

## The Mantle of the Gospel

Vannessa Dixie

The gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached at this very hour all over the world. At this moment, in some home, across a kitchen table or a sprawling metropolis and maybe even in a quiet plain or through the use of technology via the internet, the gospel is being taught.

This simplistic lesson of love with the majesty of all creation is being heard and setting hearts aflame and igniting consciences through the message of God in the person of Jesus. Long ago, with careful forethought and meticulous planning, God fashioned His will towards us, the pinnacle of His handiwork and made provisions for our restoration through the blood of Jesus Christ. For our enjoyment and delight, He formed and filled the earth in supreme artistic majesty (*Jeremiah 10:12*). God loves us beyond measure or constraint and beyond our thought and control. This is the gospel that is being recounted to the four corners of the earth.

History, both secular and religious attests to the tremendous power of the gospel. Empires have fallen, regimes have toppled and governments collapsed, but the Kingdom of God marches triumphantly on regarded on the lips, hearts and minds of the saints who sacredly preserve it. As every knee will bow before Him, every tongue will confess to God (*Romans 14:11*) and every eye will see him (*Revelation 1:7*), the message is being delivered. Hearts will be convicted and a choice will be made and in no uncertain terms, the gospel will be preached and taught. In some places it is spoken in whispered tones and in others pronounced grandly from a podium or pulpit. In prepared speech or impromptu conversation, the message of Christ is told: it was His desire to leave His heavenly existence as God, put on flesh, don a human suffering, die a cruel death, walk among us and feel, think and love as we do and remain pure.

To Himself, be the answer to all questions and remedy for sin with the magnitude of all creation obeying His will. My god, your God, our God . . . The Sweet Surrender, The Hope of Glory, The Rod of Chastisement, The Beauty of Heaven walked among us and delivered into the hands of simple men the message that reverberates to the core of human existence! The gospel is being spoken at this very minute.

Let us pray that those muted tones will be strengthened to loud proclamation and the hearers will be moved to their hearts to come to Jesus. God desires that none

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should be lost, so He revealed Himself through Christ, the Word. From the formulation of the plan in God's mind until today, it has been His will that His word not be silenced. John, from the isle of Patmos gave a glimmer of the outcome: *God's message in triumph*. The great commission bids us to carry the message

in our hearts, on our lips and to the ear of a prospective believer and trust that the word will make due course to the heart of the hearer. God's word will not return to Him void (*Isaiah 55:11*), and His desire is not the loss of a single precious soul. Our aid has been enlisted as on the day of the commission directive to therefore make disciples, and we must take up this mantle! This call to action for the gospel must be preached and taught by our generation as it was in generations past.

The corded common thread that binds us to our spiritual past is the keeping and spreading of the gospel of Jesus. Won't you take this mantle of the gospel with you every day and share the message of love, God's unconditional love, His selfless act of giving His only Son to us (*John 3:16*)?

# Depression, An Unhealthy State of Mind

Dody Gibson

Depression is emotional pain varying from melancholy to psychosis. Whether we suffer short-term discouragement or unbearable mental stress needing professional help, we all have been touched by this problem, whether within ourselves, or someone we know. This is not a *new* problem, for it is as old as this world we live in.

"Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?'" (Genesis 4:6).

*Countenance* comes from a word that means a changed expression, which reflects the inner feelings. It is found fifty-five times in the Old and New Testaments.

No one can be happy all the time. Even the Blue Bird of Happiness has a bad day now and then. Having our own experiences enables us to have empathy with others in their times of trials. Being a Christian does not protect us from emotional pain. Indeed it may cause some of these problems. Going to heaven is a rocky road. What Bible character can we read about that did not suffer hopelessness and despair for their faith? Paul is the first to come to mind and he is an excellent example for dealing with depression.

We each tend to believe our problems are worse than anyone else's. Becoming self-centered is a mistake. We focus inward and the pain intensifies. We look for someone to blame; some even criticizing God for allowing such things to happen. But all things in life have a purpose and misfortune *can* be an avenue that will bring glory to God. It pleases Him to see His children overcome their difficulties and go on to fulfill their goals in life. Man will focus upon the pain of the moment but God knows the joys of eternity. If we truly have the greater burden, then we have the ability to glorify Him all the more.

Remember, discouragement is Satan's greatest weapon. If you allow him to take over, he will. He wants you depressed, unhappy, dissatisfied, and discouraged. This will leave you with little energy or willpower to serve the Lord. Keep in mind that Satan knows your weakest character flaws, and he is relentless in his endeavor to bring you down.

If the Bible could be summarized in one short phrase, it would read, "Love God, love your neighbor, and love yourself." If you truly follow this, you will have many friends, a degree of success and happiness, and you will please God and have a home with Him for all eternity.

No, this realm of our existence is not Paradise. It is a journey through many trials and a preparation for the final test at the end. Depression is all downhill. The uphill road to happiness is hard work. Sometimes we need professional help, and

many effective medications are available to help treat clinical depression. But the remedy for emotional depression is never enough without the Lord. The Bible is the greatest psychology book ever written and the timeless message it contains is the key to our own healthy state of being.

From the Scriptures we learn of how several Bible characters reacted to depressing events:

1. Job 2:9-10—Job realized we can expect tragedy as well as blessings in our lifetime. In all this, Job did not accuse God.
2. 1 Samuel 1:11—Hannah was barren and her husband's other wife provoked her continually. She took her fervent prayers to the Lord who blessed her with Samuel, and later with other sons and daughters.
3. Daniel 5:5-6, 30—Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall and was so troubled his hip joints were loosened and his knees knocked one against the other. His violent death was imminent.
4. Matthew 6:16—These hypocrites disfigured their faces feigning a sad countenance that they might appear unto men that they had fasted, denying themselves food and drink. Jesus said, "They have their reward."
5. 1 Kings 21:4—King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard which was adjacent to the palace. Upon denial, he lay down on his bed with his face to the wall and didn't eat, brooding in a childish pout.
6. 1 Kings 19:13-14, 18—Elijah hid in a cave mistakenly believing he was the only one left of God's people, and others sought his life. God told him there were still seven thousand left that did not worship Baal.
7. Matthew 26:38, Luke 22:44—Our Lord suffered a depression so severe it could have caused His death. Perspiration mingled with blood from the tiny capillaries under the skin is evidence of this extreme emotional trauma, and it's no wonder that Luke, a physician, was the only one to record it. There are medical journals that document this rare condition. It is called—*Haematidrosis*.

Romans 15:4 explains to us that the events found in the Scriptures will help us understand that Bible characters of old endured trials, travails, and troubles. But since they overcame, we should also be victorious by their examples of faith: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."