



1. Sunday Summary: This morning we continued our series on *The Life of David*. Specifically, we explored the story of David on the run, and how 400 of the most disgruntled and disenfranchised men of Israel (the “bitter of spirit”) were drawn to him at the cave of Adullam. Then we looked at why the men were drawn to him. Part of the answer surely lies in the fact that they were not welcome with Saul. In fact, it’s likely he had done many of them a wrong turn. But, part of the answer also lies in the fact that David was a man who could understand, relate to, and empathize with their plight. He was like them, on the run and destitute; no longer welcome with Saul. More than anything people feel like they belong where they’re treated with dignity and understanding. Sadly though, many of those who are the “bitter of spirit” in our world feel judged and unwelcomed, and so they would rather go it alone. God of course has a plan for those who are bitter of spirit: it’s the church. Because our Lord, like David, was a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, we are called to know our own sorrows and suffering, and pass on the comfort we’ve received from God to others who are going through their own hard times. It’s not easy to admit that we are in need, that we are *mar nephesh*, but when we do we become a conduit of gospel healing for each other and for the world.

2. Important Words:

מַר-נֶפֶשׁ (mar nephesh) = bitter or downcast of spirit, discontented

3. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Are there times in your life that you’ve felt particularly *mar nephesh*? Talk about it with the group. In those times who were the people you were drawn to? Who were the people you stayed away from?

- Have you ever had a time when you were able to provide comfort to someone who was going through something that you’ve been through? What was that like? What’s the danger of doing this?

- Think about the church. Do you think there's room for people at Cornerstone who are truly *mar nephesh*? Are there certain kinds of being *mar nephesh* that are more acceptable than others at Cornerstone?
- What insights from today's message were most helpful for you?

4. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-7. According to this passage what's the "prerequisite" for comforting others in their trials and distress? Where does our comfort come from?
- Read Luke 8:40-48. Here we encounter a woman who was definitely as "misfit," someone who was *mar nephesh*. As someone who was perpetually bleeding how would she have been treated in a Jewish culture? How was she treated by Jesus? How would Jesus' words have struck her?

5. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the truth of the gospel deeper into your life this week? Specifically, what will you do to make a space for others, and offer (or receive) compassion and comfort?
- What can you do to become a person to whom people who are *mar nephesh* will be attracted? Take time to think about and discuss whether you even want to be (or collectively whether we as a church really want to be) a person (people) like that? Take time as a group to confess your reluctance to God.

6. Resources for Further Study:

1. Peterson, Eugene H. *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (Harper Collins Publishers, New York, NY, 2011).