



Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

To keep saints sad, doubting, and questioning: Pt. 4

Introduction

In the USA alone, there are roughly 63 million people actively suffering from major depression or anxiety. Those numbers spiked in 2020 due to the pandemic, and they have been consistent since, though there are a few slight changes. As of 2020, suicide is the second leading cause of death in children (0-18) behind "Accidental Deaths." Although not everyone is clinically diagnosed with depression or anxiety, everyone experiences them – even if it occurs in lesser degrees. It's common for humanity to experience sadness, despair, hopelessness, helplessness, fear, stress, worry, or something like these due to the cursed world we live in and the effects of sin.

Although I haven't been diagnosed with depression or anxiety, I do experience these things in different ways and at different times, as we all do. Whether it's directly because of my sin, or whether I'm just in a funky season/mood, there are times when it feels like the 'joy of the Lord' has been snatched from me. I remember when I first became a Christian, I was so filled with joy and comfort, that I thought it would never leave. It remained with me for several years, and then things began to shift. When I went to seminary, those comforts would come and go. To this day, they come and go. The temptation is to think there is something wrong with me – sometimes, there is! Sometimes I need to repent and be restored – to God first, but also to my wife or another relationship. Sometimes I need to confess my sin. Other times, I just find myself in a dry valley longing for the joy of my salvation to be restored. In these moments, it's not uncommon to experience doubts about your faith. Satan will use these moments to try keeping you in sad, questioning, and miserable conditions.

Device: "By suggesting to the soul that his state is not good, because he cannot joy and rejoice in Christ as he once could but has lost that comfort and joy that once was in his spirit."

Definition: Says Satan, "You can remember the time when your heart was much carried out in joy and rejoicing in Christ; you don't forget the time when your heart used to be full of joy and comfort. But now, how you have fallen in your joys and comforts! Therefore, your state is not good. You deceive yourself to think that it was ever good, for surely if it was, your joy and comfort would have continued."

And with this, the soul is apt to take part with Satan and say, "It is as you say; I see all is nothing, and I have but deceived my own soul."

***In what ways have you experienced this in your own life?**

Psalm 42: As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” ⁴ These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. ⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. ⁶ My soul is downcast within me; therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. ⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. ⁸ By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. ⁹ I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?” ¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?” ¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

In what ways should Psalm 42 disarm this device of Satan for a believer?

Remedies

1. Solemnly consider that the loss of comfort is distinct from the loss of grace.

“The soul may be full of holy affections when it is empty of divine consolations. There may be, and often is, true grace, yes, much grace, where there is not a drop of comfort, nor an ounce of joy.”

“Comfort is not of the being – but of the well-being – of a Christian. God has not so linked these two choice lovers together that they may not be put asunder.”

“That wisdom from above will never work a person to reason thus: I have no comfort, therefore, I have no grace. I have lost that joy that I once had, therefore, my condition is not good, and was never good. But it will enable a person to reason thus: Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides. Though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain.”

“The best men’s joys are as fragile as glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking. Spiritual joy is a sun that is often clouded. It is like a precious flower, which is subject to fade and wither.”

Can you share about a time when you lost a sense of joy or comfort? How did that impact you?

2. The precious things that you still enjoy are far better than the joys and comforts that you have lost.

“Your union with Christ, your communion with Christ, your sonship, your saintship, your heirship – which you still enjoy by Christ – are far better than the comforts you have lost by sin.”

“Even though your comforts are gone, yet your union and communion with Christ remains (Jer. 31:18-20). Even though your comforts are gone, yet you are a son, though a comfortless son; an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. Though the ‘bag of silver’ – your comforts – are lost, yet the ‘box of jewels’ – your union with Christ, your communion with Christ, your sonship, saintship, and heirship, which you still enjoy – is far better than the bag of silver you have lost.”

“Yes, the least of those precious jewels is more worth than all the comforts in the world. Let this be a cordial to comfort you, a star to lead you, and a staff to support you – that your box of jewels is safe, though your bag of silver is lost.”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18: Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

***What makes it hard for you not to lose heart when you experience momentary afflictions?**

3. Your condition is no different than what has been the condition of those precious souls whose names were written upon the heart of Christ, and who are now at rest in the bosom of Christ.

“One day you shall have them praising and rejoicing, the next day mourning and weeping. The next day shall have them singing, “The Lord is our portion!” The next day shall have them sighing and moaning, “Why are you cast down, O my soul?”

See: Ps. 51:12, 30:6-7, Job 23:6-9, 30-31; Lam. 1:16, 5:15; Matt. 27:46; Ps. 42:7

***When you lose your comfort or joy, how do you normally compare yourself with other Christians?**

4. God will restore and make up the comforts of his people.

“Though your candle be put out, yet God will light it again, and make it burn brighter than ever. Though your sun for the present be clouded, yet he who rides upon the clouds shall scatter those clouds and cause the sun to shine and warm your heart as in former days.”

Ps. 71:20-21: You who have shown me great and sore troubles shall enliven me again, and you shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

“God takes away a little comfort that he may make room in the soul for a greater degree of comfort.”

“Bear up sweetly, O precious soul! Your storm shall end in a calm, and your dark night in a sunshine day! Your mourning shall be turned into rejoicing, and the waters of consolation shall be sweeter and higher in your soul than ever! The mercy is surely yours – but the time of giving is the Lord’s. Wait but a little, and you shall find the Lord comforting you on every side.”

***Why is your view (i.e., doctrine) of God important for being able to appropriate this remedy in your life? What are some roadblocks to believing this?**

Conclusion

***Prayer Requests for the Deceased and Remedies in your lives, as well as in those you know & love.**