When Feelings Get In The Way of Faith
Psalm 142:1-7 (NKJV)

Our scripture text comes to this morning from Psalm 142. And we'll be reading all seven verses.

PSALM 142:1-7 (NKJV)

1 I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
   With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.

2 I pour out my complaint before Him;
   I declare before Him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
   Then You knew my path.
   In the way in which I walk
   They have secretly set a snare for me.

4 Look on my right hand and see,
   For there is no one who acknowledges me;
   Refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul.

5 I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, “You are my refuge,
   My portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low;
   Deliver me from my persecutors,
   For they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name;
   The righteous shall surround me,
   For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION
Most of us probably live by **our feelings** more than anything else.

“I feel blah.” “I feel excited.” “I don't feel like going to work today.”
“I don't feel like going to school.” “I feel like going shopping.”
“I feel like giving him a piece of my mind.” “I feel like a big, juicy steak!”

There is nothing inherently wrong with having feelings. God created us with feelings and emotions. Our feelings and emotions are our natural response to the circumstances or situations that surround us.

But when it comes to living the Christian life, one of the biggest struggles many of us wrestle with is that our feelings often get in the way of faith.

For example........

*There may be times when you don't “feel” like God loves you.

*There may be times when you don't “feel” like God has forgiven you.

*There may be times when you don't “feel” like God hears and answers your prayers.

*There may be times when you don't “feel” very spiritual.

*There may even be times when you don't “feel” like you are saved.

Do you ever have those days **when you don't “feel” like reading your Bible?** Or you **don't “feel” like praying?** Or you **don't “feel” like going to Church?** Or you **don't “feel” like smiling or being joyful?**

We are embarrassed and ashamed to talk about these feelings
amongst fellow Christians for fear they might think less of us or think that our faith isn't genuine.

If it is any consolation to you, I assure you that you are not alone in your struggle.

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Background To Psalm 142

If I were to ask each of you to write down the names of five of the greatest men of faith in the Old Testament, I'm sure many of you would include DAVID on your list.

But do you know there were times when DAVID'S feelings got in the way of his faith?

David wrote this 142nd Psalm while running for his life from King Saul. After David killed the giant Goliath, he became so popular with the Israelites, they wanted to “oust” King Saul and make David the new king of Israel.

As you can well imagine, this didn't set very well with King Saul. He became so consumed with jealousy towards David he vowed to kill him if it was the last thing he did. It was during those twelve years as a fugitive that David penned the words to this Psalm we are looking at this morning.

In this Psalm we are going to see four “feelings” David wrestled with, and chances are you and I have wrestled with these same feelings as well.
First of all.........
I. David Struggled With Feelings of DESPAIR (v.3)

v. 3  “When my spirit was over-whelmed within me, then You knew my path.”

1. Being on the run as a fugitive for twelve long years often took an emotional toll on David.

   Notice David says, “When my spirit was over-whelmed within me.”

   The Hebrew word for “over-whelmed” literally means “the muffling of one's spirit.”

   When something is “muffled” it means it is “quieted” or “silenced” doesn't it?

2. What David is saying is there are times when I feel such despair I don't know what to say......I don't know what to do.......I don't know where to turn......or who to turn to.

   “My spirit is muffled within me.”

3. Chances are everyone of us has wrestled with “feelings of absolute despair” at some time or another. We have all had a situation that was so difficult, so stressful, that we didn't know what to do, what to say, or where to turn.

   Our “spirit was muffled within us.”

4. But I want you to pay close attention to something David says there in verse 3.
v.3 a, b  “When my spirit was over-whelmed within me, then YOU knew my path.”

Here we see David's faith. He is acknowledging that even though he felt total DESPAIR He knew in his heart that GOD had everything under control.

“I didn't know what to do or where to turn, but YOU did! YOU KNEW MY PATH!”

5. Brothers and sisters, when you and I feel despair.....when we feel helplessly and hopelessly trapped in a difficult situation, OUR FAITH should tell us GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL, therefore I will not give up!

Secondly we see..........

II. David Struggled With Feelings of DESERTION  (v.4)

v. 4  Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul.

1. This is the same David who had boldly declared in PSALM 16:8
   “I have set the LORD always before me, because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.”

2. But now in this moment when his faith is weak, David feels totally deserted by everyone, including God.

   He says, “No one even acknowledges my existence.”
“No one will give me refuge or shelter.”  “No one cares for my soul.”

3.  Aren't those the same feelings we entertain when we are going through a difficult time?

“Nobody loves me.”

“Nobody cares for me.”

“If I died, nobody would ever miss me.”

4.  Listen carefully!  Just because you “feel” deserted doesn't mean you have been deserted!

BY FAITH you must take GOD at His word when He says, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.”

ILLUSTRATION

Years ago the captain of a large sailing vessel set sail with his family from Liverpool, England to New York city. One night on the voyage while everyone was asleep, a sudden squall arose. The wind was so strong and the waves so powerful it almost capsized the boat. Anything that wasn't fastened down was sent tumbling and crashing across the ship. Everyone on board was fearful for his or her life.

The captain's little eight year old daughter was awakened by all the noise and started to cry with fright.  “What's the matter” she said. When someone told her there was a terrible storm, she asked, “Is my father on deck?”  When they assured her he was, she laid her head on her pillow and went back to sleep.”

5.  Brothers and sisters, when we find yourself caught in
a terrible storm in life, just remember YOUR FATHER IS ALWAYS ON DECK! He is always in control!

Next we see.....

III. David Struggled With Feelings of DEPRESSION  (v.6a)

v.6a  “Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low;

1. When you read many of the Psalms David wrote they are full of praise and rejoicing, but not this 142nd Psalm.

2. That phrase David uses to describe his feelings of depression in this verse has an interesting meaning.

   In the Hebrew language “to be brought low” literally means “to be left with an indentation.”

   If I push my thumbnail into my palm like this, it leaves an indentation. What David is saying is “all the months and years of running for his life had left an indentation on his spirit.”

3. David was a man of strong faith in GOD, but there were times he felt deeply depressed.

4. If you will carefully study the lives of many of the great heroes of the faith in the scriptures you will discover most all of them wrestled with feelings of depression from time to time.
5. When you and I “FEEL” depressed it doesn't mean we have lost our FAITH, it simply means we are human. And as weak human beings sometimes the difficulties of life “leave an indentation” on our spirit, and we feel depressed.

6. How can our FAITH help us overcome “feelings” of depression? Remember FAITH is “taking GOD at His word.”

And in PSALM 34:18, 19 (NKJV) God gives us this wonderful promise: “The L ORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the L ORD delivers him out of them all.

Finally we see.....

IV. David Struggled With Feelings of DEFEAT (v.6b)

v.6b “Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.”

1. David has now been on the run so long he no longer has the confidence that he is going to emerge victorious. To put it in our vernacular, David feel “whipped” and ready to throw in the towel.”

2. Isn't that the way we feel when we've been in a difficult and stressful situation for a long time with no end in sight? We start feeling defeated as though we have nothing going in our favor.

3. But just because you “FEEL” defeated doesn't mean you
are defeated!

1 Corinthians 15:57 NKJV  But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 8:31 (NKJV)  What then shall we say to these things: If GOD is for us, who can be against us?

4.  BY FAITH we must take GOD at HIS WORD and claim the victory, even when our “feelings” say otherwise.

CONCLUSION

Lawrence Hanratty of Mt. Vernon, New York was once voted “New York’s Unluckiest Man.”

Nearly electrocuted while on his construction job back in 1984. Mr. Hanratty went into a coma for weeks. Of the four lawyers who handled Mr. Hanratty's liability claim in court, one was disbarred......two died.......and the fourth lawyer ran off with Hanratty's wife.

In a span of just a few weeks, Hanratty totaled his car and was robbed by an on-looker after the police left the scene of the accident. And as if that weren't enough, his insurance company cancelled his policy and he was kicked out of his apartment.

When the newspaper reporter asked Mr. Hanratty how he felt about being voted “New York's Unluckiest Man” Hanratty replied, “There's always hope.”

Brothers and sisters, there is always HOPE......especially for the
child of GOD!

So when you “feel” DESPAIR

When you “feel” DESERTED

When you “feel” DEPRESSED

When you “feel” DEFEATED

Remember the PROMISES of GOD, and BY FAITH take Him at His word!