

When All Hope Disappears

Scripture used: Jobs 17:1 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

Pastor Hurmon kicked us off with the tragic story of Pastor Rick Warren's son Matthew who took his own life after battling mental illness for years. Rick Warren stated that "the more people we know in Heaven, the closer Heaven is to us." But sometimes that feels way too close! For many, suicide still has a huge stigma. It also leaves the surviving family and friends with a deep sense of shame and guilt. Pastor Hurmon reminded us that nowhere in the Bible is suicide characterized as an unforgivable sin. Suicide is the result of being overwhelmed by mental illness, but grace and mercy can still have the last word.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Depression is a sense that "my days are over, my hopes have disappeared."** This is what Job is experiencing in this week's Scripture. He's beyond grief, full of torment and anguish. Job is depleted of all hope. Suffering produces depression and a desire to "end it." But depression can also produce suffering! We feel numb, "in the dark", and think about death. We lose appetite for life (washing, dressing well, exercising, eating). Our jobs, health, families, and relationships suffer.
- 2) **Every day, we need a positive declaration that God has plans for us.** When we recognize the signs of depression, we have to reaffirm who we are, get together with friends & family, participate, and engage with our Life Groups. We have to take care of ourselves, know who God says we are through Scripture, take care of ourselves with healthy nutrition, exercise, prayer, social support -- and medication and counseling if needed. Our faith is the scaffolding to take care of ourselves in pragmatic ways. James 1:17 reminds us that "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..."
- 3) **Life is a series of long waiting seasons as miracles incubate in our lives.** Our faith is a structural framework, not an instant remedy to overcome the woes of life. Miracles take time, as many prior witnesses can attest (Hebrews 12:1-2). Rick Warren never stopped believing in God, but he seriously doubted His wisdom. Pastor Hurmon mentioned his own personal anger when their first child was stillborn, after 9 months of daily prayers. "God, you made a fool out of me." That level of anger can lead us to question God's wisdom. But in those moments we need to remember what God has already done for us, and that He is with us in the dark. This will rebuild our trust in Him.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - In what ways is this message relevant to your life right now? Does it speak to you personally? Does it bring to mind a close friend or loved one? How have you encountered depression, and in what ways did this message affect your perspective?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - If wrestling with depression is an active reality in your life right now, either for yourself or a person close to you, what "next step" might be appropriate to move in a direction of greater health? Consider the full range of practical choices, from deeper spiritual and relational engagement (prayer, study of Scripture, prioritizing relationships) to medical and professional engagement (exercising regularly, going to see a doctor, reaching out to a professional therapist, etc.) Recognize that struggling with depression will likely require trying one thing at a time to move in a direction of health.
- 3) **DO** - If you aren't actively wrestling with depression in your own life right now, it's a great time to develop a "gratitude list" of ways that God has proven his faithfulness and goodness in your life. When you encounter suffering, this list will be something that can remind you to not lose hope and to continue to trust in God. If you are actively wrestling with depression, or you are walking alongside another person struggling with depression, commit to taking the next step toward health. Turn toward God now and declare "I will confront depression with trust!"