

## How's your mental health, my friend?

There have been all kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, but you must agree that this has got to be one of the most bizarre times you or I have ever seen on this earth.

A great many challenges have been put before us in recent weeks. The challenge that I want to share with you is one that I face personally. Perhaps it is one that faces you as well. It is depression.

Pretty much everyone has felt depression at some point in their lives. You know, that feeling of sadness that starts deep within, nags at you and manifests itself into some outward emotion. Perhaps tears, or rage, or irritability. You cannot name it, explain it, or comprehend it, it is just there. But, when you cannot seem to move past it, it is more than just the “blues”. It is clinical depression.

Right now, many of the things normally done to counteract these feelings are not available to us. But, let me make one thing perfectly clear... Depression does not reflect on the love that the Father has for you! Let me say that again... **Depression does not reflect on the love that the Father has for you!**

One way to describe the feelings of depression is by comparing it to the feeling of being in an unescapable shadow. Probably the most known reference to a shadow is from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. It paints a rather ominous picture in our minds of being in an incredibly low place with no light.

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, (vs 4a)*

However, it continues with the remedy for being in that low place. If you remember nothing else, remember this...

*I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (vs 4b)*

Right now, in this time of uncertainty, there are days when getting out of bed just doesn't seem worth the effort. When my mind goes to that dark place in the valley, I “push” myself into thinking of the many blessings I have. (And, I have quite a few.) Even when I don't remember it consciously, unconsciously I know that “*thou art with me*”. As a Christian, the Spirit of our Lord was given me.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; John 14:16*

And, as Paul writes to the Romans, I know He makes intercession for me.

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:25*

Depression is an infirmity. It does not separate us from God, but instead we are helped by the Holy Spirit when we can not “speak” for ourselves. Nothing, no nothing, can separate us from that love.

*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39*

Whether you suffer from clinical depression or not, you may be feeling the “shadow” of it now. In the last 6 weeks everyone has been subjected to unprecedented changes in their lives. Some more than others, but still all have been affected. And, yes, it may be challenging your faith, but let me say this again...

**Depression does not reflect on the love that the Father has for you!**

Let me close with the words of Paul to the Philippians...

*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7*



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