

"A U-Turn to Wellnes"

Scriptue: Lamentations 3:22-24

John 16: 17-22

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I do not know about you, but I need to take a deep breath. So let's take a deep breath together and I will open the sermon with a prayer.

God of love and compassion, pour into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. May your love and compassion flow through me with the words that follow. Amen.

Have you been anxious lately? Is your anxiety hovering regarding our nation and globe? Our gospel of John text paints a picture not of a Norman Rockwell but more like a fresco of Jesus' disciples asking one another, "What does Jesus mean by in a little while?" I wonder if they were anxious about this new development for the disciples and Jesus. Jesus said, "In a little while, you will see me no more, and then after a while, you will see me."

For John, the hour is Jesus' resurrection and ascension is eschatological marking of the beginning of God's New Age of compassion. Jesus immediately promises the transformation of the disciples sorrows into joy.

In mental illness, depression can turn into joy as one moves out of a depression. Sometimes, one having mental illness may have a continuous flat affect and dysthymia. Where is the joy in these circumstances? Joy can be the result of a friend, church or church staff contacting the afflicted of any illness.

How do we know when someone is in a clinical depression? We can find signs of depression in the following case study and I want to reiterate this case study contains sensitive matter.

Lorraine is a middle school teacher and age 26.

Her story goes like this:

After the 3:00 bell rang, of course, Lorraine is fatigued to say the least. She could

only think of papers that needed to be graded when she arrived home.

However, the phone rings. It is Roger, her boyfriend of 1 year. With a smile of being in love, the smile swept over face.

She said, "Hey Roger!"

He responded, Uh, Hi. Listen, uh I wanted to let you know something...

And skeptical with a bit of anxiety, Lorraine said, "OK..."

I wanted to let you know that I am getting married."

Lorraine gasped. She says sadly with a fragile heart to him, "You're getting married" with her mouth opened.

Roger says, "Yes."

There was a long pause. Lorraine responded tearfully.

"I have nothing to say."

She dropped the phone. Her emotions became a frozen forest filled with darkness and despair.

For the next few days, Lorraine quickly acquires symptoms of clinical depression.

Neither Lorraine nor her family were aware of these symptoms and Lorraine's genetic predisposition for clinical depression.

These symptoms included having difficulty in writing lesson plans, averaging grades, slow speech and not wanting to live anymore as well as unable to drive safely.

A prescribed antidepressant was not helping Lorraine to improve her well being. Despite her acute symptoms, she continued to work. For her family's gospel was, "Keep on. Keeping on."

In a little while, she finally left her classroom with the assistance of her principal. She resigned from teaching in order to find the right medical care for her severe depression.

Days went by before getting an appointment at a major psychiatric hospital. During this time, the days continued to be dark as in the wilderness. One evening, Lorraine was driving her car while having intrusive thoughts such as, "I don't want to live like this anymore." The thoughts became darker and tumbling forth. So she drove

off the side of the road and turned her car on its side.

The next thing she knew was that a police car makes a U-turn when he sees her car on its side. The police then asked her to roll down her window.

He said to Lorraine, “Are you OK?”

She responded “Yes.” while in a frozen state. After assessing her situation, he concluded that she was trying to die of suicide.

The police responded “Miss Lorraine, you are going to be alright in due time. Things will improve.”

He then drove her home.

as she was headed for wellness later that week, Lorraine was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Her diagnosis was bipolar disorder.

Well, the next questions for Lorraine:

What next? Do I try teaching again? Will I be able to work again? The questions were swirling in her head.

A few days later, she was driving into her neighborhood when she saw a familiar yellow Toyota drive past her. The driver was her pastor. She saw him make a U-turn and followed her home.

Her pastor wanted to make a visit of care for Lorraine. He was aware of her concern about her personal and professional future.

So he asked the question:

“Have you ever thought of attending seminary?”

Her mouth dropped open and responded with disbelief. They discussed the ins and outs of seminary and the importance of Lorraine’s calling

You may have surmised by now that I am Lorraine in this story. (Gloria Lorraine Lightsey)

As in Matthew 10:27, “What I told you in the dark, I now speak in the daylight. What is whispered in your ear, name and proclaim it from the roof top.

Guardian of our souls, lead us through the valley of darkness with your abiding compassion.