

FRUITFULNESS: DEALING WITH THE STRESSES OF LIFE

(Mat 13:1 KJV) The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. (Mat 13:2 KJV) And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. (Mat 13:3 KJV) And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (Mat 13:4 KJV) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: (Mat 13:5 KJV) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: (Mat 13:6 KJV) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (Mat 13:7 KJV) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (Mat 13:8 KJV) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (Mat 13:9 KJV) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

- A. ***Seed fell on way side***--devoured by the fowls of the air.
- B. ***Seed fell on stony ground***--withered because of lack of depth.
- C. ***Seed fell among thorns***--choked by the cares of this life.

II. BEING FRUITFUL BY PRESERVING THE SEED.

- A. ***Fruitfulness: Developing Understanding.***
- B. ***Fruitfulness: Developing a Good Root System.***
- C. ***Fruitfulness: Dealing with the Stresses of Life.***
- D. ***Fruitfulness: Cultivating Good Soil.***

III. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: THE SEED THAT FELL AMONG THE THORNS.

- A. ***Word preached; received; but fell among thorns and was choked out.***
- B. ***Matthews account.*** (Mat 13:22 KJV) He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.
- C. ***Mark's account.*** (Mark 4:18 KJV) And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, (Mark 4:19 KJV) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.
- D. ***Luke's account.*** (Luke 8:14 KJV) And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.
- E. ***Summary.***
 1. Cares (of this world; life).
 2. Deceitfulness of riches.
 3. Lusts of other things.
 4. Pleasures of this life.

IV. RICHES.

- A. ***God's promise.***
 1. (Psa 112:1 KJV) Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. (Psa 112:2 KJV) His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. (Psa 112:3 KJV) Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.
 2. (Prov 3:16 KJV) Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.
- B. ***Deceitfulness of riches is trusting in riches.***

1. Believing them to be the answer to every problem; that this is the ultimate in life; and they should be obtained at any cost, especially to others.
2. (Psa 49:6 KJV) They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; (Psa 49:7 KJV) None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:
3. (Prov 11:28 KJV) He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
4. (1 Tim 6:17 KJV) Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

V. LUST OF OTHER THINGS AND PLEASURE.

A. *Lust.*

1. Inordinate desires.
2. Covetousness.
 - a. (Eph 5:3 KJV) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
 - b. (Col 3:5 KJV) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

B. *Pleasures of this life.*

1. Worldly pleasures.
2. Never satisfied.

VI. THE CARES OF THIS LIFE.

A. *The cares of this world represent the stresses of life.*

1. Fast-paced lifestyle; go, go, go society.
2. Finances - job, unemployment.
3. Children.
4. Marriage problems.
5. Health.

B. *Definition of stress.*

1. Positive.
 - a. Stress in itself is neither good nor bad; it's what we make of it that really counts.
 - b. When it motivates us to action, stress can be good.
2. Negative.
 - a. The wear and tear of living which each of us experiences as the result of the pressures of life.
 - b. But when stress puts our bodies under prolonged physical and emotional pressure, then the very things that might have been stimulating and fun become destructive and unpleasant instead.

VII. CASTING ALL OUR CARE UPON THE LORD. (1 Pet 5:7 KJV) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

A. *Jesus loves and cares for us.*

B. *Jesus has paid it all.*

1. Borne our griefs; carried our sorrows. (Isa 53:4 KJV) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
 2. Touched by our infirmities (without strength or weak). (Heb 4:15 KJV) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
 3. Not just weaknesses, but emotional hang-ups and inner conflicts.
 4. Jesus understands our frustration, anxiety, depression, hurts, feelings of abandonment, loneliness, isolation, and rejection
- C. ***Satan is effective in using weapons of guilt, rejection, fear, embarrassment, grief, depression, loneliness, and misunderstanding.***
- D. ***Laying aside weights and besetting sins.*** (Heb 12:1 KJV) Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Heb 12:2 KJV) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
1. Weights.
 - a. Pain, hurts, disappointments, and failures.
 - b. Discouragement, depression, hopelessness.
- And besetting sin.
Anxiety, fear, worry.
Frustration, anger, uncontrolled temper, rage, bitterness, hatred, hostility.
Resentment, strife.

I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ANXIETY.

- A. ***"The cares (anxieties) of this world choke out the word."***
- B. ***Anxious hearts are very heavy.*** (Prov 12:25 KJV) Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.
- C. ***Be anxious for nothing.*** Phil. 4:6 - *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

PREVENTING ANXIETY

- Learn to lean on the Lord; Trust God.*** (Prov 3:5 KJV) Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
- Take no thought for tomorrow.*** We are more important than the sparrows.
- Don't deny, but admit fears, insecurities, conflicts, and anxieties when they arise.***
- Find someone with whom you can talk these over with on a regular basis if necessary.***
- Learn to communicate more effectively.***
- Learn how to relax.***
- Periodically evaluate priorities and life goals.***
- Utilize time management--use your time wisely.***
- Keep things in perspective.***
- Seek help from God and others in meeting one's needs.***

Choruses:

Leave them there,
Leave them there.
Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.
If you'll trust and never doubt,
He will surely bring you out.
Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.

When your body suffers pain,
And your health you can't regain.
And you have to get along on meager fare;
Just remember in God's Word,
How He fed the little birds.
Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.

Learning to lean,
I'm learning to lean.
I'm learning to lean on Jesus;
Finding more power than I ever dreamed,
I'm learning to lean on Jesus.