Part 2: Can God Help My Mental Health?

Small Group Lesson

Big Idea: Mental Health is a very popular topic currently in our culture. Everyone is talking about the importance of mental health and the mental health issues many are dealing with on a daily basis. The truth is, we are all on a mental health continuum. We all have to work on our mental health, no one is exempt. Our minds aren't instantly made healthy when we accept Jesus as our savior. It's a process but with the help of the Holy Spirit we can be made whole and experience healing and total freedom!

Key Scripture: Mark 5:1-15 - So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit." Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them." So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.

1. What Are Mental Health Issues?

How do we define mental health issues? Mental health issues are behavioral, emotional, or mental disorders that can range in impact from mild to severe. There are some common symptoms that let us know if we or someone around us is battling in their mental health.

Symptoms of Mental Health Issues:

- Chronic Sadness
- Feelings of Hopelessness

- High Levels of Anxiety & Stress
- Increased Reliance on Substances
- Desire for Isolation or Feelings of Being Disconnected
- Thoughts of Suicide or Self-Harm
- Urges to Harm Others

Discussion Question: Do you currently experience any of the symptoms listed above?

2. What Can I Do to Help My Mental Health?

Some mental health issues and symptoms can be solved with natural solutions. By simply making some adjustments in your daily routines and interactions with others you can ease or even eliminate those symptoms.

Natural Solutions

- **Physical Solutions**
  - Exercise
  - Sleep
  - Sunlight
  - Make it a point to be in Nature
- **Relational Solutions**
  - Relationships & Community
  - Family & Friends
- **Environmental Factors**
  - Healthy Home
  - School
  - Work Environments
- **Psychological Solutions**
  - Seeking assistance from a Trained Professional (Pastoral Counseling & Christian Psychologists)
  - Medicine, depending on the case

Discussion Question: What are some things you can do physically to help your mental health? Are there relationships you can focus on that can help? Are there any changes you can make to your environment to ensure you thrive? Do you feel like you need to seek some professional help with a Christian counselor or pastor?

3. What If Natural Solutions Don't Help?

Sometimes the issues we battle aren't natural but are spiritual in their origin. Natural solutions such as journaling, counseling, or medicine aren't enough to loosen the grip of that spirit and its effects on our life. ONLY Jesus can set us free! Many who are experiencing mental health issues are oppressed by the

enemy and his tormenting spirits. There's a vast difference between oppression and possession. Oppression is defined as mental pressure or distress while Possession is defined as owning or controlling something. For example, Saul was oppressed by an evil spirit, it would come and go like a cloud over him. But Legion was possessed. He was unable to control himself and was tormented day and night by the enemy.

The Bible tells us that the enemy hurls fiery darts at us intending to attack us in our minds. (Ephesians 6:10-18) This is why the Armor of God is so important to us as believers. They help to protect us and our minds from the schemes of the enemy intended to harm, discourage, and torment us.

Discussion Question: Is your mental health crisis natural or spiritual? Do you desire freedom?

4. How Can God Help My Mental Health?

- Through Prayer - Philippians 4:6-7
- Through Praise - Isaiah 61:3
- Through Purpose - John 4:34
- Through His Presence - Psalm 16:11

Discussion Question: How can you apply these 4 things to your life this week to experience freedom in your mental health? (Example: Attending midweek prayer at your campus, setting a time each day to praise and worship God, seeking to find a place to serve with the Ateam to find your purpose).

Conclusion: God cares about our mental health! We find all we need to thrive in every area of our life in His presence. He provides us with ***Peace,*** the shalom of God, where we feel settled (John 14:27) and with ***Hope***, the sense of our future being bright (Romans 15:13). We experience ***Fulfillment***, the deep sense of satisfaction (Psalm 107:9) and ***Joy,*** intense happiness and laughter (Psalm 16:11) that the world can't take away! Don't allow the enemy to plague you any longer in your mind. Allow the Lord to break every chain and set you free!