

Friday, October 2, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Guests of Desert Hills Lutheran Church,

This weekend I'll be looking at Philippians 3:7-16, about our goal of growing up and maturing in the faith. Don't we all love to hear someone tell us, "grow up." Some of us probably have heard it more than others. I hope you will join either in person if you are comfortable or online.

Yesterday I came across a little book I'd purchased but had not yet read. It was by one of my favorite authors, Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend. The title: *What To Do, When You Don't Know What To Do Discouragement and Depression*. I'm guessing I bought the little book online when ordering other books. I've not finished it, but as a person who has struggled in years past with depression, I thought at this time in history, it might be a good subject for an e update. The two doctors give 8 principles for guiding us out of depression. I won't give all of them, but I'll cover them in the next three e updates.

Principle One: Begin Your Journey with God.

How could it not? But as Christians we sometimes just want to do it all on our own. When it doesn't work, we get discouraged and often just throw in the towel. Healing of depression must begin with a journey with God. This is more than attending worship or being online with a church, this is a real time walk and conversation with God. Jesus said, "God blesses those who realize their need for him" (Matthew 5:3 NLT). God's resources are gifts. We need our creator to help us navigate this life, especially when we find ourselves inadequate to the task of life, and who doesn't find this to be the case at times? In the sermon last week, I told the story of a young man at the end of his rope. He entered an unlocked church and prayed at the altar for hours, "God please listen." As Psalm 18:6 says, "In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears." Principal one is to reach out and ask God for help.

Principle Two: Choose Your Traveling Companions Wisely

When we are depressed, we often separate ourselves from other people. We stop going for coffee, or to church, or we drop out of golf and other fellowship activities. God uses other people to give us support and encouragement and prayer. Solomon said, "Two are better than one... If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). We look for people who can give support and honesty and wisdom and values, etc. If people are not readily available, we return to Principal One and again ask God for help and to bring people into our lives for healing.

I'll continue these principals next week. In the meantime, pray for our country, pray for our President's health, pray for the election, and pray for the end of the lockdown. I hope to see you or be seen by you this weekend.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin