

# SHADOWS // Darkness

## WK2: October 30<sup>th</sup>

### Big Idea:

It may look I am surrounded, but I am surrounded by Him

### Key Passages:

*Yet I curse the day I was born!  
May no one celebrate the day of my birth.*

*Why was I ever born?  
My entire life has been filled  
with trouble, sorrow, and shame.*

**Jeremiah 20:14, 18**

*Why was I ever born?  
My entire life has been filled  
with trouble, sorrow, and shame.  
I have no peace, no quietness.  
I have no rest; only trouble comes.”*

**Job 3:11, 26**

*Now O Lord, take away my life,  
for it is better for me to die than to live. ...I am angry enough to die.*

**Jonah 4:3,9**

*I have had enough Lord, he said. Take my life,  
I am not better than my ancestors.*

**1 Kings 19:4**

*“My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.”*

**Ps. 38:4**

*And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.*

*And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; **remove this cup from Me**; yet not what I will, but what You will.*

**Mark 14:34-36**

*“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

**Ps. 34:18**

*I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So, don't be troubled or afraid.*

**John 14:27**

## **(INTRO)**

***(on stage have a baptism tent as a constant prop – take it with you everywhere you move. Rehearse this so it doesn't feel awkward. This tent will be the landing point of the entire message)***

**(...coming out of bumper video)**

That...is a picture of what life can often feel like...running to get away –  
Running to search for an escape –  
Running to find something, anything, to rid ourselves of the battle within...

And often times it can feel like we are running without direction, yet in search of something deeper, richer, and more meaningful –

If you are new, on behalf of our team I want to welcome you again!

My name is Jeff and I serve with our student team.

We started this series called “Shadows” a few weeks ago with the goal of helping students like yourselves to find peace in the midst of chaos.

For the rest of you welcome back.

We hope today can shine a light and a glimmer of hope with whatever you are facing or feeling.

As we stated last week, something has to change because we have a problem – a big problem. And no matter your faith, story, or background, I think we can all agree, something has to change.

Research tells us -

**(Review Time Magazine Stats and the toll it is taking)**

So, what are we to do?

Like last week, it may strike a nerve within and make us a bit uncomfortable. And that is a risk we are willing to take.

Before we jump in I want to state a few things worth noting!

**First** – Anxiety, Depression, and Suicide are REAL! The challenges many of you face and the battles you fight everyday are REAL. And we want to help!

**Second** – These topics are **NOT** designed to be sexy and cool. This isn't a fad or something worth posting for the sake of attention. We aren't doing this series for click bait or to win you over.

Rather we know these topics need addressed and what better place to do that than the church. You being here today says it all and we are glad you made it!

So, let me shut up, let's pray, and dive in to "Shadows" Week 2.

**Pray...**

**(ME)**

Confession –

I never anticipated or realized how important this issue was until a few years ago. Yes, growing up I had my issues, but I battled through it. I made it. I got through life. So, when I first heard about the rise of teen suicide, depression, and anxiety, I was highly insensitive.

Then – after the birth of my second daughter, I became a first – hand witness of what depression can do.

You see, after giving birth to a child, often times women can go through something called post-partum depression. And my wife Amy experienced this.

She wasn't getting much sleep.

She was irritated easily.

She was high strung.

She was hyper sensitive.

She loved to exercise but no longer had that same drive.

She was a shadow of herself...and it caused a huge rift in our marriage.

The embarrassing part about it – I didn't know what to do or what to say because all I could think about was myself. It was all about me, my feelings, and my misery.

Had I paused for just a moment during that season of our life, I would like to think things would have been different.

So, for almost a year I didn't want to be home. When I was, it felt like I was walking on egg shells.

My wife was hurting and I felt completely helpless. I longed for the funny, witty, and smiling woman I had married and there was nothing I could do.

After what felt like an eternity, we slowly started to discuss all that she had been feeling, where her mind was, and what I could do to support her.

Four years later we still have our ups and downs but it was through that season of life I feel like God taught me a lot about patience and empathy for those going through a difficult season!

## **(WE)**

In the words of Logic "who can relate"?

What we do when we feel alone?

What do we do when it feels like the walls are closing in?

What do we do when we see someone we love become a shell of themselves?

What do we do when we see those we care about stop caring to the point they want to end it?

What do we do when we feel as if we are surrounded by what some would say are small obstacles, yet they feel like mountains we can't ever climb?

I don't promise to have all the answers but with the remainder of our time, I would like to look at a few individual's story's, their stresses, their worries, their anxieties.

More importantly, **I want to look at HOW they battled this darkness**, the lessons it can teach those of you currently battling, and how we can help our friends and family out of this darkness.

Take a look at the big idea:

(slide)

**It may look like we are surrounded,  
but we are surrounded by Him.**

One more time –

**It may look like we are surrounded,  
but we are surrounded by Him.**

Let's break that down and give it some clarity as we look in God's Word.

Take a look at these verses –

## **(GOD)**

**(slide)**

*Yet I curse the day I was born!  
May no one celebrate the day of my birth.  
Why was I ever born?  
My entire life has been filled  
with trouble, sorrow, and shame.  
**Jeremiah 20:14, 18***

*Why was I ever born?  
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with trouble, sorrow, and shame.  
I have no peace, no quietness.  
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**Job 3:11, 26***

*Now O Lord, take away my life,  
for it is better for me to die than to live. ...I am angry enough to die.  
**Jonah 4:3,9***

*I have had enough Lord, he said. Take my life,  
I am not better than my ancestors.  
**1 Kings 19:4***

*“My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.”  
**Ps. 38:4***

You read these passages and if you are like me, you wonder, why and how did they get to this point in their life. What was going on?

Some were lonely and insecure.  
Some were grief stricken over the death of those they loved most.  
Some lost families, sons, and other children.  
Some were discouraged, while others were afraid.  
Some were being chased by their enemies wanting to kill them.  
Some were angry and frustrated.  
Some experienced physical illness.

Some had given up their lives to serve God and couldn't  
understand that "this" was the result.  
Some were poor and rejected by their own people.

This is what surrounded them.  
Their lives were chaotic. So much so, they wanted to end their life.

Some of us in this room can relate with every trait I just said and fully grasp what they  
were experiencing.

You feel their pain because that is the kind of darkness that you have experienced, are  
currently experiencing, or have seen with the ones you love.

And you just don't know what to do...

You wake up every day feeling surrounded by utter chaos, perhaps longing for a break;  
for an easier day.

You walk the halls of your school feeling lonely and without.

You feel this pressure to achieve and be successful

You get anxious wondering what happens when they find out that I am not "normal".  
Perhaps to the point of a panic attack.

You are so overwhelmed by life and all the pressures of being a certain someone,  
having the right image, being the cool person, and being accepted.

And when all that pressure mounts up, it becomes absolutely paralyzing, eventually  
leading to apathy, and a just don't give a blank mentality.

And before you know it, the darkness seeps further and further into your soul and just  
like some of the writers, you contemplate ending it. You convince yourselves there  
could be only one way out.

Will they care?  
Will they miss me?  
Would it even matter if I was gone?  
Would they notice?  
Would they cry?

And to that I respond – yes. We sure would!

It is heartbreaking to see how real that darkness is but the devil is a lie.

Listen –

It may seem like you are surrounded by chaos, confusion, hurt, pain, and anger.

It may seem like you are surrounded by hopeless circumstances.

It may seem like you are surrounded with nothing and with no one.

It may seem like you are surrounded by insecurity, shame, and guilt.

But my plea, our plea, is that even though you are walking in this shadow of darkness,  
you are surrounded by Him – by Jesus.

And what makes that statement so palpable is that Jesus, the Son of God, had his own  
experience with anxiousness and lack of control we all feel at times – some deeper than  
others.

*And He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and  
keep watch.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray  
that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.*

*And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; **remove this cup  
from Me**; yet not what I will, but what You will.*

**Mark 14:34-36**

Look at that...

**My soul is deeply grieved...**

One of the writers would even say Jesus sweat blood –  
that's how disturbed he was in that moment!

He goes on to say **remove this cup**.

How many times have some of us felt that. Pleading with our burden, our “cup” if you  
will, to be removed. It is a plea for help. A plea for it to end. We just want it to stop! We  
can't take it. Enough is enough!

But what I love about these different stories is we find where they all turn in the midst of  
this darkness. Over time, they realize everything will be okay. That even though they  
are surrounded by unbearable situations, God is still with them!

In their own way – they state –

**It may look I am surrounded, but I am surrounded by Him**

That –

That is GREAT NEWS and that is our hope for ALL OF YOU!

Morgan, a senior in our ministry, has experienced this personally – here is her story!

**(play Morgan's' video)**

**(Acknowledge Morgan and her bravery, transition into YOU)**

**(YOU)**

How do we move forward and deal with this practically? What can you do to battle the anxiety, depression, and need to take your own life?

Again – this isn't EVERYTHING, but these might be something to give you hope when all feels hopeless.

First –

**(slide)**

## **TAKE IT SLOW**

2 weeks ago, I was chatting with one of the freshman leaders Mikayla. I don't think I will ever forget this –

She said when you are feeling anxious or are in this dark season of life, you aren't trying to get through each day but you are trying to get through the next 5 seconds.

That blew me away.

So, for those of you battling, my encouragement is to take it slow. Take it 5 seconds at a time. Take a deep breath and now go for 10 seconds. Allow the seconds to become minutes, minutes become hours, and hours into a day. Take it slow. If you have to start over, you can. It is OK! Build on each second without the angst of feeling like you have to do it perfectly. You don't. Take your time and take it slow.

Second –

**(slide)**

## **Talk About It**

One of the best things we can do to battle anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts is to use our voices whenever we can. Get it out there. Make it known about what you are feeling. As challenging as that can be, as you talk about it, it will bring more

understanding and clarity to the people around you. You don't have to have all the right words, but they will go a long way.

It is important to say here as well that some of us need to seek and talk to a professional. Our friends and loved ones can only do so much but some of you need professional help. Some of what you are experiencing could be a chemical or genetic issue. But listen – that is OK!

Discussing all that is within with the right people is crucial to moving forward. Help is available. Don't feel the need to try to hide your pain, or struggle through on your own.

Talk to a friend or counselor. Seek out professional treatment and care. Depression is a common, yet very treatable condition that affects many people in our world. Yet statistics tell us that only about one-third of those who are depressed actually receive treatment. If you or a loved one is struggling with suicidal thoughts and tendencies, please get help. Don't try to face this on your own. There is hope and healing, and there are many who will and WANT to journey through this trial with you.

Now – for those of us trying to help those in need, sometimes talking isn't really an option. Sometimes this darkness can feel so deep that our words can be dismissed or be seen as insensitive.

My encouragement for you is keep the conversation positive when you are doing the talking. Yet even better than talking can be your mere presence.

**“Being with” can be more important to the individual than “talking to”.**

In this season of your life, you may feel a nudge to sacrifice other friendships for the sake of being available. Even though it may seem like a long road ahead, your presence will mean more to that individual than you could possibly imagine. Don't miss an opportunity like I did. Talk sometimes, but be present as often as you can.

Finally –

## **Remember Your Surroundings**

**(make sure you are next to your tent)**

Look at this verse -

*“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

**Ps. 34:18**

He was there in the good days and in the dark days too. He didn't condemn them for their questions and pain. He didn't tell them to just tough it out. He reached down to their deepest pit of suffering, and lifted them out.

He cared.

He showed compassion. He offered mercy. He brought hope. He instilled purpose. He gave victory. And He still works in the same way today.

The greatest truth is this, we have a Savior who understands our pain, who knows about every weakness and hurt, and reaches out with compassion and hope.

He is Healer. Redeemer. Restorer. And friend.

He will never waste the seasons of suffering we face, but will use it, in some way, to bring good, to instill purpose, to help others, and to make us stronger.

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/7-bible-figures-who-struggled-with-depression.html>

## **It may look like we are surrounded, but we are surrounded by Him**

Since the beginning of time God has always wanted to be with His people, His greatest creation. Despite any misunderstanding, He loved us too much for us to figure it out on our own.

As you page through story after story in Bible, we see this reality.

It started with the people of Israel. We learned that God was with them in the desert. The leader at the time was a man named Moses. He commissioned the construction of a portable tent called the tabernacle to house and transport the commandments God had given His people. We read that the "glory of the Lord filled this tabernacle".

Translation – **God took up residence**. This tent was His home. He chose to be a continual residence with His people.

When you continue reading the early parts of the Bible, we see that this tabernacle became the place where the ancient believers would go to find God. They knew where He was. He wasn't up in the sky laughing and scoffing. He wasn't saying peace out...He was RIGHT THERE. And he was available.

A few thousand years later God sends His son Jesus into the world. He would walk the earth for 33 years showing mercy, compassion, wisdom, and guidance to anyone willing to hear and receive it. Although God was no longer in the tent, He was available in human form doing what He did best – loving people.

Jesus eventually dies, raises from the dead, and tells His friends, I will still be with you always! They were confused because even though He had risen, He too would go back into the heavens...but not without sending a Helper to guide His people.

**(slide)**

*I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So, don't be troubled or afraid.*

**John 14:27**

This peace was called the Holy Spirit. And this Spirit came when what the writers in the early church called Pentecost. And that same Spirit exist today with us if we are willing to acknowledge his presence and surrounding.

When we say the Lord is close to the brokenhearted, it isn't some catch phrase. It is the truth. And for those of you experiencing an anxiety and depression that makes you want to give up, you have to know there is a God whose Spirit is accessible to you. He is right beside you. He hasn't gone anywhere. He will never abandon you.

God cares about you.  
God cares about your worries.  
God knows all that you are going through,  
Give it all to him - for He is with you and walking right beside you!

Talk to Him. Tell him everything you feel and are experiencing. Tell him your pain. Give him your worries. He can handle it.

Don't give up. Keep fighting and hold on!

Please, don't go!

We need you here. We want you here. He wants you here.  
He has something so GOOD for your life!

Take it Slow – go at your own pace – and do it with Him!  
Talk About It – and include Him. He wants to hear it ALL!  
And Remember your surrounding because you are surrounded by Him!

Would you pray with me –

**(Pray)**