

#AllTheFeels – Depression

This month we are discussing the emotion of Depression and how Psalm 88 shows us that we can find an everlasting hope even amongst our deepest depression. As we study together through this Psalm, we will see that we need to stay close to the Father's heart, be in community with God's people, and fix our eyes on an eternal perspective.

Read Psalm 88

Watch #AllTheFeels – Depression

- Why might Christians think that they shouldn't be depressed? Is that a reasonable assumption?

1. We must seek God for answers

Read verses 1-9 & 13

As it was discussed in the video, depression can be caused by a number of things. It may be simply a chemical imbalance in the body, a difficult circumstance outside of our control, or a spiritual darkness that we have yet to seek God on.

We are not sure what caused the depression that the psalmist was going through but we see that he was fervent to seek God for answers. Looking to God for answers does not mean that we refuse the good gifts that God gives us such as; medicine and Christian

counseling. It just means that we continue to seek God's heart as we look for ways to overcome depression.

- Considering our psalmist. Is seeking God a guaranteed cure for depression? Why or why not?

2. We must find a living hope in the face of depression

Read verses 10-12

Depression has a way of distorting our perception and outlook on the world and our lives. In these verses the psalmist can only focus on death and the grave because his sight has become distorted towards his reality, he has no hope for the future.

However; we have a great hope in knowing that Jesus Christ has defeated death and sin on our behalf, Jesus has shown us that there is greater life than what we are currently dealing with.

Our living hope is anchored in Jesus, we can be reassured of His goodness even in our times of depression.

- Even in times of darkness and depression, what are some things you can remind yourself of to find a perspective of hope?

3. We must find authentic community in the face of loneliness

Read verses 14-18

In these verses the psalmist speaks of loneliness and how there is no one walking through this journey with him, how the sadness has overwhelmed him because there is no one to lean and depend on.

Our impulse in times of sadness and depression is to retract from others and isolate ourselves. This isolation comes out of a place of shame for what we are going through or not wanting to burden others with our pain, however; God's design for the church is that we would be an authentic community living out life together.

Real community is forged when we are willing to hurt and heal with others. Authentic community can only be formed out of vulnerability, lean into those God has placed around you.

- What do you think authentic community is like?

4. We must fix our eyes on an eternal perspective

Read James 1:2-4

We know many of the early church Christians found themselves in low places such as prison and becoming martyrs for the gospel.

However; they were able to continue on in joy because they knew there was an eternal goal and reward for their suffering.

Understanding and gaining an eternal perspective helps to endure our troubles and times of darkness with hope and even joy.

- How can we possibly consider our trials a joy?
- Does finding joy diminish the pain that we are going through? Why or why not?

Psalm 88 shows us that in times of depression and sadness that we need to stay close to the Father by seeking Him for answers, leaning on His living hope, surrounding ourselves with authentic community, and fixing our eyes on an eternal perspective. God is near to the broken-hearted and He has given us great gifts of hope and freedom through relationship with Him, counseling, and medication (if need be).

Our faith does not eliminate the potential for depression, but it does help us to walk through it with hope and strength.

Pray for each other's needs and that in times of struggling we would be confident to lean on each other.