

Why Suicide, Depression Don't Have to Conquer You

If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to the National Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month (#NSPM). This year, Sept. 8-14 was National Suicide Prevention Week (#NSPW), and Sept. 10 was World Suicide Prevention Day (#WSPD). At no other point in the calendar year is more emphasis placed on raising suicide awareness and prevention.

Nothing communicates as clearly, however, as when tragedy comes home.

Monday, Christendom learned one of our own—a 30-year-old Southern California megachurch pastor and mental health advocate, Jarrid Wilson—took his own life.

As is so often the case, Jarrid ministered most effectively in an area where he himself struggled. He was very open and transparent about his battle with depression.

Shortly before his death, Jarrid tweeted: “Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure suicidal thoughts. Loving Jesus doesn’t always cure depression ... But that doesn’t mean Jesus doesn’t offer us companionship and comfort. He ALWAYS does that.”

Hours after his death, Jarrid’s wife Julianne posted, “Suicide doesn’t get the last word. I won’t let it. You always said ‘Hope Gets the last word. Jesus gets the last word.’”

Believers, let us honor Jarrid’s life and ministry by heeding those words.

For far too long, mental health has been treated as something of a red-headed stepchild in Christian circles. Depression is

dismissed as sadness, with its corresponding low energy and isolation interpreted as signs of a weak faith. We have to be realistic: Depression is a disease—and one of the leading causes of death in the United States.

Thanks to advances in neuroscience and technology, our understanding of the brain and its maladies is improving. New and improving treatment methods—EMDR, cognitive behavioral, equine, body movement and art therapies, for instance—have all been highly effective.

But because God holds all truth—having knit us together in the womb; ordained each of our days; and given our lives value, purpose and meaning—when we combine the power of the Holy Spirit with the latest in medical technologies and mental health therapies to holistically treat mind, body and spirit, miracles happen.

Where depression and anxiety are concerned, there is hope.

Suicide is the bitter fruit of depression and anxiety. To prevent this awful fruit, we have to get to its root—trauma. We live in a fallen world—bad things happen and some of us experience this more than others. When we experience trauma, the enemy attacks our primary identity as a child of God by planting seeds of shame. We buy into his lies, concluding: *I'm no good. I'll never be good enough. If people really knew me, they'd never love me. No one loves me. No one understands me. Not even God.*

As the lies take hold and shame mounts, it impacts every area of our lives. We start to make decisions based on fear, not truth. This manifests itself in isolation. We are not built to be alone. We were created for relationships, with God and with others. Love is the essence. When we lose sight of love, we experience hopelessness, despair, suicidality and death.

We need to take the enemy's lies and put them where they belong by planting them at the foot of the cross of Jesus

Christ. There we find the wherewithal to say, *You know what, devil, you're right—I'll never be perfect. But that's not a conversation we're going to have; you take that up with my Father, the sovereign God of the universe. I'm His. End of story. End of conversation.*

This is a result attainable through the combination of God's truth and proper administration and application of today's medical and mental health advances. And I can speak to this, because I see these miracles occur every day.

"Jarrid loved the Lord and had a servant's heart," Senior Pastor Greg Laurie wrote on Harvest Fellowship's website. "He was vibrant, positive, and was always serving and helping others. He wanted to especially help those who were dealing with suicidal thoughts."

May his testimony in life, ministry and death speak to us all: Depression and anxiety don't have the last word.

Dr. David Hoskins is the CEO of Honey Lake Clinic, the only licensed residential Christian behavioral treatment center in the world. Offering 24/7 nursing, medical doctors, psychiatrists and a pharmacy on campus, Honey Lake Clinic is a JCAHO-accredited, DCF-licensed, specially equipped hospital caring for people struggling with depression and anxiety.