

Speaker : Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam
Title : Stress and Prayer
Text : Luke 10:38-42

Introduction

2 Ways of living – Mary and Martha

“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV).

“38-40As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand."

41-42The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it – it's the main course, and won't be taken from her" (Luke 10:38-42 (The Message).

- Martha lived a stressful life and was troubled and worried
- Mary was surrounded by the same pressures but was not affected, this disturbed Martha

Jesus’ reply to Martha’s request

“But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42).

- She was building the inner man which was helpful
- It will not be taken from her
- You can choose to worry and live a stressful life or choose to trust and depend on God

Paul’s testimony (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

“Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and

toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”

Paul’s advice (Philippians 4:6-7)

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

- The answer to a stressed life is prayer
- The answer to cares is prayer
- The answer to anxiety is to know God and live in His will
- To be “anxious” is to be pulled in 2 different ways. It is an inward battle
- It is a battle that goes on inside you

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6: 25).

Biblical Principles of Stress Relieving Prayer

- **Stress relieving prayer is dependence on the Lord**

Prayer is meant to be more preventive than remedial

- Common practice is to pray only when in trouble
- Jesus taught us to pray before we get into trouble

“And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:4).

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- Human nature – our greatest challenge comes from feeling inadequate.
- We want to be “macho” in every way
- Recognize that the responsibility for us to be victorious lies in God who has promised to meet all our inadequacies
- The battle is the Lord’s when we feel inadequate as Christians.
Instead of care, prayer

“Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

“ ... casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

- By not praying, we are not trusting God nor depend on Him.
- Stress relieving prayer ought to be our lifestyle
 - Be anxious for nothing
 - Pray about everything – qualitative prayer not quantitative prayer
- Everything that happens to you is permitted by God.

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23).

- God allows trying circumstances so that we can know His Strength
 - God permits situations when we are required to do more than we are capable of so we can depend on Him (e.g. Moses, Gideon, David)
 - We will not be anxious as He is our Provider
 - The answer to our cares is God. Don't cast away your confidence, cast away your cares
- Stress relieving prayer declares our love for God
 - Begin with praise and worship
 - Make Him bigger than everything we know
 - Then, bring your requests to Him

Conclusion

“and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

- The peace of God will guard your heart and mind
- Build the inward man and the outward man will succeed
- Be a Mary and not a Martha