**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | How to Handle Stress |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Psalm 23:2 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1361 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Psalm 23:2
   2. Every shepherd knows how important it is for his sheep to have a quiet time.
   3. So many people are all stressed up and nowhere to go.
      1. We’re tense, frenetic and so very busy.
      2. We sometimes think that it’s wrong for us to be quiet and still.
   4. God wants His sheep to learn how to get quiet and to lie down in the green pastures and to drink from the still waters.
      1. Sheep typically don’t like to drink from rushing, gurgling streams.
      2. But they will drink from a quiet pool of water, from still waters.
   5. Psalm 100:3
      1. God describes us as the sheep of His pasture.
         1. Sheep are not typically thought of as very intelligent animals.
            1. In spiritual realms, we are not very smart.

Nicodemus was very intelligent and a master in Israel, but he was spiritually ignorant.

John 3:10

Romans 3:11

* + - * 1. In the spiritual realm, we are like sheep.
      1. A sheep is defenseless.
         1. Other animals can defend themselves fairly well.

A horse can run.

A mule can kick.

A lion can bite.

A snake can strike.

* + - * 1. But a sheep is pretty defenseless.

He can’t really run.

He has relatively weak muscles.

He has poor eyesight.

He doesn’t have good hearing.

* + - * 1. Isaiah 53:7
        2. Jeremiah 51:40
        3. We think of sheep as needing someone to defend them.

That’s the way we are.

2 Corinthians 3:5

We don’t have it in and of ourselves.

* + - 1. A sheep doesn’t have a good sense of direction.
         1. A sheep is easily lost.
         2. Isaiah 53:6
         3. A sheep can get further and further away from the fold and the shepherd, and he doesn’t know that he’s getting further away.
         4. When a sheep gets lost, he can’t find his way home.
         5. Sheep have to be sought, and they have to be brought.

That is their nature.

* + - * 1. Hosea 11:7

We have a tendency to get away from God.

* + - 1. A sheep is dependent.
         1. He needs someone to take care of him.
         2. Sometimes a sheep will roll over on its back and get in a “cast” position.

This is dangerous for the sheep.

The sheep needs the shepherd to come and pick him up and put him back on his feet.

Has God ever done this for you?

When we are down and can’t get up on our own, the Shepherd comes.

* + 1. We are like sheep, and that’s why we have a tendency to be stressed.
  1. Psalm 23:2 has a lot to say about how to handle stress.

1. we have security in our shepherd (psalm 23:2)
   1. We are secure in Jesus.
   2. Psalm 23:2
      1. He leads us.
      2. He makes us.
   3. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament.
      1. John 10:14
      2. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the chief Shepherd; and because of that, we have security.
   4. The Bible gives us some characteristics of the Shepherd:
      1. Compassion
         1. Matthew 9:36
            1. The word “moved” in this verse is a powerful word that literally means “to convulse.”

It has the idea of hurting.

* + - * 1. The word “compassion” means “to feel or to suffer.”
      1. Jesus was convulsed as He felt with those sheep, and He saw them as sheep having no shepherd.
         1. That’s what caused Him to leave Heaven and come and die for us.
    1. Care
       1. Isaiah 40:11
          1. The Lord is tender with us.
       2. God gives us what we need and not what we deserve.
       3. As little lambs (as new, baby Christians), the Lord Jesus picks us up and carries us.
          1. He carries us gently.
    2. Courage
       1. He’s a courageous Shepherd.
       2. John 10:11-13
          1. There were many dangers for the sheep in that day: wolves, bears, lions, wild dogs, and thieves would come to steal and slaughter the sheep.
          2. Jesus said that a false shepherd, one who is only paid by the hour, will flee and leave the sheep.

But a good shepherd will fight for his sheep.

Isaiah 50:7

* 1. John 10:7
     1. Jesus is the Shepherd and the door.
        1. The Shepherd becomes the door.
     2. In that day when all of the sheep were counted and secure within the sheepfold, the shepherd would lie down across the opening.
        1. No one would get in or out without the shepherd knowing it.
           1. No one can get to us except he goes through the Lord Jesus.
        2. John 10:27-28
  2. We may be weak like sheep, but He is the strong Shepherd.
     1. This security helps us deal with stress.

1. we have sufficiency in our shepherd (psalm 23:2)
   1. Psalm 23:2
      1. He makes us to lie down, not in brown, withered pastures, but in green pastures.
      2. He leads us, not beside muddy or dried-up streams, but beside the still waters.
   2. All we need and more is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.
   3. We get stressed because we think our needs are not going to be met.
   4. Matthew 6:25-32
      1. “Gentiles” in this passage refers to unsaved people.
      2. Most people worry about food, friends, fame, fortune, fashion and fitness.
      3. The Lord Jesus is not saying that these things are not important, but that they don’t even take on significance until we have our deepest needs met.
         1. Matthew 6:33
   5. Psalm 22:26, 29
   6. Psalm 23:2
      1. The green grass is the green pasture of God’s Word.
      2. The still waters speak of His Spirit.
   7. We are to find our satisfaction in the Lord.
      1. If we don’t find our satisfaction in Him, then we are going to be stressed because the deepest needs of our heart will not be met.
   8. Matthew 4:4
      1. The Bible is to us what bread is to the natural man.
   9. Matthew 5:6
      1. The word “blessed” mean “happy,” “satisfied,” “content,” “to be congratulated,” or “joyful.”
      2. How many people have a hunger for the Word and a thirst for the Spirit?
      3. He did not say, “Blessed are those who seek after blessedness or happiness.”
         1. He said, “Happy are those who seek after righteousness.”
   10. People who seek to be happy generally are not.
       1. Happiness is something you never find by looking for it.
       2. Happiness is something you stumble over on your way to serve Jesus.
       3. Happiness is the by-product of righteousness.
   11. Unhappiness comes from self-centeredness and sin.
       1. God so loves us that He has engineered us so that we would not be happy without Jesus.
   12. Genesis 3:17
       1. The ground was cursed, not for Adam’s judgment, but for his sake.
       2. The worst thing that could happen to sinful man would be to have a diseased heart and live in paradise because he would never know that anything was wrong.
       3. God allows thorns and thistles and problems to remind us that something is wrong in this world.
          1. What is wrong is sin, and the answer is righteousness.
          2. Most people try to get rid of the thorns and thistles without ever dealing with the problem that caused them.
             1. People who are trying to be happy are only treating the symptoms.
             2. If we seek after righteousness, then we’ll be dealing with the root cause.
   13. The deepest need of our heart and life is to worship God, to drink of His Spirit and to feed on His Word.
       1. The deepest need of our heart will be met only in Jesus.
2. we have serenity in our shepherd (psalm 23:2)
   1. Sheep will not lie down until they are content.
   2. So many people today are always in a hurry.
      1. They don’t take time to slow down and to know that God is God.
      2. They don’t have that serenity, that quietness.
   3. Isaiah 30:15
   4. Psalm 46:10
   5. A sheep chews its cud while it is lying down.
      1. This is when the sheep grows.
      2. This quiet time is the most productive time for the sheep.
   6. We need a quiet time and to meditate on God’s Word.
      1. Psalm 1:2
      2. Psalm 19:14
      3. Psalm 104:34
      4. Psalm 119:15
   7. What is wrong with most of us is that we don’t lie down in the green pastures and meditate.
      1. We don’t take the time to really digest and assimilate what God has given us.
         1. Do you spend time meditating on the sermons you hear?
         2. When you study God’s Word, do you really have a quiet time?
         3. Do you keep a spiritual journal?
      2. After we study God’s Word, we need to sit back and meditate upon it.
      3. If we expect God to speak to us during our quiet times, then we need to have something with which to write it down.
         1. Keep a spiritual journal.
      4. We are going to miss life if we are too busy to do this.
         1. We will miss life while looking for it.
      5. John 10:10
   8. Sometimes God may have to make us lie down.
      1. Psalm 23:2
      2. Psalm 119:67
      3. Psalm 119:71
      4. Why don’t we just slow down and get quiet and still rather than have the Lord make us to lie down?
   9. A distressed sheep doesn’t produce wool or fat, and it doesn’t reproduce.
      1. A shepherd makes his sheep to lie down because he loves the sheep, and he wants healthy sheep.
3. CONCLUSION
   1. The cure for stress is the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. Find in Jesus Christ your security.
         1. He’s the Good Shepherd.
      2. Find in Him sufficiency.
         1. The green pastures.
      3. Find in Him serenity.
         1. He makes us to lie down.
   2. Is the Lord Jesus your Shepherd?
   3. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   4. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16