. I found myself very irritable, very quickly angry, and especially at my baby, which made me feel very uncomfortable, very guilty. I felt like something was wrong with me.

So, after several, several months of all of these feelings and the circumstances being so difficult, so my mom realized, "There's something not right with you. You're not who you are." So, she insisted that I see a counselor. That was the beginning of my healing process. God led me to a counselor that had experienced postpartum depression, but with only her second child, like me. So, that personal connection was the beginning of my hope. There was one thing that she said to me in that first meeting that was so important. She said, "There is not something wrong with your faith in the Lord. There is not some sin that you've committed that has caused you to be depressed. There is not some weakness in your relationship with God. This is an illness like having cancer, or like having heart disease. It's not your fault and you can get better."

That day was where I started to feel hope and feel like my life could change, and my feelings, and the darkness could be turned around. The way that my faith has helped me through this is spending and relying on God's word. Or spending time in his word. I spend time in it as much as I can, usually everyday. One of the most important things for me is several scriptures like Hebrews 13:5, that says, "The Lord will never forsake me." And Joshua 1:9, that says, "He will go with me wherever I go." So, I choose to believe that. I may not feel it one day. I may not feel like he's with me or I may feel forsaken, but I choose to believe what his word says, and his words says that he is with me.

So, each morning, I spend time in prayer and I spend time in his word reminding myself of that. Now that the darkness has subsided, when I'm struggling, I write those scriptures down on note cards and I read them, and I read them, and I keep reading them. His word is my shield and my sword.

Brian Frost: So, for those in the room who feel embattled, I just want you to know that Christ will hold you fast. Look to him in faith. In a minute, we're going to sing a song about God's sovereignty over us. What I want to encourage you to do is whether you feel it or not is to lean into the song. Lean into the Lord because he is there for you.

So, let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for your kindness to us, and I pray for those that are embattled, those that are just wrestling right now with darkness. I pray God for the light of hope to pierce through the darkness. I pray father that as we have an offering, we pray God for your blessing upon these resources, that they would take the gospel far and fast. But God, as we sing to you know, I pray that you would minister to our hearts as we sing truth over each other. God, help us to lean in. To understand, to see, to believe what we are singing. And I pray, father, that you would be gracious to each one of us. That you would give us the gift of belief and help us to remember that you are sovereign over us. We pray all this in Christ name. Amen.



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.