

# Preaching on Mental Health

By **PNW Conference** - Jul 31, 2017



By Rev. Shane Moore

Many times I have ideas for a sermon series, but then do not have the courage to preach the series. I talk myself out of the idea. The reasons could be anything from not feeling knowledgeable enough to not wanting to offend people in the congregation. But last fall, I knew that all of those reasons weren't enough to stop me from starting a four week series on mental health.

The idea started with my own struggles around mental health. The previous year I had experienced a lot of changes. Contributing to that were the many changes happening in my life at the time. My wife and I were expecting our first child, we are parents to two young girls, and I was trying to juggle two part-time ministry positions. I talked to my wife and what they did for help when they were overwhelmed. Thanks to their support, I began seeing

openly admitted to church members that I was working with a therapist.

It was during one of those open and honest moments with a congregant that I came to realize it was time to speak about mental health from the pulpit. I was sharing with this church member an moment of catastrophic thinking that I recently experienced, and the person looked at me and said, "Wow, even my pastor struggles with mental health! I'm not the only one." It was this statement that convinced me I needed to start working on a sermon series around the issue of mental health.

In the fall of 2016 I preached a four week series entitled "Faithfully Mindful." Each week we looked at issues surrounding mental health and essential self-care from a scriptural perspective. Then after the sermon, we had a "Mental Health Moment" that provided the more practical aspects of mental health and included ways to care for our own mental health.

The first week introduced mental health and the Christian responsibility to care for the mental he was Mark 2:1-5, focusing on the actions of the group bringing a paralyzed man to Jesus. The scrip paralyzed man because of the faith of his friends. Each and every one of us has a responsibility to those in our community. We invited a local mental health counselor to talk about the mental heal community and ways we can engage in the mental health care of others.

The second week explored the idea of our own mental health and how it is important to whole b Deuteronomy 6:5-7 and the fact that we are called to love and follow God with all of our being. W cared for our mental health. During the "Mental Health Moment," we had a church member who psychologist lead us in a full body meditation scan.

Using the burnout of Moses in Exodus 18, we explored the role of burnout during the third week happen to Moses, it can happen to any of us. We passed out a burnout survey and invited people their own burnout level. Many were surprised by the results.

The last week we spoke about the importance of self-care. We intentionally put this sermon the v holidays are a season in which we as God's people need to be intentional in caring for ourselves. his frequent habit of drawing apart from the disciples to pray indicated someone who knew how

person was handed a card and invited to write down three ways they could care for themselves c

This was one of the hardest sermon series I've ever preached but one of the most rewarding. It p  
hear from the pulpit that mental health is important and that it is okay to seek help. And I learned  
courage to bring difficult subjects into the open are essential to vital ministry. I can only imagine I  
conversation around mental health if more pastors and churches were willing to engage in this in

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