Devotion #245

**Are You Stressed?**

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB)** *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Not too long ago I was in a meeting with several of our area pastors. We were meeting to encourage one another and to see how everyone is faring through this past year. You might wonder why pastors need encouragement or think it sounds strange that they would need the support of other pastors. Well, I hate to be the one to tell you, but pastors are human. We feel the same things everyone else feels and get tired and stressed and all that goes with being a human. So from time to time, we need to meet with other brothers who do the same kind of work to lift each other up. At the meeting, one of the brothers asked if there were any of us who were feeling more tired than normal? To which all of us said, “Yes, but we thought it was just life and maybe getting older.”. But our brother said, “No it’s a scientific fact that when our brains have to think more, it causes the glucose levels to rise which causes tiredness.”. This last year has been one that has caused a great deal more brainpower than in the past. For example, he said, “When you go to a store, you have think more. You have to remember a mask. You have to think about how you will interact with people around you. You have to think about what to touch and what not to touch or wipe off things.”, etc. All that, he said, makes us more tired. And that’s on top of all we have to do normally.

So it shouldn’t be a surprise that you feel the way you do, physically, mentally and emotionally, all of which affect you spiritually. I’m sure you have heard that frustration levels are up higher than normal, not just over COVID but also the strange political climate and weird decision making that is occurring. Our nation is rapidly changing in many ways. Because of all the stress that comes with monumental changes, people don’t handle life well. Suicide is on the rise especially among young people. I know there are various reasons people take their own lives, but it always comes back to stress or the inability to handle life in a way that is healthy. Many young people are looking at our world and wondering what it’s going to be like for them in the future. And part of the concern comes from the fact that life has been relatively easy for them - easy in the sense that much of what young people have has been given to them. That’s not true 100%, but for most young people in our nation, they have not had to stress about the things they need like generations in the past had to do.

Suffice it to say, even if we agree or disagree on the subject, life is full of stress. So much stress that people find no other option but to take their own lives to get out from under it. The saddest part of this is that, if they are without Christ, they are going into an eternity that is worse than any stress faced in this life. But the Lord says that it doesn’t have to be that way. In fact, these verses for today are His message to us that if we will go to Him, or better, follow Him in obedience, He will give us rest. His rest is the kind of rest that is real rest. Not the going-to-bed kind where you wake up every fifteen minutes, but the kind of rest where the heart and mind are at peace with life. To be clear however, the Lord never said He would remove the pressures of life, but that He would be with us every step of the way, helping us to deal with those pressures. It is possible to live your life at peace within. We all need to remember that, even those of us who have been following Him for years. We need to regularly go back to the drawing board so-to-speak and remember that, in Christ, we have the ability to let go of stresses and let Him take what we cannot deal with or fix on our own. He has promised that He will help us. In fact, He says He has no plans to burden us with anything greater but to help us in all we go through.

What is your stress over today? Wouldn’t it be great to just let God take it? He can handle whatever you are dealing with. Just put whatever it is in His hands and trust Him with it. You will find the peace you are looking for. He promised that, and He always keeps his promises.