



Ways Forward

WEEK 3: MAY 31, 2020

We hope you are enjoying, learning, and being challenged by the ANCHORED Sermon Series on mental health and the Church. We pray on this Pentecost Sunday that everyone will feel refreshed and strengthened in the Holy Spirit.

A quick review of where we have been with ANCHORED:

- Dr. Nii Addy from Yale University shared some of the biological and clinical aspects of mental health and mental illness and how faith may provide positive stimuli. Watch [here](#).
- Sermon Week 1: Pastor Mike shared from I Kings on how Elijah dealt with a stressful situation and more importantly how God pursued him.
- Dr. John Lennox from Oxford University encouraged us to not think about science and faith as two independent realms but rather ones that are complementary and consistent with a biblical world view. [Watch here](#).
- Sermon Week 2: Dr. Phil Ryken shared from Psalm 142 how David communicated openly with God in the midst of a very difficult and dark situation, as well as how this psalm is a "lesson" on how to pray in such instances.

Join us this Wednesday, June 3 at 7:00 p.m. for "A Conversation on Resilience and Mental Health." The webinar will be hosted by Pastor Mike and include 3 professional subject matter experts. [Register here](#).

Introduction

As mentioned last week, isolation, withdrawal, and feeling alone are not uncommon feelings in a stressful situation, especially for those living with mental illness. We saw this the previous 2 weeks and see it again this week with another psalm of desperation, Psalm 13. As with the prior sermons, we also see God pursuing and loving those who are in the midst of deep distress.

Sermon: Psalm 13

Pastor Mike shared a few comments about Vincent Van Gogh and the intersection between his art and his faith journey.

-Was this new information to you?

Christ Church will have the opportunity to worship with and hear from Fernando Ortega. Generally speaking, we know that music and the arts can have therapeutic value.

- Do you or someone you know use the creative arts to express your thoughts and feelings?
- How might you use the creative arts to communicate how you are feeling or how you interpret a passage of scripture with God and others?

Verses 1-2

David cries out in despair and anger, repeating the plea "How long?" several times. He calls out God for ignoring him and letting his enemy triumph over him. God is hiding. This appears to be different from what we discussed last week in Psalm 142. There is no hint of hope or remembrance of who God is.

- Have you or someone you know ever felt this way for an extended period of time?
- Have you ever shared such feelings with a loved one or follower of Christ? What was that like?

Verses 3-4

David pleads with God to come out of hiding, as if to say, "Look at me! Say something! 'Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.' Otherwise, my enemies will rub it in if you don't do something!" Again, he is crying out, "How long?"

- Have you ever been in a place where there seemed to be no answer or movement from God after an extended period of time?
- How did you navigate that time? Did you share the struggle with a loved one or Christ follower?

The Psalmist uses the phrase "wrestle with my thoughts" (v. 2), and Pastor Mike referenced the book *Wrestling with My Thoughts*.

- How can we, as followers of Christ, walk with others who are in such places, whether for a short or long period of time? (See additional suggestions in the "Response" section below.)
- What role(s) may the Holy Spirit play as we walk with others or wrestle with our own thoughts?

Verse 5-6

Someone once said, "God's train is never late, seldom early, but always on time." While this may be true, it doesn't provide immediate relief to those in a "How long?" place. Here, David suggests an act of faith, an act of worship, that can bring some "light to our eyes" (v. 3) and hope for the future in the midst of the (perceived) silence of God. As we studied last week in Psalm 142, this psalm also ends with a desire to worship.

- How can we foster "trust in [God's] unfailing love" as individuals and as a faith community?

As Pastor Mike noted, some seasons of "How long?" continue indefinitely; there may also be other biological or clinical factors involved.

- How do we encourage our loved ones or other followers of Christ to avail themselves of additional resources?
- How do we listen to others who may encourage us to engage with such resources?

RESPONSE:

If you feel like you are in a "How long?" season,

- Take a first step to reach out to a loved one, a friend, a pastor, or consider one of the resources listed on the ANCHORED sermon series page [here](#).
- Some helpful tips for engaging with others who are living with and/or supporting someone with mental illness:
 - It is okay to feel uncomfortable. Don't feel the need to "fix it."
 - Listen.
 - Proactively greet someone. Sit with them, if it's an appropriate setting. This can have a positive impact on those feeling lonely or isolated.
 - Supporting an individual or a family living with a mental illness is not different from doing so for a physical illness; bring a meal or other needed resources, ask them if they would welcome others bringing meals or what other needs they have.
- While it may or may not be appropriate to share specific details with your Small Group, ask them to pray for and with you.
- Listen to, sing along with, or play worship music that reminds you of God's greatness and love for you. A link to music and related information for Fernando Ortega can be found [here](#).

RESOURCES:

Including reaching out to the pastoral staff and a/your counsellor or healthcare professional, several resources are available [here](#).

[Where is God in a Coronavirus World?](#) by Dr. John C. Lennox