



Whether you have been a believer for most of your life, or are just trying to figure out what it even means to follow Jesus, depression and anxiety can come for you when you least suspect it. Many people struggle with these issues on a daily basis, and those numbers have only been going up since COVID-19 hit the American population. What are we to do when we struggle with this kind of darkness? We will look at how God loved one of the Bible's most powerful characters through his own season of depression.

Read 1 Kings 19:1-4

This takes place right after one of Elijah's most successful episodes in his ministry as God's prophet. He had just seen the powerful hand of God, and yet the threat from Jezebel causes him to be afraid, escape to the desert, and even want his life to just come to an end.

Have you ever had a season where you experienced extreme success, or saw God move powerfully, only to be followed by extreme emotional difficulty? If you're with a group, are you willing to share about that time?

Does it surprise you that Elijah, a prophet, would fall into depression and suicidal thought? What does this tell you about the nature of depression and anxiety?

Read 1 Kings 19:5-9a

What sticks out to you about the way God responds to Elijah?

- Sometimes when people experience depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts, they assume that God looks upon them with disappointment and disgust. But here, we see that God responds with care and compassion.

If you have ever gone through a season of depression in which you felt God meet you in it, how did you see God express His care and concern for you?

Read 1 Kings 19:9b-13

What sticks out to you about this portion of the story?

- We often look for God in the “big”- big worship songs, big festivals, big moments in life. Yet, God seems to often be found in the quiet moments of stillness. This is good news to those struggling through the isolation that comes with depression and anxiety, because that is exactly where God can meet you most powerfully.

Read 1 Kings 19:13-16

How would you describe what God is doing with Elijah in this part of the story?

- God corrected the way Elijah was looking at the world. He needed some spiritual optometry. God also affirmed Elijah. He reminded Elijah that he wasn't alone. He then gave Elijah a new mission- it was time to pass along his ministry to a new prophet.

Can you describe a time when God corrected the way you were seeing your life, and then sent you on a new mission that filled with you with purpose?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the way you meet us in our hour of need. Thank you that we can cast our anxieties upon you. Thank you that we can honestly express our hearts to you, and you respond with compassion. But we also thank you that you don't leave us in our despair- you lead us to a place of freedom and hope. May we all receive your grace that transforms us, and may we allow you to call us into a new purpose to share that freedom with others. With people, this might seem impossible, but with God, nothing is impossible. We pray this in the name of Jesus, amen.