

January 22nd – Learn to Let Go P. Bruce
Matthew 6 –Stress and worry

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever feel like this?

Two executives were drowning their sorrows in the local tavern.

"My job is getting to me, I can't handle all the stress. I worry so much, I either can't sleep, or have terrible nightmares."

"I'm sleeping like a baby," said the other, "I wake every three hours and cry."

If we are honest with ourselves many of us struggle with a two headed snake that sneaks into our garden of peace we seek to cultivate in the presence of God.

The curse of this snake is that it transforms us into people like this.

T.S. A life controlled by stress or worry is fails to honor Christ as Lord of the Body. Therefore,

P.S. TO HONOR JESUS AS LORD OF OUR BODIES WE MUST ADDRESS HOW WE HANDLE STRESS AND WORRY.

In an issue of the AARP Bulletin, readers were asked to respond to the question: What's your strategy for coping with stress? The answers ranged from "eat a chocolate chip cookie" to "have a stiff drink." But Don Betz of Oakdale, Minnesota, offered his own unique solution. Every January 1st, Betz says, "I give my wife \$1, and she worries about everything for both of us."

T.S. Jesus himself gives us direction on how to face the two headed snake of Stress and Worry.
Turn with me to Matt 6:25-34 NIV

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The November 1999 issue of Outside magazine, in an article entitled "The Trees: Lovely, Dark, and Deep," says that one of the favorite extremes of skiers is running through a stand of trees after a fresh, deep snow. Tim Etchells, the writer of the article says, "What you focus your eyes on becomes critical in

the woods. Look at the spaces between the trees — the exits where you hope to be traveling.” Kim Reichelm, the expert in the sport says, “The secret is not to stare at what you don’t want to hit.”

It is all about focus. The extreme skier who focuses on the trees is more likely to hit the trees. The one who is looking for the spaces, or the exits, between the trees is going to miss the obstacles.

I. Focus on the Right Decisions

25 "Therefore I tell you, . . .

- Jesus has been teaching on making right decisions about money about lordship about following him.
- In the Midst of times of stress and worry we need to make the right decisions. The decisions that will honor him.

Appl: Some people worry and want to drink. Some people are stressed at work and want to quit. During the times of stress and worry in our life, Jesus wants us to keep making the right decisions.

III: I accompanied a teenager to the police station to turn himself in for theft. He was very worried about what was going to happen, about what his father would do. All along the way he kept asking me if I thought he should lie. I have counseled couples under real stress in their marriage and they have asked me should we get a divorce. I always give them the same advice. Make the right decision based on the Lordship issue you have already settled.

II. Focus on the Heart of the Father

In times of uncertainty and stress we need to focus on the heart of the father.

26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Professional baseball player John Olerud's daughter has a rare genetic disease. During one of her medical treatments, the Boston Red Sox first baseman held his infant daughter while doctors attempted to insert an IV. Olerud described the look in her eyes this way: What's going on? I thought you were my dad, protecting me, and you're holding me down and allowing them to poke me? How can you say you love me and let somebody do this? Knowing that even if he could tell her why all this was happening, she wouldn't understand, Olerud could only say, "You've just got to trust me."^[1]

The father’s heart is good. Sometimes all we can do is trust him.

III. Focus on the Eternal Goal

In the midst of everyday stress and worry we need to keep pursue the eternal Goal. All this life is about the next.

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

I love the Lord of the Rings Trilogy--An epic journey of diligently seeking one thing despite everything

else that they faced. It was always about only one thing, the destruction of the ring of power.

In our lives it's all about one thing seeking his kingdom, wanting it pursuing it, striving for it, thirsting for it.

IV. Focus on Day-Tight Compartments

In the 1980's there was a sit com on TV based upon a profound truth. Life was lived "One Day at a Time"

Jesus reminds us that this walk is walked one day at a time.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Sometimes the best strategy is just to hang on survive, and get through the day.

This last week due to a miscommunication my wife and I were very stressed over the fact that we were going to have to move all our final belongings from Austintown, this week instead of next.

It was ugly, there was a lot of stress, a lot of frustration. In the end all we could do was take each day as it can. Do the best we could. And Hold on for the week to be over.

The great thing about living "one day at a time" is that each day is a fresh slate a clean page. Worry robs us of that precious gift.

CONCLUSION

TO HONOR JESUS AS LORD OF OUR BODIES WE MUST ADDRESS HOW WE HANDLE STRESS AND WORRY.

**LEARN TO FOCUS ON...
THE RIGHT DECISIONS
THE HEART OF THE FATHER
THE ETERNAL GOAL
DAY-TIGHT COMPARTMENTS**

Is it time for you to surrender? Is it time for you to ask God to help you refocus

[1]

Stephen Nordbye, Charlton, Massachusetts; source: The Boston Globe (6-24-05) pp. D1 & D6