

From Victory to Despair

- I. Introduction
 - a. The meeting on Mt. Carmel (1 King 18:21, 38-39)
 - i. An amazing demonstration of the power of God
 - ii. An apparent overwhelming victory over the forces of evil
 - b. Less than two days later (19:4)
 - i. He appears totally defeated
 - ii. What happened?
 - c. The victory didn't last (19:1-4)
 - i. No change in the leader's attitudes
 - ii. More threats and living on the run
 - d. After a mountain-top experience, Elijah enters a deep valley
 - i. He goes from exaltation to exhaustion
 - ii. From delight to despair
 - iii. From victory to defeat
 - iv. From triumph to hopelessness
 - e. In our modern language, we would say that Elijah suffered a time of depression
 - i. So did Ahab - 1 Kings 21:1-16 –
 1. Causes
 - a. Wanted a vineyard, but couldn't get it -
 2. Reaction
 - a. Went to bed,
 - b. Turned his head to the wall,
 - c. wouldn't eat –
 3. Solution
 - a. His wife got what he wanted for him
 - b. Then he was happy
 - ii. So did Job –
 1. Causes
 - a. lost his health, wealth, family, friends, reputation
 2. Reaction
 - a. Remained faithful
 - b. Cried
 - c. Wanted to die
 - d. Felt that life was unfair
 3. Solution
 - a. God told him: Stand up and answer me: Job 38:3; 40:7
 - b. Job realized: God has all power, I cannot understand His purposes Job 42:1-6
 - iii. So did Jonah
 1. Causes
 - a. God didn't destroy Ninevah
 2. Reaction

- a. It is better to die than to live
 - 3. Solution
 - a. God gave him a shade plant and took it away, then rebuked him
 - iv. So did Timothy –
 - 1. Causes
 - a. Difficulties
 - b. Disappointments
 - c. Opposition
 - 2. Reaction
 - a. Fear,
 - b. Reticence
 - 3. Solution
 - a. 2 Tim. 1:6-7, 2 Tim 4:5 – Stir up the gift that is in you; fulfill your work
- II. KEY THOUGHT: Elijah's depression and God's response to it can give us encouragement and instruction for when enter life's darker times
- III. Elijah's depression
- a. The causes
 - i. Disappointment
 - ii. Loss & Grief
 - iii. External circumstances
 - b. The cycle
 - i. Thoughts
 - ii. Actions
 - iii. A downward spiral that reinforces itself
 - iv. Elijah
 - 1. Thought
 - c. The Symptoms of Depression
 - i. Desire to be alone
 - ii. Despair
 - iii. Lack of self-worth
 - iv. Desire to die
 - v. Desire to sleep
 - vi. Disinterest in food
 - vii. Feelings of failure, grief and loss
 - viii. Feelings of loneliness => Yet he isolated himself
 - ix. Underestimation of good circumstances
 - x. Overestimation of evil circumstances
 - xi. Preoccupation with the negative
- IV. God's response
- a. What it was not
 - i. Cheer up!
 - ii. You shouldn't feel this way
 - iii. If you were pleasing to God you wouldn't be in this circumstance
 - iv. Rom 12:15; Prov. 25:20

- b. What it was
 - i. Providing for Elijah's needs
 - 1. Providential care
 - 2. Arise and eat (twice)
 - 3. Did not provide his wants
 - a. He wanted to die
 - b. God elected not to kill him now
 - c. Or ever to allow him to die
 - ii. Personal contact
 - 1. Demonstration of impersonal Divine power (three times)
 - a. God can do anything
 - b. Anything we can imagine
 - c. And much more
 - 2. Demonstration of personal Divine presence
 - a. God is doing something
 - b. He is communing with us and holding us in His care
 - iii. Persistence
 - 1. What are you doing here? (twice)
 - a. You! – Elijah
 - b. Here! – In a cave in isolation
 - iv. Focus on actions rather than feelings
 - 1. Tasks to perform/Purpose to fulfill
 - 2. Correction of false perceptions/beliefs
 - a. He didn't answer according to his folly when he wanted to die
 - b. Now he gives correction
 - 3. God always has something for us to do
 - a. Do that
 - b. Even if we don't feel like it

V. Conclusion

- a. Those who were depressed
 - i. Elijah
 - 1. Cause
 - a. Disappointment, Fear
 - 2. Reaction
 - a. Classic symptoms of depression
 - 3. Solution
 - a. Why are you here?
 - b. Stand up
 - c. You have a job to do
- b. Satan loves depression
 - i. It is a natural reaction to loss and sorrow
 - ii. But Satan can use it to
 - 1. Enslave people to sin
 - 2. Immobilize with guilt and sorrow
 - 3. Destroy lives and souls

- 4. Deactivate Christian
- c. God has a solution
 - i. To depression – 2 Tim 1:6-7
 - 1. We have the gift of being able to act independently of negative thoughts and feelings
 - 2. We have hope, power, and love through Jesus
 - ii. To Sin
 - 1. Forgiveness through the blood of Jesus
 - 2. Rom. 8:31-35
- d.