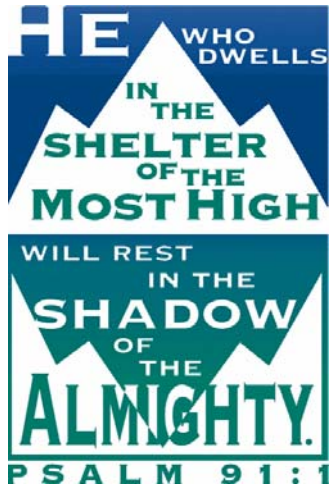


FAITH CAN MAKE YOU WHOLE

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, July 9, 2006



Luke 10:38-42 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. **But Martha was distracted by her many tasks;** so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "**Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things;** there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

A housewife went to her doctor with complaints of feeling run down. After a thorough examination, the doctor told her, "**Lady, you're not run down. You're too wound up.**"

What is Stress? Here is a simple practical definition! Stress is the uncomfortable gap between a) how we would like our life to be and b) how it actually is. If this gap is **persistent**, or even worse **growing**, **despite our efforts to reduce it** then our **distress is particularly acute!**

When you often hear yourself ask, "Where will it all end?"

Then you are showing a stress symptom showing anxiety & fear!

Nothing seems to work!

Frustration and depression

Who is responsible for this situation?

Anger

How much more can I take?

Anxiety

Can/will anybody help me?

Anxiety

I feel helpless to stop this!

Frustration & depression.

No one seems to care!

Helplessness & depression

A well-known psychologist of our time, Robert Eliot, wrote a book on stress and how to overcome it. The challenging title is the simple question: **Is it worth dying for?** He states that all of us need to take a hard look at ourselves, our lifestyle, and our relations and then ask ourselves - what are the things that are stressing us out. Ask the question "Is it worth dying for?" **If the answer is: "Yes!" - Go Ahead.** If "No" — **time to do something about it!**

We are not the first generation of people who are under lots of pressure, anxiety, and stress. There were people uptight and anxious in the time of Jesus too. In fact, in our gospel text, Jesus told a good friend named Martha to slow down and "smell the flowers," so to speak.

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things **but there is need for only one thing!**" And that one thing -- was indeed - one person - at that moment sitting right across from her. **"Martha, just follow me!"**

Now, people do have different ways of dealing with stress. A certain wife decided to always give her stressed out husband a cheerful welcome home from a trying day at the office. One day she really had to strain. **"Guess what, dear,"** she said as he entered the door. "Of our five children, four of them didn't break an arm today!"

It is said that thirty years ago people were asking: **"How can I improve my life and get closer to God?"** Today people are asking, **"How can I get through this day?"** That statement made such an impact on me because

*That's what I've been **hearing**.

* That's what I've been **seeing**.

* That's what I've been **feeling** inside!

This is the age: Of the half-read page; the quick hash and the mad dash. **This is the age** of the bright night with the nerves tight; And the plane hop with a brief stop! **This is the age** of the lamp tan in a short span. The brain strain and the heart pain; **the catnaps till the spring snaps and the fun is done.**

It is estimated that the top ten killers of humankind are all stress-related diseases. Our lives have gotten more and more complicated. We're such busy people. Many of you are under lots of pressure at home – at work or at school. Many are under stress because of a shaky marriage or problems with the children.

Today, we deal more with **diseases of choice** than with diseases of chance. **Half of our illnesses are preventable** ~ we know what causes them and how people can behave differently to prevent them.

Martha was working feverishly. Mary was working feverishly as well. **But when Jesus arrives**, all of Mary's activity stops as she visits with and listens to him. Meanwhile, Martha's in the kitchen finishing up the meal. **"When is that girl going to get in here and help me finish up?"** she huffs. The pots and pans and slamming doors get louder and louder. That doesn't work. So, finally Martha can't stand it anymore. She bursts into the living room, hands on her hips, her face flushed with anger, as she blurts out these words to Jesus: **"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?"** Tell her then to help me!" "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, **which shall not be taken away from her.**" MARY HAS CHOSEN TO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF Jesus.

A woman carrying a heavy suitcase managed to catch a crowded bus. When she was safely aboard, the conductor noticed that she stood in the aisle clinging to her suitcase. Finally he said to her, **"Lady, you can put your suitcase down now. The bus will carry it for you."** **That is exactly what Mary did! Mary chose to be in the presence of Jesus.**

In the old filmstrips Tonto often referred to the Lone Ranger with admiration and affection in the words **Kee-mo-sab-bee**, which in his Indian language means **"faithful friend."** That is what we all need: a **'faithful friend'**—a **Kee-mo-sab-bee**--who will stand by us in all of life's fluctuations. The Bible teaches us that God is such a friend--even when all other friends have failed us and forgotten us--there is one who stands by us. In our times it is easy to find justification and excuses to live under stress and **complain the ears of others** about how terrible our times are. We can easily ruin someone else's day by spreading our own version of how terrible the world and our pains and our problems are. Live can be worth living. Our faith provides a **Kee-mo-sab-bee** for all of us ~ throughout our lives.

Dr. Eliot who posed the question, "Is it worth dying for?" Concludes that – no matter what ~~ you're and my life ~ is worth living! No matter what the provocation or the incentive, you don't have to kill yourself to deal with it. IT'S NOT WORTH DYING FOR. So the good news of the day is: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. **Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.**" Mary has chosen to be in the presence of Jesus. Are you under stress?

YOUR FAITH CAN MAKE YOU WHOLE!

AMEN