

WAITING PATIENTLY

Nelson Mandela in his autobiography, *Die Wit Man*, wrote about his experience with solitary confinement:

“I was locked up for 23 hours a day, with 30 minutes of exercise in the morning and again in the afternoon...There was no natural light in my cell; a single bulb burned overhead 24 hours a day...I had nothing to read, nothing to write on or with, no one to talk to. The mind begins to turn in on itself, and one desperately wants something outside of oneself on which to fix one’s attention. I have known men who have taken half-a-dozen lashes in preference to being locked up alone.”

Mandela went on to talk about the relief brought about when an insect appeared from a crack in the floor.

When we are deeply depressed it is like emotional solitary confinement. Relief is often best found in simple physical pleasures like a hot bath, a drink of bubbly soda or sweet hot chocolate, hugging a friend – or a pillow.

Psalms 40:1 says *“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.”* Patient waiting is not easy when what we’re going through is like tortured emotional confinement.

BUT when our depression is not deep or when we are only on the verge, there are things we can do – strategies we can employ.

- How can we avoid isolation?
- How can we reach beyond ourselves? To others? To God?

David’s prayer:

*To you, O Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy:
What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me; O Lord, be my help.
You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.
That my heart may sing to you and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.*

Psalm 30:8-12

Author Corrie ten Boom, author of *The Hiding Place*, a story about her time in a concentration camp during the Second World War, wrote these very comforting words: “There is no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still.”