

19-107-3-Psalms 107: The God of Melancholy
fools, insanity, healing, joy
Ps.107:17-22, 43
The mind in tune with God is in tune with life.

INTRODUCTION:

–[**Review:** “God of the Desert” (*God can lead us from homeless deserts to heavenly destinies.*); “God of the Prison” (*Only God can free us from the chains of guilt we forge for ourselves.*)] **this sermon: “The God of Melancholy” (HOM.idea).**
–[**Grolier Encyclopedia:** “Mental health is the state of psychological well-being that includes both subjective comfort and the capacity to function effectively with others. Definitions of mental health invariably include some value statement about how an individual should live his or her life.... Some have argued that the terms mental health and mental illness should be dropped altogether because issues regarding how people are to live are moral and legal rather than psychological or scientific.”] **So, what is it, disease and or behavior?** [**Psychiatrist** Garth Wood in *Myth of Neurosis*, argued that the problem is behavior, which can be helped by “Moral Therapy.”]
–*When people behave foolishly, treating the real world as fantasy, or denying the God who created reality, they suffer for it— melancholy or depression can set in.* But Psalm 107 has the answer: **HOM.idea.**

I. This Condition of Melancholy Can Be Avoided

- A. Foolish patterns can precede depression [as smoking does cancer]
1. Foolish patterns of rebellion oversteps healthy boundaries, ignoring God’s principles of life– v.17, *Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.*
 2. “iniquities” are wrong behaviors, wrong ways of dealing with life
 - a. Two big twins that can destroy us are bitterness and jealousy – **Job 5:2**, Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.
 - b. Our tongues can get us into trouble– **Prov 10:14**, Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin. [*Talking hinders listening.*]
 - c. Another iniquity is isolated thinking– **Prov 12:15**, The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. [**Teamwork** wins!]
 - d. Mishandling conflicts– **Prov 12:16**, A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult. \ **Prov 20:3**, It is to a man’s honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. [Don’t fan the fire!]
 - e. Ignoring true guilt– **Prov 14:9**, Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright. [**Confession** is good for the soul.]
 - f. Repressed childhood anger– **Prov 20:20**, If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch **darkness** [*depression?*].

- B. **The results of these foolish patterns**– v.17, “(they) suffered affliction”
1. [Some signs & symptoms of depression: 1) weight loss from poor appetite; 2) excessive weight gain from overeating; 3) insomnia or increased sleeping; 4) agitation or fatigue; 5) loss of interest in usual activities; 6) feelings of false guilt or worthlessness; 7) diminished ability to concentrate or make decisions; 8) recurrent thoughts of death or suicide]
 2. Depression brings nutritional stagnation– v.18a, *They loathed all food... (sometimes both physical and spiritual food).*
 3. Depression has a morbid focus– v.18b– “near the gates of death” (Life is our true focus [“Glance at death; give life your full attention!”])
 - a. The only reason to think about death is to live a better life.
 - b. Death is a “passing” event that owns just a brief moment; life has a right to the whole of every day, every hour.
 - c. Life’s mission isn’t over till it’s over– **Psa104:33**, I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

TRANS: *Depression is no joke! The condition of melancholy is real!*
But there’s a remedy: **The mind in tune with God is in tune with life.**

II. The Condition of Melancholy Can Be Cured

- A. But the depressed person must be desperate,– v.19a, *Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble*
1. Self-inflicted depression isn’t always self-resolving. (Being responsible for breaking something *doesn’t mean you can fix it.*)
 2. Once depression takes up residence, we have trouble getting it evicted. (Our only hope is to cry to the LORD in our trouble!)
- B. How does the God of Melancholy deliver us from it?
1. v.19b, *he saved them from their distress*– [“Jesus” means: *Jehovah saves, Jehovah delivers, Jehovah heals.*] [**TV drama:** 2 angels in a staring match.]
 2. v.20a, *He sent forth his word and healed them*–
 - a. The “sent forth” Word is intimate, coming from God’s throne....
 - b. John 1 identifies Jesus as “the Word” behind the “Let there be...” in creation; but also the Voice behind the “Be healed!” in the NT.
 3. v.20b, *he rescued them from the grave* [from **Heb. word** *pitfall*, a bowed or *depressed* state]– **Prov.12:25**, An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. \ (**NKJV**) Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad. (Jesus is the “sent Word” who can rescue us from our pitfalls, our states of depression.)
[my poem “Escaping the Pit,” comparing other religions with the God Who Saves...

A self-made, worldly traveller wandered toward the pit of sin,
 And blindly tripping at the brink, he tumbled headlong in.
 He landed in a selfish muck of broken, rotting schemes,
 And slipped about the walls all slimed with his own empty dreams.
 He crawled and struggled upward until all his strength was sapped,
 Then fell back in a muddy heap; he knew that he was trapped!
 He screamed out loud for anyone who might be passing by,
 In hope that they might rescue him, then someone heard his cry.

{A Jewish rabbi (*You've broken the Law! Start keeping it better.*)
 A Hindu mystic (*It's only illusion. Just wait for your next rebirth.*)
 A Muslim teacher (*If prayers and almsgiving doesn't help, it's Allah's will.*)
 A Buddhist monk (*Your desire is the problem. Give it up, and be content.*)
 Finally Jesus comes, helps him out, and tells him to help others out...}

Now you may follow teachers, even prophets, or a view,
 That claim to show salvation by the works that you must do.
 But just like this poor traveller, we'll be groping helplessly,
 Unless the One who made us comes to set our spirits free.
 We need more than a doctrine: sinners need a God who saves,
 Who gives new life and power over all that which enslaves.
 So, search among religions, none can match that One who came:
 A Person to redeem us, Jesus Christ, that is his name. . . .

III. There's an Ongoing Medicine for Melancholy

- A. v.21, *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. (To be in tune with life is to be filled with praise and thanksgiving. It's the medicine to keep loving relationships alive.)*
- B. Gratitude is **preventative medicine!** –
1. v.22a, *Let them sacrifice thank offerings (When life is depressive, our thanksgiving costs us something [OT morning & evening sacrifices].)*
 2. v.22b, *tell of his works with songs of joy (Singing praise songs can help us remember God's blessings [1st verse: "Count Your Blessings"].)*

CONCLUSION:

–[Freud's definition of mental health was the capacity "to work and to love."] The God of Melancholy wants to lead us out of depression into a pathway of love and service– Isa 35:8 (NKJV), A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray."
Jesus saves us to be in tune with God, and in tune with life.

Psalm 107:17-22, 43 (NIV)

- 17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.
 18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.
 19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
 20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.
 21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.
 22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.
- 43 Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD.