

## *Pk's Perspectives... "Depression"*

Returning an email or phone call can seem overwhelming. No amount of rest alleviates a fatigue created by an invisible weight. The color drains from life, leaving only black and gray and dark blue. You want to "snap out of it," as do those around you but "snapping out of it" is more impossible than others can imagine. On the worst days, you fear you may never feel better.

Rachel Held Evans says about demons: *I'm inclined to take the sophisticated approach and assume the people who had demons cast out of them were healed of mental illness or epilepsy or something like that. But lately, I've been wondering if this leaves something important out, something true about the shape of evil, which is not merely an absence of good but the presence of a dark and irrational power.*

That is how I experience depression. It is a demon that can be fought but is seldom exorcised forever. I am not an expert on depression in the clinical sense. I rarely feel like an expert on anything aside from my own experience. There is not a time in my life in which I don't remember the visitation of it. I experienced it even before I knew how to name it. A "moody child" I was sometimes labeled in a tone that caused this description to take the form of an accusation. As an adult depression has continued to be a companion, visiting from time to time without providing much information regarding the length of its stay. Demons are like that. They don't offer much in terms of manners or social graces. They just show up and linger at their own discretion.

Depression is a demon that holds its host under. Not so much under water but under a heavy darkness. It holds some under longer than others. I don't know why. I see others who seem to suffer more than I. But I shouldn't diminish my own pain nor should any of you, yours. That's how demons are. They are unpredictable; yet even scarier when you can see them coming. Most people I know are surprised when I tell them of my acquaintance with depression. I am implored by the demon to hide it and be dishonest about it. That's how demons are. They lie and encourage lying.

Knowing that so many have traveled this path before me strangely heartens me. The "depressed psalmist" authored Psalm 88. The light is shed on his dark struggle when he writes: "You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me; you overwhelm me with all your waves." Was he talking to God or the demon some of us know so well? That is how demons are. They disguise themselves.

Mostly I am heartened by people like my mom who passed away on February 24. She knew the demon and perhaps unwittingly introduced me. I wrote this about her to be read at her memorial service: *"Mom was never hesitant in sharing her own battles with visitations of darkness. Her way of being seemed to announce: 'Come to me, broken though you may be and I will love you; broken though I may be.' None of us can measure how many hurting souls found solace in her care. She offered her love and her pain, hiding none of it, and this brought healing to others. As far as I know, that is what Jesus did and if that is so, that is the very best any of us can do."* That is how demons are. They meet their match in love and our shared truth.

Written by a friend, college/seminary classmate, and fellow pastor...I hope it speaks hope & encouragement to your heart. Cya Sunday, PK.