



**12/13 January 2019**  
Vol. 41, No. 2

# Clear the Air: The Christian and Depression and Suicide

*Psalm 42*

**English Services**  
(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude  
Worship through Praise  
Worship through Fellowship  
Baptism (10:30 a.m.)  
Testimony  
Scripture Reading  
Pastoral Prayer  
Worship in the Word  
*Pastor Larry Pabiona*  
Worship through Giving  
Response Song  
Benediction

**Filipino Service**  
(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda  
Tawag sa Pagsamba  
Pagsamba sa Pag-awit  
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita  
Patotoo  
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos  
Panalanging Pastoral  
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos  
*Pastor Sam Rendal*  
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay  
Tugon na Awit  
Bendisyon

See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.



# Clear the Air: The Christian and Depression and Suicide

Today's Message (12/13 January 2019) /  
*Psalm 42*

Our message combines topics from two previous messages in our very first “Clear the Air” series in January 2017—depression and suicide. These topics are combined and brought up again due to recent events involving Christian youth or young adults who unfortunately took their own lives.

To come up with a helpful message in our limited time, we'll focus on a few key questions:

## 1. WHY IS THERE DEPRESSION IN THE FIRST PLACE?

- The Fall and its wide-ranging effect on all of creation:
  - We have been affected by sin at all levels of our being. All of us carry the physical, mental, and relational effects of sinful programming.
  - Mental illnesses are real disorders that often have origins in faulty biological processes. The Bible in fact lists madness along with physical problems like boils, tumors, sores, and blindness in Deuteronomy 28:27-28. Mental disorders do not discriminate according to faith, but affect believers and nonbelievers alike.

## 2. BUT AREN'T CHRISTIANS SUPPOSED TO BE IMMUNE TO DEPRESSION?

- Believers have been transformed spiritually and are righteous before God. But that does not instantaneously remove the sinful “flesh” we still carry around. Like the man born blind, we are all flawed so that “the work of God might be displayed” in us (*John 9:3*).
- Personal sin often causes (or aggravates) depression and anxiety, just as personal sin often causes (or aggravates) heart disease or other diseases. But these same diseases can also be the result, not of personal sin, but of living in a fallen body in a fallen world.
- If our default position in dealing with the cause of depression is that “it is sin until proven otherwise”, we are painfully close to the disciples' error: “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” (*John 9:2*).

## 3. HOW DO WE KNOW WHO ARE THE CLINICALLY DEPRESSED (AND AT RISK OF SUICIDE)?

David and other psalmists often found themselves deeply depressed for various reasons. They did not gloss over or deny what they were feeling, and expressed it to God as the lament Psalms of Scripture. It was a legitimate part of their relationship with God. They interacted with Him through the context of their depression. Using DSM-5 criteria and also Biblical examples, let's look at how to detect the possibility among ourselves.

## 4. HOW DO WE HELP THOSE STRUGGLING WITH DEPRESSION?

- **What not to say:** “Pull yourself together.” “But you've got nothing to be sad about.” “Don't get so emotional.” “Oh, you'll soon get over it.” “It's a sin to be depressed.” “Smile, it can't be that bad.” “Well, things could be worse.” “At least it's nothing serious.” “You should confess your sins.” “You are not still on medication, are you?”
- **What the struggling believer can do for him/herself:**
  1. *Admit that you need help, and ask for it.*
  2. *Christianity is community. The more depressed you are, the less you should isolate yourself*



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*from others, especially those who can help you. Don't fight this battle alone. Find people who will come alongside you.*

- Find a Christian counselor. In our setting (GCF), there is a system of referrals, from lay counselors all the way to psychiatrists with pharmacotherapy, if needed.
  - Find a welcoming group of believers—e.g. a Growth Group or a support group. Depression says you are alone and you should act that way. But that is not true. God is with you and He wants you to reach out to someone who will listen, care, and pray for you.
3. *Don't forget the most basic things: Philippians 4:6–8.*
- **Prayer:** “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
  - **Personal Environment:** “Finally...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” Create your own positive internal milieu.
4. *When alone, focus on Christ. Immerse yourself in the four Gospels and see:*
- The reality of Christ. The love of Christ for you. The power of Christ. The wisdom of God/Christ.
  - Focus your mind on God's love for you. It is not our love for God but His love for us, that matters; His grip on us, not our grip on Him.
5. *Choose to trust Christ even while it's dark.* Faith is not a feeling. Faith is a choice. Faith is not something you are supposed to “have” as if someone must hand it to you. It is something you decide. And it does not matter whether it is big or small, as long as it is placed on the right object—Jesus.
- **What the church family can do to help:** The body of Christ offers four things the mental health care system lacks: (1) a hope that transcends circumstances, (2) a holistic view of people, (3) accessibility, and (4) supportive community.

**This is why the Church should be a safe place for those who struggle.** We need to end the shame. Remember that God has called us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (*Romans 12:15*). This is as much our trial as it is that of the person with the mental illness.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Depression can't rob you of hope because your hope is in a person, and that person, Jesus, is alive and with you. If anyone had a right to be depressed and suicidal, it would be Paul, after everything he went through (*2 Corinthians 11:23–29*)! So let him have the last Word for us: “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 troubles 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. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (*2 Corinthians 4:16–18*) ■

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# Ministry Opportunities + Announcements



## HONORING GOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

*Joy Women Anniversary and Love Month Celebration*

Speakers: Pastor BJ and Dra. Bebet Sebastian  
February 12 (Tue), 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Couples are encouraged to join!  
Please text **0916 243 1901** to register.



## JOURNEYING WITH GRACE

*Naomi Women 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

Speaker: Merlyn Guillermo  
February 23 (Sat), 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
Attendee with Best Headdress will win a special prize! Contact **0917 532 1921** to register.



## THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES SEMINAR

*Learn to express to and receive love from your partner thru the Five Love Languages Forum*

February 23 (Sat), 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Fee: Php 100 (materials and snack included)  
Contact **0917 532 7713** to register, or visit the information booth on Sundays



## GGEX EXTREME

*featuring Discovering What the Future Holds by Precept Ministries*

*All adults without GG are invited.*  
March 31 (Sun) 9:30-10:30 a.m.  
at the Fellowship Hall  
Free snack and material will be provided.  
Registration is **free** but **limited to first 200**.  
Register at the booth at the lobby.

*The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to God by Rubelyn Enriquez, Tess Roseus, Mr. & Mrs. Martin, the Santos boys, and the Messiah College. Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.*

## Join a DISCIPLE-MAKING GROUP

### Growth Group Express

*How to Make Decisions You Won't Regret (Lessons on David's Life)*

Adults without GGs are invited!  
Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.  
Fellowship Hall

### Best Together in Christ

*Group for Couples*

Sundays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.  
Rm. B508

### Spark Growth Group

Mondays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Seniors' Room

### Life in Technicolor

*support group for cancer patients and survivors*

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month  
12:00-3:00 p.m., Seniors' Rm.

### Overcomers

*support group for those under any kind of addiction*

Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

*If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form of this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag, or submit it at the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at **0917 532 1921**.*

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT / January 2019

	General Funds	Mission Support Fund	Others (Designated, facilities, etc.)	Total
January Projected	9,610,406	1,317,698	698,549	11,626,652
Received (Jan. 1-7)	2,553,186	153,115	46,204	2,752,505

# In the midst of depression, God's love doesn't change

BY JUSTINE YAMBAO



I am a home-grown GCFer and is currently privileged to be working as a full-time staff here at GCF. I first

came to know Christ when I was six. I was technically raised in church, even studying in ICS from middle school to high school.

My 2018 ended with being diagnosed with a Bipolar II disorder. I take three pills that helps balance my mood disorders, hormonal imbalance, and insomnia. Last October, I had one of my more serious suicidal attempts. My depression started two weeks before my attempt, when my environment started crumbling. I made a huge irresponsible mistake that really caused me and those around me to be restless and sleepless. I was running out of solutions, and that's when my suicidal thoughts began.

I told God that if He still had a purpose for the mess that I am, I would give Him two weeks to show me anything that would make me want to stay. I couldn't think straight, I couldn't express fully what I wanted to say, and not a single ounce of joy was left in me.

Two weeks had gone with each day getting darker and heavier. I woke up to a firm decision that it would be the day I would do it. I still came to work, but teared up a few times at the thought that it was final. When I got home, I cried while trying to reach

certain trusted people. I was able to talk to a friend who encouraged me, but pain and the desire to die did not go away. The next thing I knew, I was on the balcony of our condo unit on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. I was crying until my tears had dried, apologizing to God for what I was about to do. I messaged my friend, "Help me get out of this. Talk me out of it." But I got no response.

I sat on the balcony, swaying back and forth. How do I jump? What if I survive? Will I survive? Who will miss me and who will I miss? One last deep breath calling out to God when suddenly everything fell quiet. After all the chaos in my head, it felt like the waves just stopped roaring. I suddenly found peace. And all I could hear was a loud distinct voice hushing me. It felt like someone was patting my head, telling me to go back to bed and rest. That was when I felt God's presence for the lack of a better term. How much He cares for me and how much He loves me. How precious my life actually is. That was the moment it was clear to me that I needed to trust Him more and not place my life on my hands.

Being a Christian and living with mental illnesses has caused me to constantly ask what is wrong with me. It belittles you and stirs up doubt in you. But even when that suicidal episode felt traumatic, it was the episode that needed to happen for me to look back and see a glimpse of God's glory. That with all my imperfections, flaws and faults, His love doesn't change ■

## GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS *at the Chapel*

**The GCF Hour of Prayer**  
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

**Midweek Prayer Service**  
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

**ON THE COVER:** *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem (1630)* by the Dutch painter Rembrandt (public domain, [Wikimedia](#)). Jeremiah (aka the lonely prophet) is thought to have written the Book of Lamentations, which contain some of the most vivid cries of suffering and grieving that there is in the Bible.



## Greenhills Christian Fellowship

Know Christ and Make Him Known

Ruby cor. Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605  
Tel. Nos. 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80, 635 0082 to 83 | Fax No. 632 1357  
Mobile No. 0920 961 2964, Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.  
E-mail: [email@gcf.org.ph](mailto:email@gcf.org.ph) • Website: [www.gcf.org.ph](http://www.gcf.org.ph)

## How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- I am a first-time guest.
- I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- I want to join a Growth Group.**  
(Specify age group: \_\_\_\_\_)  
(Specify group composition: \_\_\_\_\_)
- I want to start a Growth Group.
- I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_ Landline no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): \_\_\_\_\_

*Today is 12/13 January 2019, and I attended the 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (Sat) (encircle the time).*

Write below *any* inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

\_\_\_\_\_

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### THE GOSPEL

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”  
*(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).*

### THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

**God is holy and righteous:** “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory” *(Isaiah 6:3)*. **He requires holiness of us as well:** “Be holy, for I am holy” *(1 Peter 1:16)*.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

**Man is sinful:** “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” *(Romans 3:23)*.  
**Sin demands a penalty:** “For the wages of sin is death” *(Romans 6:23)*.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

**Christ is the expression of God's love for us:** “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” *(Romans 5:8)*. **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” *(1 Peter 3:18)*. **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them” *(2 Corinthians 5:18)*.

### WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

**Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior:** “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” *(Romans 10:9)*.

PRAYER: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.*

## Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.

For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.