

May 23, 2021

Mental Health Awareness: The Compassionate Church (by Pastor Oleg Xu)

Psalm 88 (NKJV)

O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You.

² Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry.

³ For my soul is full of troubles, And my life draws near to the grave.

⁴ I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man *who has* no strength,

⁵ Adrift among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave,

Whom You remember no more, And who are cut off from Your hand.

⁶ You have laid me in the lowest pit, In darkness, in the depths.

⁷ Your wrath lies heavy upon me, And You have afflicted *me* with all Your waves. *Selah*

⁸ You have put away my acquaintances far from me;

You have made me an abomination to them; *I am* shut up, and I cannot get out;

⁹ My eye wastes away because of affliction.

LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.

¹⁰ Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise *and* praise You? *Selah*

¹¹ Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *Or* Your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

¹² Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

¹³ But to You I have cried out, O LORD, And in the morning my prayer comes before You.

¹⁴ LORD, why do You cast off my soul? *Why* do You hide Your face from me?

¹⁵ *I have been* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught.

¹⁶ Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off.

¹⁷ They came around me all day long like water; They engulfed me altogether.

¹⁸ Loved one and friend You have put far from me, *And* my acquaintances into darkness.

Four Encouraging Truths for Christians

1. You are not alone (Matt. 27:46, Ps. 22:1)
2. It is not your fault (Jn. 9:3)
3. God sees you and is with you forever (Ps. 34:18, Job 33:28, Lam. 3:55, Jn. 11:35)
4. God's Word Speaks to You (Ps. 25:16, 42:5)

(Discussion Questions at the back)

Discussion Questions:

1. What may be some reasons for stigma and taboo within the Christian church in regards to mental health and mental illness issues?
 2. As you read this Psalm what is your first impression?
 3. What is the psalmist's problem?
 4. Why does he feel God has abandoned him? Does he express any hope? How?
 5. Name the phrases used in the Psalm to describe the afterlife (there are 16 instances)
 6. Does the psalmist express any hope that God will hear, come, help?
 7. In what ways can Christians show compassion towards people struggles with mental issues?
 8. Write one way you can engage in learning more about mental health:
-

Resources

Focus on the Family

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/mental-health-resources/>

Hope and Healing Center of Houston, St. Martin's Episcopal Church

<https://hopeandhealingcenter.org/>

Grace Alliance

<https://mentalhealthgracealliance.org/the-team>

Southern Baptist Convention, Mental Health Advisory Group & 2013 Resolution

<https://www.sbc.net/resource-library/topic-index/mental-health/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)