

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Handle Stress

SERMON REFERENCE: Psalm 23:2

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1361

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Psalm 23:2
- b) Every shepherd knows how important it is for his sheep to have a quiet time.
- c) So many people are all stressed up and nowhere to go.
 - i) We're tense, frenetic and so very busy.
 - ii) We sometimes think that it's wrong for us to be quiet and still.
- d) 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.
 - i) Sheep typically don't like to drink from rushing, gurgling streams.
 - ii) But they will drink from a quiet pool of water, from still waters.
- e) Psalm 100:3
 - i) God describes us as the sheep of His pasture.
 - (1) Sheep are not typically thought of as very intelligent animals.
 - (a) In spiritual realms, we are not very smart.
 - (i) Nicodemus was very intelligent and a master in Israel, but he was spiritually ignorant.
 - 1. John 3:10
 - (ii) Romans 3:11
 - (b) In the spiritual realm, we are like sheep.
 - (2) A sheep is defenseless.
 - (a) Other animals can defend themselves fairly well.
 - (i) A horse can run.
 - (ii) A mule can kick.
 - (iii) A lion can bite.
 - (iv) A snake can strike.
 - (b) But a sheep is pretty defenseless.
 - (i) He can't really run.
 - 1. He has relatively weak muscles.
 - (ii) He has poor eyesight.
 - (iii) He doesn't have good hearing.
 - (c) Isaiah 53:7
 - (d) Jeremiah 51:40
 - (e) We think of sheep as needing someone to defend them.
 - (i) That's the way we are.
 - (ii) 2 Corinthians 3:5
 - 1. We don't have it in and of ourselves.
 - (3) A sheep doesn't have a good sense of direction.
 - (a) A sheep is easily lost.
 - (b) Isaiah 53:6
 - (c) 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.
 - (d) When a sheep gets lost, he can't find his way home.
 - (e) Sheep have to be sought, and they have to be brought.
 - (i) That is their nature.

- (f) Hosea 11:7
 - (i) We have a tendency to get away from God.
 - (4) A sheep is dependent.
 - (a) He needs someone to take care of him.
 - (b) Sometimes a sheep will roll over on its back and get in a “cast” position.
 - (i) This is dangerous for the sheep.
 - (ii) The sheep needs the shepherd to come and pick him up and put him back on his feet.
 - 1. Has God ever done this for you?
 - 2. When we are down and can’t get up on our own, the Shepherd comes.
 - ii) We are like sheep, and that’s why we have a tendency to be stressed.
 - f) Psalm 23:2 has a lot to say about how to handle stress.
- 2) WE HAVE SECURITY IN OUR SHEPHERD (PSALM 23:2)
- a) We are secure in Jesus.
 - b) Psalm 23:2
 - i) He leads us.
 - ii) He makes us.
 - c) The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament.
 - i) John 10:14
 - ii) Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the chief Shepherd; and because of that, we have security.
 - d) The Bible gives us some characteristics of the Shepherd:
 - i) Compassion
 - (1) Matthew 9:36
 - (a) The word “moved” in this verse is a powerful word that literally means “to convulse.”
 - (i) It has the idea of hurting.
 - (b) The word “compassion” means “to feel or to suffer.”
 - (2) Jesus was convulsed as He felt with those sheep, and He saw them as sheep having no shepherd.
 - (a) That’s what caused Him to leave Heaven and come and die for us.
 - ii) Care
 - (1) Isaiah 40:11
 - (a) 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.
 - (a) He carries us gently.
 - iii) Courage
 - (1) He’s a courageous Shepherd.
 - (2) John 10:11-13

- (a) 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.
 - (b) Jesus said that a false shepherd, one who is only paid by the hour, will flee and leave the sheep.
 - (i) But a good shepherd will fight for his sheep.
 - (ii) Isaiah 50:7
 - e) John 10:7
 - i) Jesus is the Shepherd and the door.
 - (1) The Shepherd becomes the door.
 - ii) 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.
 - (a) No one can get to us except he goes through the Lord Jesus.
 - (2) John 10:27-28
 - f) We may be weak like sheep, but He is the strong Shepherd.
 - i) This security helps us deal with stress.
- 3) WE HAVE SUFFICIENCY IN OUR SHEPHERD (PSALM 23:2)
 - a) Psalm 23:2
 - i) He makes us to lie down, not in brown, withered pastures, but in green pastures.
 - ii) He leads us, not beside muddy or dried-up streams, but beside the still waters.
 - b) All we need and more is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c) We get stressed because we think our needs are not going to be met.
 - d) Matthew 6:25-32
 - i) “Gentiles” in this passage refers to unsaved people.
 - ii) Most people worry about food, friends, fame, fortune, fashion and fitness.
 - iii) 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
 - e) Psalm 22:26, 29
 - f) Psalm 23:2
 - i) The green grass is the green pasture of God’s Word.
 - ii) The still waters speak of His Spirit.
 - g) We are to find our satisfaction in the Lord.
 - i) 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.
 - h) Matthew 4:4
 - i) The Bible is to us what bread is to the natural man.
 - i) Matthew 5:6
 - i) The word “blessed” mean “happy,” “satisfied,” “content,” “to be congratulated,” or “joyful.”

- ii) How many people have a hunger for the Word and a thirst for the Spirit?
 - iii) He did not say, "Blessed are those who seek after blessedness or happiness."
 - (1) He said, "Happy are those who seek after righteousness."
 - j) People who seek to be happy generally are not.
 - i) Happiness is something you never find by looking for it.
 - ii) Happiness is something you stumble over on your way to serve Jesus.
 - iii) Happiness is the by-product of righteousness.
 - k) Unhappiness comes from self-centeredness and sin.
 - i) God so loves us that He has engineered us so that we would not be happy without Jesus.
 - l) Genesis 3:17
 - i) The ground was cursed, not for Adam's judgment, but for his sake.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) 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.
 - (a) People who are trying to be happy are only treating the symptoms.
 - (b) If we seek after righteousness, then we'll be dealing with the root cause.
 - m) The deepest need of our heart and life is to worship God, to drink of His Spirit and to feed on His Word.
 - i) The deepest need of our heart will be met only in Jesus.
- 4) WE HAVE SERENITY IN OUR SHEPHERD (PSALM 23:2)
- a) Sheep will not lie down until they are content.
 - b) So many people today are always in a hurry.
 - i) They don't take time to slow down and to know that God is God.
 - ii) They don't have that serenity, that quietness.
 - c) Isaiah 30:15
 - d) Psalm 46:10
 - e) A sheep chews its cud while it is lying down.
 - i) This is when the sheep grows.
 - ii) This quiet time is the most productive time for the sheep.
 - f) We need a quiet time and to meditate on God's Word.
 - i) Psalm 1:2
 - ii) Psalm 19:14
 - iii) Psalm 104:34
 - iv) Psalm 119:15

- g) What is wrong with most of us is that we don't lie down in the green pastures and meditate.
 - i) 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?
 - ii) After we study God's Word, we need to sit back and meditate upon it.
 - iii) 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.
 - iv) We are going to miss life if we are too busy to do this.
 - (1) We will miss life while looking for it.
 - v) John 10:10
- h) Sometimes God may have to make us lie down.
 - i) Psalm 23:2
 - ii) Psalm 119:67
 - iii) Psalm 119:71
 - iv) Why don't we just slow down and get quiet and still rather than have the Lord make us to lie down?
- i) A distressed sheep doesn't produce wool or fat, and it doesn't reproduce.
 - i) A shepherd makes his sheep to lie down because he loves the sheep, and he wants healthy sheep.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) The cure for stress is the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i) Find in Jesus Christ your security.
 - (1) He's the Good Shepherd.
 - ii) Find in Him sufficiency.
 - (1) The green pastures.
 - iii) Find in Him serenity.
 - (1) He makes us to lie down.
- b) Is the Lord Jesus your Shepherd?
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) 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.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16