



When Jesus was grieved, He rested his soul in the infinite wisdom of God. He said, "**nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt**" (v. 39b). After I have poured out my heart to God, I will rest in His infinite wisdom to do whatever He pleases with my life. Finally, when Jesus was despondent, He fixed his eyes on the glorious future grace that awaited him on the other side of the cross. The writer of the Hebrews says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

This is the strategy that I am given and it's a great one because the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ employed it in His life. I can do no less as I am His servant!

Furthermore, I am reminded of the Psalmist who wrote, "**My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever**" (Psalm 73:26). Literally, the verb here is simply, "I am despondent! I am discouraged!" But I observe that the Psalmist musters a counterattack immediately—but God is the strength of my heart! As he did not yield to despondency, I must also battle with a counterattack that is found in the precious promises of God! (See these verses for saints struggling with sunken spirits—Psalm 19:7, Psalm 23:2-3, 1 Samuel 13:14, Psalm 30:5.)

When I am despondent, I will encourage myself with God's word!

WHEN I AM  
DESPONDENT

**DESPONDENCY IS NOT A WORD WE USE VERY OFTEN NOWADAYS.** I mean you don't call somebody on the phone and ask them, "How you doing?" and they answer back and say, "I am despondent today." According to dictionary definition, despondency is "a state of low spirits caused by loss of hope or courage." It's not exactly *depression*—because *depression* has got a psychological clinical condition attached to it. It's more like you've wakened up on the wrong side of the bed feeling, or simply just "having a bad day." Despondency is simply feeling gloomy or unhappy.

The medical doctor turned pastor, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in the 1950's, said, "The greatest need of the hour is a revived and joyful Church... Unhappy Christians are, to say the least, a poor recommendation of the Christian faith."<sup>1</sup>

When I am despondent, I realize that I might be ignoring the many precious promises which God gives in the Bible for me. David says, **"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him For the help of his countenance"** (Psalm 42:5). I will preach this to myself—"Soul, listen to me. You need to battle against despondency. Put your hope in God. Battle against your unhappiness—there's great joy in God!" " **Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In thy presence is fulness of joy; At thy**

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in John Piper, *Battling Unbelief*, (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2007), 120.

**right hand there are pleasures for evermore"** (Psalm 16:11). I have really no cause for despondency!

In the New Testament, I am given a great strategy to battle against despondency, in the example given by Jesus Christ Himself in the garden of Getsemane. In Matthew 26, Jesus **"began to be sorrowful and very heavy,"** (v. 37) that is, grieved and deeply distressed. But I observe that Jesus chose some close friends to be with him. I follow this example, that when I feel despondent, I resolve to call some close friends to be with me.

When Jesus was deeply distressed, He opened up his soul to His close friends, **"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"** (v. 38). Next, Jesus asked for their intercession and partnership in the battle. **"[T]arry ye here, and watch with me"** (v. 38b), that is, He wanted them to watch and pray for Him and with Him. When I am despondent, I will follow this strategy. I can contact my church's prayer core group and ask for their intercession and partnership in my battle against despondency. Later, I observe from Matthew 26, that Jesus poured out his heart to his Father in prayer. **"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"** (v. 39), that is, the cup of the deepest suffering which was beyond the physical suffering on the cross.