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*Savior Who Understands*

If anyone savored His alone time with God, it was the Savior. And when the crowds prevented Him from having some, He didn't explode in anger or scold their insensitivity. He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like "sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9-36). They were the very people He came to save, the very sheep He came to shepherd. Jesus understands when we feel stressed. Perhaps we ought to feel compassion on others like He did, even in our own distress.

**Jesus understands when people frustrate your expectations.** The apostles were eyewitnesses of His miracles. They saw Him heal a leper, a paralytic, and Peter's own mother-in-law. Yet, when their safety was threatened by the violent storm on the sea, they wondered how He could sleep on the boat. Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, but not before rebuking these "men of little faith" (Matt. 8:26). They should have known that a God who cares for sparrows and lilies was watching over His chosen twelve.

At times, people disappoint us. Even those in whom we have great confidence sometimes fail us. That does not mean we should hold everyone at arm's length or never trust again. We must be patient and forgiving, just as the Lord is with us when we fail Him. After all was said and done and Jesus ate the final Passover with the apostles, "He loved them to the end" (John 13:1). He never fails to show us the way.

Jesus understands, even when you think no one else does. Why we don't draw nearer to Him when we need Him the most, I'll never understand.

Bubba Garner, *Biblical Insights*

## Remember in Prayer

### The Sick:

**Susie Kaiser** continues to suffer with chronic back pain and knee pain. She has also been diagnosed with lymphodema resulting in swelling in her legs. She is currently receiving treatment on an outpatient basis as UMC.

**Billie Keller** was able to be with us Wednesday night after her recent hospitalization to insert stents in her heart.

**Sibyl Claypool**, Mark's mother, is at home recovering from knee replacement surgery. Her address is 443 Oakley Dr., Nashville, TN 37220.

**Vicky Collins**, friend of Carolyn Lowder who underwent surgery for breast cancer, is currently receiving chemotherapy.

Continue to remember **Xenna Gooch, Katherine See, Ronald Miller**, Larry's father, **Louis Mullen, James Tanksley** and **Pansy Hensley**.

## News & Notes

--**Group 3** will meet today in the Library after the morning service.

--Everyone is invited to a gathering Friday night, Oct. 30 at the Claypool's house at 6:30

## *Service Times*

SUNDAY

Bible Study—9:00 am

Worship—9:55 am & 6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study 7:00 pm

# Perry Heights Weekly Bulletin

Perry Heights church of Christ  
423 Donelson Pike  
Nashville, TN 37214  
(615) 883-3118

"...let us consider how we may encourage one another"  
Heb. 10:24

October 25, 2009

## Defeating Depression

Most of us are visited from time to time by the mind-numbing feeling of depression—sapping our energy, beating on our self-esteem and garbling our sense of perspective. Despite the certain promises of God, we get shaken by the uncertainty of our times. Through we are blessed beyond measure, we become mired in self-pity. While we have been given the ultimate freedom and hope, we slog through the deep mud of depression.

One day, one moment, we become aware of our fatigue and feel a cloud settling over us, pulling us toward the dark world of depression. Why? How do we lose our way; and how do we get back on track and stay there?

**Learning from Elijah:** In the story of Elijah, recorded in 1 Kings 17-19, we see a picture of a powerful servant of God brought low in despondency. It is an intriguing portrayal, in that Elijah bottoms out when it seems he should soar. This strong prophet has, by chapter 19, demonstrated the power of the One True God through a very public humiliation of the false prophets, finally washing away their influence by the heavy rain which broke the drought of the land.

After standing victorious over the enemies of his God, Elijah finds himself threatened with the retribution of Jezebel. He flees to the desert, sits under a broom tree and gives up. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life. I am no better than my ancestors." Elijah had lost his bearings.

There is a strong tendency to have a major let down following a burst of stressful activity. Doesn't it seem we often get sick during our vacations, just after the frenzy of packing and getting things ready to leave? How about the blues that hit after the bustle of the holidays?

Elijah had been toe-to-toe with 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. As the children of Israel wavered between God and these false gods, Elijah set up a challenge match, intended to drive the Israelites off center by a demonstration of God's almighty presence. After all this, he faced threats, not cheers. He met resistance, not faith in God. He may have been worn out. Certainly, he was greatly disheartened.

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## A Savior Who Understands

I keep an unnamed folder in my filing cabinet at the office. I use it to store cards and notes that people send to me, words of encouragement that always seem to come at just the right time. Some are from little kids who have drawn a picture of me in the pulpit. Others are from groups of Christians who just met on their own one night to write cards to their brothers and sisters. All of them are special and meaningful in some way. One that I cherish came several years ago from Denise Bowman shortly after my grandmother dies. She simply wrote, “I remember how it hurts.”

One of the things that help us endure times of grief or discouragement is the knowledge that someone understands what we’re going through. We are comforted by the thought that we’re not the only person in the course of human history who has ever felt this way, that a fellow believer has walked down this same path before and can sympathize with us. As a spiritual family, we “*bear one another’s burdens*” (Gal. 6:2) because we know what it’s like to have burdens that seem unbearable. But how much more ought we to be strengthened when we realize that we have an elder Brother who understands.

*“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). Jesus has been here. That means He has been there. He can sympathize with us, a word that literally means “feel with”, or as the KJV translates, “*be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*” Jesus, our example, has experienced the same difficulties that we endure. And He did so without ever regretting how He handled them, without ever wishing He could go back and do it differently, without ever sinning. “*Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.*” (4:16).

**Jesus understands when death darkens your door.** He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, a man whom the Scripture says He loved (John 11:5, 36). When the disciples reported the execution of John the Baptist to Him, the Son of God “*withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself*” (Matt. 14:13). Jesus truly remembers how it hurts.

When we are robbed of someone special in our lives, we are often tempted to give up living ourselves. Jesus didn’t do that; He continued in submission to His Father’s will for Him. The Lord has use for widows and widowers. He has a purpose for those whose parents or even whose children have preceded them in death. Jesus understands as One who dealt with death, but didn’t let death deal with Him. He can carry you through.

**Jesus understands when stress threatens your peace.** His time and attention were constantly in demand. If He wasn’t preaching and teaching, He was healing the masses of all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. On at least one occasion, “*there were many people coming and going and they did not even have time to eat*” (Mark 6:31).

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## —continued from front page Defeating Depression

Part of the prescription for his recovery seemed to be to rest and eat right (19:5-8). It is important for us, when facing depression, to care for ourselves physically. Of far greater importance, though, is our need to feed our spirits and to reach out for God’s guidance, comfort and strength.

Another lesson in dealing with despair is seen in vv. 15-16. The Lord directed Elijah to get up and get busy. This call to activity highlights the need to keep at it instead of drifting off alone. God sent Elijah to another two kings and another prophet. Too often we keep cycling through the endless loop of self-doubt and self-pity, paralyzed by our emotional heaviness.

This leads us to a third critical response to depression. Elijah, in his weariness, had lost perspective. He saw himself as the only one fighting the fight. He replayed what he had done and concluded, “*I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.*” When we’re down and struggling, we’ve got to stay focused on the bigger picture. We need to remember that God’s purposes will be fulfilled, even if we can’t possibly imagine how.

God reminded Elijah, after putting him back to work, that he had reserved 7,000 others who remained faithful (v. 48). Depression tempts us to narrow our vision, to pull our world in around us. God’s plans bring us back to His eternal reality and involve us in His higher goals.

The New Testament reinforces these depression-defeating steps as well. Take the time to consider these three passages:

**Spend Time with God:** The Philippians’ path to the surpassing peace of God and away from anxiety led through prayer, supplication and thanksgiving (4:6-8). Time spent opening our hearts in prayer and meditation is our life-line today as well.

**Keep Busy and Involved:** Paul urges us, through Galatians 6:7-9, not to grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. When tempted to lie down, we’ve got to get up and keep doing good.

**Stay Focused on Eternity:** In 2 Corinthians 4:7-18, after emphasizing that we may be knocked down, but not out, Paul says we are renewed because we focus on the unseen. Only by looking to the realm of eternity where God dwells, beyond what we can personally experience, do we stay grounded and renewed.

Depression will keep coming around, knocking on our doors when we are weak and distressed. When we spend time with the Lord, stay busy, and keep our eyes on our Savior, we won’t let it in.

Steve Clark, *Christianity Magazine*

**Our Gospel Meeting began today with Dan Edwards. We will meet this afternoon at 2:00 for a singing, and our evening worship service will be at 2:30 in lieu of 6:00. The services on Monday and Tuesday nights will be at 7:00 pm. Invite your neighbors!! Flyers are available in the lobby.**