



Wellbeing

God's Plan For Your

Mental Wellbeing

Date: Sunday 14th February

Speaker: Andrew McNeil

Key Verses: 1 Kings 19: Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:5

Talk Summary:

- One simple message was all it took for fear to grip Elijah. He mentally went from peace and elation to a place of isolation, despair and depression, eventually pleading with God to end his life.
- We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health and what goes on in our thoughts really matters. Mental wellbeing is responding to life events from a mindset that factors in God, His perspective on what we face and His presence with us.
- Elijah faced a credible threat. But his thoughts and actions took him to very dark place. We can face a real threat – but choose to respond from love, a sound mind, empowered by the Spirit (2 Timothy 1:7). How do we do that?
- Read: What's going on. Sometimes unhelpful thinking is obvious. Sometimes it's not. We can learn to read the symptoms in our bodies, or read the signals in our emotions to understand what's lurking in our thoughts, because it's all connected.
- Reflect: Thinking about what you are thinking about: We get to "stand back" and observe our thinking. God met Elijah in a moment of quite stillness when he was alone. The Lord wasn't in the wind or the earthquake but "after the fire came a gentle whisper." To hear a whisper, you have to be still and you have to be close.
- Renew: We are transformed as we renew our thinking in line with God's (Romans 12:1-2).
- Learning to renew our mind is like having a software update. We get better ways of responding to life's events.
- We're not captive to our temperament or family history. We have been designed to partner with God, create thoughts, and from these we live out our lives "For as a person thinks in his heart so he is" (Prov. 23:7). We do this as we take thoughts captive and make them obedient to Jesus (2 Corinthians 10:5).

That's not God's job. It's our job. Taking thoughts captive means controlling them instead of letting them control you.

- Elijah had a limited perspective on reality. The story he was believing in his head was that he was alone. God resets his perspective with the truth.
- Watch your train of thought. That train might be going somewhere so don't just get on whichever train comes into your mind!
- Avoid the train of shame. Get on the grace train. "Jesus I'm coming right into your presence, thankful for the cross and for your love for me".
- The train of fear. Sounds like... "This is overwhelming. How on earth will I get through this?" Your perfect love reassures me you're with me and will carry me through. The fear is real, but your love is more enduring.
- Train of hopelessness. When feeling hopeless I choose to remember your faithfulness. Your mercy never fails. "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end" (Lamentations 3:21-26).

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- To consider. What is the one thing that Jesus is speaking to me about?
- What did you learn from your family or culture about mental health? Was it a taboo subject? Could you have honest conversations?
- What are you learning about strengthening your mental health? (personally, or from others).
- Read, reflect, renew. Which of those is a strong area, which is a growth area?
- Has someone come to mind you might help?

Further Resources (for you or a friend)

- "Birmingham Vineyard Sozo" - <https://www.birminghamvineyard.com/sozo>
A sozo prayer appointment aims to quickly get to and deal with the root of things that are hindering your connection with Father God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. (It is not a counselling session).
- "Mind & Soul Foundation" - Christian charity - <https://www.mindandsoulfoundation.org>
- "Mind" – Mental health charity - <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- "Shout" - Texting support and mental health resources - Text SHOUT to 85258
<https://giveusashout.org>
- "NHS" - Mental health services– 0121 262 3555, <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/contact-us/>