

Dealing with the Stress of Life

Mark 6: 30-32

Let me begin by asking: has anyone been stressed today? I'm sure the majority of us would answer: Yes! We live in a stressful world. There are pressures at work, at home, in the world, among our families, and even within the church. We often fail to enjoy our lives because we are forced to deal with stress. I am guilty of allowing stressful situations to get the best of me.

It is important that we learn to deal with the pressures of life and overcome the stress that plagues us so often. The great preacher Vance Havner said, "*If you don't come apart and rest, you will come apart.*" The disciples had dealt with the pressures of life. These were stressful times. Jesus had been rejected at Nazareth and it seemed as if His popularity was beginning to fade. Immediately following the incident at Nazareth, Jesus sends them out, two by two, to labor for Him [vv.7-13](#). While carrying out the task they've been asked to do, the disciples learn firsthand of the pressures of life. No doubt life had been much simpler before they surrendered to the Lord's call. They had to learn to deal with the difficulties of discipleship. Let's examine the great [truths](#) found within the verses we've read concerning: [Dealing with the Stress of Life](#).

I. A Need for Continued Association (30a) – [And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus](#). This involved:

A. Association with Each Other – [And the apostles gathered themselves together](#). I want you to imagine how different things had become. They had been walking with Jesus, and basically watching Him work in great power. He had authority over sickness, disease, infirmities, and even death. Now these men find themselves being sent out to work the works of God. They have been called upon to preach the gospel and anoint the sick with oil for healing by faith. I'm sure they felt things were much easier with Jesus around.

- Many times we are called upon to do things that seem more than we can possibly do. But also consider the fact that they were sent out in groups of two. They had to learn to work with each other. Someone had to work with Peter, the outspoken trailblazer. Someone had to work with James and John, the two who wanted to be first in all things. Someone had to work with Judas, one who wasn't even a believer. It is encouraging to see that they gathered themselves together after their tour of duty. They never lost sight of their need for each other.

- When dealing with the stress of life, we need to lean upon those around us and recognize our need for each other. We are all different, but we all have something of value to offer and some way of being a help to the cause of Christ.

B. Association with the Lord (30a) – [And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus.](#)

I'm sure they were well aware of the disapproval of the religious sect of that day. They had witnessed the Lord's rejection; they had heard the cruel words and malicious attacks. It would've been easy while out by themselves to have abandoned the work at hand. They remained committed and made their way back to Jesus. The disciples had learned an important truth, when life gets tough, get to Jesus.

- We've all heard the expression: when the goin' gets tough, the tough get goin'. That is especially true of many Baptist, but sadly we get goin' in the wrong direction, away from Jesus. Why is it that so often when trouble comes we fail to seek the One who can help in our situation? We must learn to maintain our association with the Lord and lean on His strength rather than our own!

II. A Need for Honest Conversation (30b) – [and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.](#)

These men made the most of their opportunity. They wanted to tell Jesus all about their journey. When we are stressed we need to maintain an honest conversation with the Lord. We must talk to Him through prayer and allow Him to speak through His Word. Notice their conversation.

A. They shared their Work – [They told the Lord the things they had done.](#) They shared their experiences of difficulty. They likely told the Lord of the particular problems they had encountered and I'm sure He gave wise instruction on how to deal with similar situations in the future.

- Quite often we find ourselves in stressful situations because we haven't shared our burdens with the Lord. We haven't sought His direction in our lives. I realize that Jesus knows the very thoughts of our heart, but He like us to express them. Take the time to talk with the Lord about your plans for the day, even the smallest of details. Ask Him to open doors of opportunity and close those that would bring harm. Prayer should be exercised each day, not just while at church. There is no job too big or too small for the Lord.

B. They sought His Wisdom (30b) – **and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.** They also shared with the Lord what they had taught men concerning Him. These men were seeking reassurance that they had taught sound doctrine. They wanted to represent the Lord well to those they came in contact with.

- We need God's wisdom in our lives. There have been many times when I've faced situations that I didn't know what to do. It is easy to make a stressful situation more difficult by going in our own understanding. Stress is often brought on by problems that seem to have no solution. We need to seek spiritual discernment in the decisions we make! [Prov.3:5-6 – Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.](#) ^[6] [In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.](#) Are you dealing with a stressful situation? Have you sought the Lord's wisdom in coming to a solution?

III. A Need for Timely Separation (31a) – **And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.** The disciples found themselves in a hostile environment. The work wasn't easy. Most didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ. We are surrounded by those who don't believe. There is little help and encouragement to be found. We need separation at times. Consider:

A. The Place of Separation – Jesus called them to come apart to a desert place, a place of seclusion without the distractions of the world. They had spent much time dealing with the stress of life and needed a quiet place to rest. Gaining the victory over a stressful life must include a place of separation. Each of us must have a special place that we can get away from the cares of life and spend time with the Lord.

- The church is such a place. It is here that we can come, even if only for an hour or so, and shut the world outside. We can come together and worship the Lord and meditate on His goodness. Many times I have come discouraged and down hearted and left with joy in my soul. It is impossible to measure the importance of being at the house of God. We also need a secret place that we can go at any time. It may be a prayer closet, or a quiet place in the back yard, anywhere that you can get alone with God and make your request known to Him. We must live among the world and be a light, but we need a haven of rest that we can find peace from the pressures we face.

B. The Provision of Separation – Jesus wanted them to enjoy His rest for a while. He knew the stress and burdens of ministry. He knew the exhaustion it brings. It was there that He wanted to provide His rest. Jesus wasn't going to offer the luxuries of life, but the riches of His grace!

- Aren't you glad for the rest of our Savior? He can provide peace to the troubled heart, strength for the weary soldier, and rest for those who can't seem to find the strength or the courage to go on. It is in our times of separation that we can rest in the arms of our Lord, drawing from His strength and finding what we need to continue. [Mat.11:28 – Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.](#)

IV. A Need for Spiritual Restoration (31b) – [for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.](#) These men were exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Jesus wanted to supply the need of their bodies and soul. It is easy when facing the difficulties of life to suffer spiritually and get to the place that we don't enjoy our Christian lives. There are a couple of things that we need for spiritual restoration. We must:

A. Regain our Focus – [There were many coming and going.](#) I'm sure these men had more than they could handle. Their lives had been a whirlwind since they began their walk with Jesus. Everywhere they went there were crowds of people wanting something from them or the Lord. They were doing the works of God, but even that had taken away their focus.

- I fight this battle daily. It is easy to get so involved in good things that we neglect our own spiritual needs and lose our focus of the Lord. Moms you work all day, come home to homework, laundry, supper, and the demands of the home. Men you work all day under pressure to make production, come home to the yard work, and maybe the wife says, "Honey a little light came on in the car and it started making a funny noise." Our children deal with the stress of school and peers. It seems as if someone is always demanding our attention. Much of what we do is necessary and worthy to be done, but we must maintain our focus for the Lord. When Jesus isn't in His rightful place, everything else is out of balance. We will never overcome the stress until we make time for the Lord. It is amazing how much easier life is when we are in fellowship with Him! It may be difficult, but we must ensure we are meeting our spiritual needs before we can help others.

B. Replenish our Strength – [They had no leisure so much as to eat.](#) There was no down time, not even to eat. They had run themselves so ragged that they had neglected their own needs. The long days of little nourishment and lack of rest had taken their toll. This is evident in the lives of many Christians. Spiritually we have no leisure, no time for rest in the Lord, and we fail to feed on the things of God. There is no substitute for what God provides. You can stay as busy as you like, doing good things, but that cannot take the place of what the Lord has for you. Our churches are filled with folks who are starving themselves from the things of God.

- We need to make it a point to sit at the Master's table every day. Take the time for personal devotion, feeding on the Word and talking with God. A strong spiritual life will go a long way in reducing the stress we face. Some quality time with the Lord will make each day run much smoother. This time of rest didn't last long, but I'm sure it gave the disciples what they needed to continue for the Lord.

Conclusion: I'm sure each of us deals with stress on a regular basis. It seems to have become a part of our culture. We can learn to handle the pressures of life if we'll trust in the Lord and lean on Him. We must come apart occasionally or we will most certainly come apart. If you are weary in the journey, come find rest and help in the Lord. If you are unsaved, you don't enjoy the hope and help He gives. Respond to the call for salvation and believe on Christ today!