

Sermon Series: “Facing Life’s Problems with God’s Hope”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—1/16/05

Title: “Handling Depression”

Text: 1 Kings 19

Intro.: Ills.: Fastball Fears

Theme: Running to the Lord rather than from the problem when we feel overwhelmed by the crisis of moment.

Depression’s Causes

- Experiencing things outside of our control (**Print and read 1 Kings 19: 1-2**)
- Allowing fear to lead you into isolation (**Print and read vss. 3-4**)
- Adopting a “*messiah complex*” (**Print and read vs. 10**) (repeated in vs. 14—repeat untruth long enough becomes truth)

Depression’s Dangers

- **Despair**— the transition from discouragement to idolatry
 1. Ills.: Insurance question to new mother: ‘Have you ever contemplated suicide?’ — suicide one of top 3 killers of teens — 2x’s more likely for police, clergy, and dentists
 2. Elijah’s slide into despair (**Print vss. 4**) : fear—>self-made plan—>isolation—>gave up—>asked to die
 3. Our slide into despair: fear of losing things—>white knuckled self-made plan—>self-worth isolation—>addiction/ obsession—>despair of life
- **Destruction** – both physical, spiritual, and possibly eternal
 4. In despair Elijah did foolish things (**Print vss. 3-7**)
 1. Left his companion to go it alone (probably had justifiable reason of not wanting to endanger him)
 2. Deep in the desert without food and water
 3. Lies down in the sleep of death (shock and dehydration) (only aroused by angel’s encouragement twice)
 5. In despair we do foolish things
 1. Fall into destructive relationships or addictions to numb the pain
 2. Try to rescue ourselves through workaholism or procrastination—compounding the despair by looking to self
 3. Allow ourselves to go so far that often it is hard to real us back in through medical or psychological help
 4. Satan, the *destroyer*, wants nothing more than to lead me into despair leading me to chose harm
 5. **Ills.: Fastball Fears**
 6. If you find yourself there, remember you have a **Deliverer** —more powerful than your foes in life
 1. *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10*
 2. *The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4: 4*

God’s Depression Busters

- **God’s Grace (Print and read vss. 5-13)**
 1. Elijah gave up; God never did (4x’s he comes after Elijah – 5, 7, 9, 13)
 2. The grace of God is that no matter how far we have run from God it is not too far for him to find me and reclaim me
- **God’ Sustenance (vss. 6-8)**
 3. God provided what Elijah needed and more so for the **next 40 days**

4. *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4: 19*
5. Are you looking to the wrong things to carry you for today and wondering how you will get through tomorrow?
6. Come to God's table and feast on what will sustain you.
7. **Print and read Isaiah 55: 1-3**
- **God's Confrontation (vss. 9-13)**
 8. God will not *enable discouragement* but *empowers recovery*
 9. God's pattern for depression busting is *conviction, confession, reconciliation, and deliverance*
 10. God will often use your "friends" to do this
 11. *Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Proverbs 27:6*
- **God's Perspective (Print and read vss. 15-18)**
 12. From God's vantage point Elijah was not the only one left (still 7,000 believers with him)
 13. **Ills.:** *"The wise man in the storm prays to God, not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear."* **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
 14. God was not finished with Elijah and is not with you, either
 15. *He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil. 1: 6*

Depression in America

The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four Americans is suffering from some form of depression. Think of your three best friends. If they're okay, then it's you. **Citation: Rita Mae Brown, Church Champions Update (11-26-01)**

Fastball Fears

We are sometimes like the baseball players who used to face Sandy Koufax, the famous pitcher for the LA Dodgers during the 60's. According to Jim Kaat, another great pitcher, "Koufax was the only major-league pitcher whose fastball could be heard to hum. Opposing batters, instead of being noisily active in their dugout, would sit silently and listen for the fastball to hum. They would then take their turn at the plate already intimidated."

1 Kings 19:1-18

¹Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ²So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

³Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. ⁷The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to

death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." ¹⁵The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."

Isaiah 55:1-3

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.