

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 3 1Q 2011

Stress

SABBATH

Memory verse: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matt 11:28

Thoughts – have you ever claimed this Bible promise? I know I have and I have experienced God’s peace and presence.

What is stress?

Read first paragraph, “Stress touches...” thoughts?

Is stress only negative events or can positive life events also be stressful? Can planning a wedding be stressful? Can performing a concert be stressful? Can the first day on a job be stressful?

How would you apply Christ’s invitation to come to Him when one has lost a spouse? When a parent has lost a child? What does it mean to come to Christ when stressed?

Does it mean something more than claiming Bible promises?

I thought it might be helpful to present a case and think about:

- What you might experience if you were the parent in this situation
- What you might experience if you were the child
- How would you apply Christ’s promise to come to Him in this situation

Jenny

- Jenny was out of control.
- The rages, anger outbursts, skipping school, and the steady stream of foul language started when she was 13.

- Her mother and stepfather tried various forms of discipline: grounding, loss of cell phone and iPod, and extra chores. But she only got worse.
 - At 14 she began dressing in black, wearing black nail polish, and sneaking away from school to smoke.
 - Her parents took her to counselors and psychiatrists. She was placed on several medications,
 - but by 15 she was deliberately cutting herself when stressed and bingeing and purging on an almost daily basis.
 - She complained of feeling fat, despite being only 100 pounds at five feet four inches tall.
 - She reported anxiety, emptiness, and moodiness, and when she became overwhelmed, she would either binge, then purge, or would cut herself in order to “relieve the tension.” She was out of control and getting worse fast.
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- Jenny was beautiful with dark hair and brilliant green eyes that sparkled with a golden hue, yet radiated a deep, almost primal, pain
 - She mostly avoided direct eye contact, hanging her head with her knees pulled up to her chest and her arms wrapped tightly around them at the shin.
 - She was frightened, not of me, but of the emotional storm raging inside her; terrified she could not be helped; worried she would never find peace.
 - She felt worthless

Do you think Jenny’s parents were stressed? Was Jenny stressed? What would happen in this situation if you quoted our memory verse to Jenny? Do you think it would resolve her problem?

What does it mean to come to Jesus?

What could Jenny do in this situation to actually come to Jesus and experience His peace?

Have any of you ever felt worthless, empty, no good, struggled with low self esteem and no confidence, felt unloved, like no one cares?

I am going to tell you two truths:

1. you are not alone
2. Feelings can lie

James 1:14 no one should say God tempts, each one is tempted....

John 8:32 the truth will set you free

We have power over what we believe but our beliefs have power over us – power to heal and power to destroy! And if we believe what our feelings say, we are usually led down painful and destructive paths

- Jenny had been running from a faceless, formless, shadowy internal tormentor that haunted her constantly. She didn't know from where her persecutor had come, but she couldn't remember a day free from its taunting.
- She heard the brutal thoughts echoing in her mind,
 - *You're fat,*
 - *you're gross,*
 - *you're ugly,*
 - *you're worthless!*
 - *Nobody could love you.*
 - *You're always messed up.*
 - *You're bad and disgusting.*
- No matter what she did, she just couldn't make the thoughts stop, so, she wanted to die, believing it's all she deserved. She thought suicide was her only escape.
- It was hard for Jenny to talk, but eventually she told me the source of her pain
- Jenny was three when her father walked out. One day he just left home and never returned. He divorced her mother and she had not seen him since.
- Jenny began to cry as she recounted how she missed him. She told me that she remembered her father, remembered she loved to ride on his shoulders; loved to be held in his arms.
- Reluctantly, hesitantly, she told me she knew why her father left.
 - "Because I was bad,"
 - "If I had been a better girl my daddy wouldn't have left."

- It's my fault!"
- What did Jenny believe?
- What we believe has power over us, power to heal and power to destroy – Jenny believed a lie.
- This was it, the core, the pernicious root that had been poisoning her mind.
- This lie had to be removed.

What does it mean to come to Jesus? What does it mean to apply our memory verse promise? Doesn't it mean we come to know Him, His methods, principles and begin to apply them to our lives?

What are some of Satan's weapons? What weapons were being used on Jenny?

What do we receive when we come to Jesus that enables us to defeat the enemy?

I told Jenny what I am going to tell you, and

I know some of you have been hurt, mistreated, betrayed, abused I know some of you have heartaches, and have been through painful experiences. But we:

- Cannot change history
- Can reevaluate the conclusions drawn and replace distortions with facts, errors with the truth.

Jesus said, "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"

- Imagine a 40 y/o man cursing a 5 y/o girl

How did Jenny file away her father's leaving?

Jenny's brain at age three couldn't understand these truths so:

- Jenny had done what almost all children do when hurt by a parent; she had blamed herself for the shortcoming of her father.
- In the aftermath of her father leaving, Jenny felt abandoned, alone, empty, and rejected.
- At age three, her mind struggled to make sense of her father's departure,
- "If I had been a good girl and picked up my toys, daddy wouldn't have left."
- Her deep feelings of hurt and rejection, having been turned back on herself, grew into a loathsome self-image. She despised herself, hated herself, and thought everyone else did as well. After all, she had driven her father away.
- The echoes of her own disapproval, her own castigation, her own constant self-criticism constantly oppressed Jenny.
- The mysterious tormentor turned out to be her own hurt feelings and distorted self-image. As she grew older it got worse.
- Her mind filtered reality. Whenever someone complimented her, commended her, or showed appreciation for her, she discounted the affirmation and thought, *If they really knew me they wouldn't say that. If they really knew me they wouldn't want to be around me either.* But whenever someone was critical, cruel or unkind she held onto to those experiences as proof she was "bad" and replayed them over and over again in her mind. No matter where she went or what she did she never got away from her tormentor because the tormentor lived within.
- She feared letting people get too close lest they see the horrible thing she was, (as she saw herself) and reject her. Therefore, she acted out, instigated conflict, criticized, disobeyed, was hostile, whenever anyone was too kind or got too close in order to avoid anticipated exposure and rejection.

- Jenny reported, while in the middle of a binge, she would feel a sense of relief, a feeling of comfort, an emotional soothing. But almost immediately after the binge ended she was deluged with guilt, oppressed with disgust and overwhelmed with feelings of fatness, which led her to purge.
- Why do you think Jenny binged?

- Was it for nutritional sustenance?
- What happens when infants eat?
- On some deeply unconscious level,
- Why did Jenny think she was fat? Is a young lady who is 5'4" and weighs 100 pounds fat?
- Why did she think she was fat?
- BECAUSE SHE FELT FAT
- Feelings can lie, James 1:14
- Feelings masquerade
- Then I asked her, "What does it feel like when you feel fat?" "Bad, I feel bad, Worthless, no good, gross and ugly."
- "Do you remember a time in your life when you felt bad? A time when you felt worthless?" "After my father left."
- What lie entered Jenny's mind?
- Does it feel bad when a parent leaves? Yes, it does feel bad, what is the lie?
- That because it feels bad that Jenny is bad, or gross, or disgusting, or ugly.
- Cow pasture analogy

What we believe has power over us, power to heal and power to destroy –

What does it mean to come to Jesus with our burdens? Does it mean we stop thinking? Or does it mean in relationship to Him we reason, think and begin to apply the truth and His methods to our lives?

The truth heals and the truth sets free!

SUNDAY

Elijah during the famine was fed by ravens/angels and then sent to the widow and the oil and flour miraculously never ran dry.

Was this a stressful time? What about for the widow and her son?

Why do you think that the oil and flour appeared new every day? Why not perform a miracle in which the pantry was filled with barrels of oil and tons of wheat, appropriately sealed to avoid spoilage?

Did God want to increase their stress or reduce it? Was God merely trying to sustain them for an earthly existence, or was God working through these experience to strengthen their confidence, trust, faith in Him and to open their minds to a greater reality?

What about today with our problems? Have you ever wondered why the bank account seems to have just enough to pay the bills each month? Could it be, like Elijah, to keep strengthening our faith in God and help us see a grander reality?

The lesson notes that despite Elijah's successes he had stress. What stress do you note in Elijah's life?

- Would it be stressful to go in front of the royal court and confront the king to his face?
- Would it be stressful to confront the 450 prophets of baal?
- Would it be stressful to live as a fugitive?
- Would it be stressful to have the majority of your church members think you were a heretic and trouble maker?
- Would it be stressful to have the religious leaders in your community call you divisive?
- Would it be stressful to have your church members refuse to worship with you?

Do we ever experience any stress along these lines? Does Bible prophecy tell us we will one day experience stress like this, if not already?

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” Mal 4:5,6

What is the Elijah message that is prophesied to occur at the end of time?

A message that turns the hearts of people back to one another again, and what kind of message is that? What brings unity, harmony, oneness?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Is it happening? Is this message going forward? Will those who carry the Elijah message experience stress like Elijah did?

MONDAY

Read top paragraph, “Read 1Kings 18:40...”

Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there. 1Kings 18:40

Thoughts?

What do you think about this revival and reformation in Israel? Should we conduct ourselves in a similar way? Was killing the prophets the only way?

How would you feel about a revival in Chattanooga between two opposing views of God and after a miracle the one leader told the audience to kill the leaders of the opposing view?

How is this different from what some elements of Islam are doing? Does God need us to physically fight to kill people who don't love and worship Him?

Would God prefer people to do this to each other? What impact does it have on the character to kill another human being? Does it cause one to become more tender, compassionate, or perhaps hardened?

Could God not have brought an earthquake as He did for Korah? Was it a necessity for humans to do the killing?

Did the killing of the prophets of Baal result in the eradication of idolatry from Israel? So the lesson's conclusion that it was the only way to eradicate idolatry is incorrect if idolatry wasn't eradicated? And God would know this wouldn't He? Then was the destruction of the prophets to eradicate idolatry?

What was it for? To reduce its influence? To slow its spread? To remove those who were hardened against God and allow for a greater opportunity for the truth to spread? As a deterrent in the future?

But what kind of methods are these? What happens to a person who obeys under threat of death? Does love flourish? What lesson should be drawn from what happened here?

What actually transpired in history? Did the use of such tactics result in what God wanted?

Then rather than a demonstration of God's methods is this perhaps a demonstration of what DOESN'T work, what methods will NOT bring about what God wants and thus in scripture we read, "not by might nor by power but by the way the spirit works says the Lord. Zech 4:6?"

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Sleep. Eat...” thoughts?

Yes, nutrition, hydration, sleep, rest, exercise are all important for maintaining physical health and combating stress.

These have anti-inflammatory properties to them and restore functioning of the prefrontal cortex which calms the stress circuitry.

Any other interventions?

Meditation, particularly on God’s character of love.

Work, altruistic endeavors, sunshine.

WEDNESDAY

What methods did Jesus use to cope with stress?

- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Meditation/communion with God in prayer
- Nature
- Rest for mind
- Friends
- Helping others
- Spreading the truth
- Work
- Sunshine
- Water
- Faith/trust God with future, outcomes

Which of these do we need to do – which do we need to do more of?

Mothers frequently need to take more time away from their children – to rest their minds, to be able to turn off the “radar” and relax.

THURSDAY

Read last two paragraphs, “John D. Rockefeller...”

Thoughts? Science demonstrates that those who engage in altruistic endeavors live longer and have better physical and mental health.

But what happens if someone gives away money or resources for the purpose of getting better health and longer life?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph and discuss

Read and discuss questions 1-4