

Walking with Jesus - Part 8
Stressed Out!
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Matt 6:25-33
Subject: What should we do rather than worry about our needs being met
Complements: seek the Lord, trusting that our loving Father in heaven will care for us.
Exegetical idea: Rather than constantly worrying about whether or not our needs will be supplied, we should seek the Lord, trusting that our loving Father in heaven will care for us.
Homiletical idea: **You have a loving Father in heaven who will care for you.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to find freedom from the stresses of this life by trusting that their loving Father in heaven will care for them.

Introduction

I felt really stressed out a few weeks ago. My wife can tell when I'm stressed out, by the way. I don't shout, or throw things. My lips turn a bluish purple color. I'm serious. At least, that's what my wife tells me! Well, I was stressed out a few weeks ago. I was beginning a long trip to India. The first part of my trip involved a flight from Orlando to Washington, DC. I arrived at the airport here in Orlando in plenty of time. At least, I thought that I had plenty of time. But as I walked into the airport terminal, I saw this huge line. I mean HUGE! At first, I was in denial. This must be a line for some other airline! But no. It was my airline! My blood pressure began to rise. If there had been a mirror available, I'm sure that I would have noticed that my lips were starting to change color! I made my way to the back of the line, and waited. And waited. And waited. After waiting in that line for almost an hour and a half, I wasn't even halfway to the ticket counter. By this time I had learned of a storm in Chicago that had shut down O'Hare airport. Hundreds of people needed to reschedule their flights. And most of those people were in my line. In front of me! At times, people shouted at each other. Tempers flared.

It was ugly! I calculated how far I have moved in 90 minutes, did the math (look at my watch) and it was obvious that there was no way that I was going to catch my flight. I was stressed out!

Have you ever felt like that? Stressed out! You say, “Pastor, I feel stressed out all the time!” Or you might say, “No. I’m fine. But I live with someone who is stressed out! And, come to think of it, that stresses me out!” Or, perhaps you have a good friend who is stressed out!” Then Jesus has some counsel for us today that will bless our lives, and bless our families, and bless those around us.

We find this counsel of Jesus recorded in His great sermon on the mount. We’ve been studying this great sermon of Jesus for the past few weeks in a series entitled Walking with Jesus. And today, we have come to the portion of the sermon recorded by the apostle Matthew in Matt 6, beginning with verse 25. Let’s read the words of Jesus together, beginning with Matthew 6:25. “.....”

Apparently, some of the people that Jesus was speaking to were really stressed out about where their next meal was coming from. Living in a land of plenty, few of us are stressed out about whether we are going to have anything to eat or whether we are going to have anything to drink. But may I remind you that there may be some people listening to this message via our web church or via television who live in parts of the world where finding enough food to eat and clean water to drink is a real stressor.

But most of us aren’t stressed out about where our next meal is coming from, are we? We have more than enough to eat and drink. Maybe even too much to eat and drink. If we’re stressed out about food and drink at all, it’s probably for other reasons. Like the story of Martha, recorded in Luke 10:38-42. “.....” Martha was stressed out not because she didn’t

have enough to eat or drink. She was stressed out trying to provide what she thought was the appropriate food and drink for her guest.

But Jesus said, “Don’t be stressed out by what you’re going to eat or what you’re going to drink.” Apparently, others who were listening to Jesus that day were stressed out about what they should wear. Most of those subsistence farmers and fishermen who were listening to Jesus didn’t have huge wardrobes. They had one or two garments to protect them from the heat of the day and the cold of the nights. Perhaps they had a reason to feel stressed out about their clothing. And perhaps there are people today in some parts of the world who are stressed by the need to have adequate clothing.

But again, most of us aren’t really stressed out about not having any clothes to wear. We have closets full of clothes, though some of us get stressed out about what color to wear, or what style is “in”. But the truth is that most of us don’t get stressed out about what we’re going to wear.

Well, if most of us here aren’t stressed out by where our next meal is coming from, or finding clean drinking water, or whether we’ll have anything to wear, what are some of the issues that stress us out?

Steve and Mary were stressed out when they got a phone call at 5:00 AM. Their youngest son Jonathan had been in a terrible motorcycle accident. Jonathan lost control of his motorcycle at about 150 mph. Fortunately, he was wearing his helmet and heavy clothing. But at 150 mph, his ankles were shattered when he hit the ground and his legs were ripped open. He slid for 700 feet, wearing out his helmet until it was so thin that you could see through it. Can you imagine getting a phone call like that about one of your children? That could stress you out

too.

A young mother here at Forest Lake Church was stressed out about a financial challenge. Her son was finally able to attend a Seventh-day Adventist Christian school, and he was flourishing in a caring Christian educational environment, but she didn't have the funds to pay her son's tuition fees. She was hoping against hope for a child support check, but it didn't come. That could stressed you out!

Rachel was stressed out by a health challenge. She went to the dentist for some routine dental work, only to find out that she had a tumor on the roof of her mouth. Way in the back. It didn't hurt. No negative side-effects. At least, not yet. But the dentist referred her to an oral surgeon who told her that she would need surgery, and soon. If the tumor was malignant, and if it had affected the bone, the surgery could be extensive. She might have trouble speaking and swallowing. Now, that could stress you out.

There are many challenges in life besides food, water and clothes that can potentially stress us out, aren't there? Whatever challenge you are facing right now that could stress you out, Jesus has some counsel for you. Don't be anxious about those things! Don't get stressed out about those things! Why? Because they are unimportant. No. They may be very important. Why then shouldn't we get stressed out about those challenges?

Jesus gives us two reasons why we shouldn't be stressed out about challenges that we face in our lives. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:27. "....."

What's the answer? No! So what is the first reason why we shouldn't be stressed out by the challenges that we face. Nothing constructive is accomplished by being stressed out!

So don't get stressed out about what to eat, or drink, or wear, or about your children, or

about financial challenges, or about health problems, or any other challenge you might face because nothing useful is accomplished by worry.

But there is a second reason why we should be stressed out by challenges that we face in life. Listen to the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 6:26 and 28-33. “.....”

What is the second reason why we shouldn't get stressed out by the challenges that we face in life? Because we have a loving Father in heaven who will care for us. Did you hear me? We have a loving Father in heaven who will care for us. Instead of getting stressed out, we need to focus on our loving Heavenly Father, His kingdom, and His righteousness. You have a loving Father in heaven who will care for you. You have a Savior who will care for you. Instead of getting stressed out, which doesn't do any good, remember that God will take care of you.

The apostle Paul has this word of counsel for the followers of Jesus in Philippi. Phil 4:6-7. “.....” Instead of getting stressed out, remember that your Father in heaven will care for you.

Do remember when I was stuck in that huge line at the airport? There was no way that I was going to catch my flight. No way. So I called my wife and told her that she might as well be prepared to come back to the airport and pick me up again. She encouraged me to implement some of my assertiveness training! But I was intimidated. People were upset. Frustrated. Impatient. Then I prayed a simple prayer. I don't remember the exact words, but I went something like this: “Lord, I choose to trust You.”

You see, if God wanted me on that plane, He would open the way. If not, I didn't want to be on that plane anyway. Perhaps there was some other lesson I needed to learn. So I simply cried out to God, “Lord, I choose to trust You.”

I walked over to a airline customer service agent and said, “My plane is leaving in a few minutes. I’ve been waiting here for more than 1.5 hours. I need a paper ticket so I can catch my plane. Can you help me?” And something remarkable happened. The customer service agent actually helped me. He escorted me to the counter, I had my ticket in less than 90 seconds, having waited for 90 minutes, got through security, and made it to the gate just as they started loading the plane. And as the plane taxied down the runway, I remembered that I needed to trust that our Heavenly Father will care for all of our needs.

Some of you have faced and are facing much greater challenges than the possibility of missing a flight. Remember Steve and Mary? Their son Jonathan, who was in that terrible motorcycle accident, he should have died on the side of the highway that morning. When the emergency medical personnel found him, his feet were almost ripped off. His open wounds were jammed full of mud and debris. He had lost half of his blood supply. Their son went through 13 surgeries in the next 15 days, lasting 3-12 hours each. His father, Steve, told me that he was stressed out during that time! And as a father, I can understand. But Steve told me that there was a word of God that blessed his life during this difficult time. Phil 4:6-7.

“.....” Steve held on to this precious truth: we have a loving Father in heaven who will care for us.

And that young mother who didn’t know what to do about her son’s school fees. She was still hoping to get a child support check so that her son could continue in a wonderful Christian school. Instead of getting stressed out, she decided to come to prayer meeting back in January and asked for special prayer. Instead of being stressed out, she chose to remember that she has a loving Father in heaven who will care for her and her son. The child support check didn’t arrive,

but that young mother did find out that she was going to receive an income tax refund that would more than cover the tuition costs! And that's not all. She recently did receive a child support check that was also more than the amount needed to cover her son's school fees! Maybe she will need those funds for next school year!

What about Rachel? What happened with her tumor? Well, Rachel chose to come to prayer meeting two weeks ago and requested anointing. That's a special service outlined in James 5. We humbly ask the Lord to grant us whatever blessing that He knows we need, according to His will, not ours. We had the privilege as a prayer group of gathering around Rachel and praying the blessing of heaven upon her as she was anointed with oil in the name of the Lord.

Just this past Wednesday, Rachel came to prayer meeting again. And here is the record of her testimony. (Read e-mail)

So is the challenge over? We don't know. Rachel had surgery yesterday. The prognosis looks good. But whatever the future holds, Rachel has chosen not to be stressed out! That doesn't accomplish anything anyway, does it? Rachel has chosen to remember that she has a loving Father in heaven who will care for her!

What challenge are you facing in your life today? What unmet need is present in your life that could stress you out? I encourage you today to remember this precious truth: You have a loving Father in heaven who will care for you!

Does that mean that everything will be easy? No. Does that mean that you'll never have any challenges? No! But it means that whatever you face, not enough food to eat, no clean water to drink, nothing to wear, troubles with your children, financial challenges, health problems...you don't have to get stressed out. It doesn't do any good. Rather you can choose to remember that you have a loving Father in heaven who will care of you.