

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
June 8th 2014
Matthew 11:28-29

“Work Related Stresses”

Good morning Fil-Am Community Church, I want to welcome you here this morning, as there were many other places you could have been and yet you chose to come here so for that we thank you.

I want to take this opportunity to apologize to those who I have offended and hurt over the last few weeks; I can assure it that **most** of it was **unintentional**.

And I don't want any of you to feel left out just give me a few weeks and I am sure I will upset you as well.

But all jokes aside, we are trying our best to keep you from ending up on a **dead end road** and make some if not all of the mistakes that we have made, and sometimes in order to prevent that you get your toes stepped on.

The sermon this morning will be built around Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB)

Then Jesus said, 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.”

Let me tell you an illustration in order to **protect the innocent**

The story goes about two years ago, a man walked into my doctor's office for my first check up in a long while.

He had not been in a while and his wife was pestering him to get it done.

The first thing the Doctor mentioned at the appointment was that he had **high blood pressure**, not just slightly high but off the charts high.

This was not well received as he was in his early 30's. The treatment was to hook him up on a blood pressure monitor that took readings approximately every 15 minutes, which would be done for four days and then the results would be examined.

The Doctor immediately brought it to my attention that the measurements in fact showed that I not only had high blood pressure but it **spiked** dangerously high during multiple times throughout the day, while I was at work.

The Doctor explained that you have what we call stress induced high blood pressure. And because of that the spikes many times throughout the day were caused by the stress and put my health in a very dangerous position.

The Doctor told him about certain things he had to stop eating; he had to remove some things from his diet, and would be put on high blood pressure medicine. And then he looked at me and he said something I will never forget.

If that were not enough he then said, if your blood pressure stays where it is, and you don't learn how to deal with the stress you face at work, you are going to have a major heart attack in your 40's. It's not a question of if; it's a question of when.

This was just an example however; you would be surprised at all the people under my voice that could easily fill in their names in place of this person.

So that is what we are talking about this morning, how to deal with stress in the workplace!

The truth is, we often let our jobs and our careers stress us out, but that's not the way God intended it. That's not the plan that God has for our careers to stress us out. You see, we may be stressed out by our jobs, but Jesus wants to get the stress out of our jobs.

Therefore this morning we will be looking at How to Get Stress Out of our Jobs.

It says in Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB) Memory Verse

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.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (Amplified Bible)

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened and I will cause you to rest. [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.]

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls.

For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

You see, Jesus wants to replace your stress with His rest when it comes to your job.

- ✓ You see, work is hard,
- ✓ Work is draining,
- ✓ It's always going to be that way,
- ✓ After all, it's called work.

But God also wants your work to be...

- ✓ Meaningful,
- ✓ To make a difference,
- ✓ And to have purpose.

It says it in Ecclesiastes 2:24,

“There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.”

Finding satisfaction in work is from the hand of God.”

If I want to replace the stress of your work with the REST that only God can give, then God’s hand has to be on your work.

Now let fast forward to the same individual in the illustration from before, today he goes back to the Doctors office for a routine follow-up appointment.

The good news is that he is taken off the blood pressure medicine, as his blood pressure is back to normal level and very little to no spikes at all.

You may ask what’s the difference, what changed?

- ✓ Did the job change,
- ✓ Did the boss change,
- ✓ What changed?

I can tell you in this scenario the job didn’t change at all, in fact might have even gotten more stressful, so what changed?

The change was with Godly principles that can be applied to **your life** and that is what we are going to dig into today.

So as we have said in the past let us get into the Word of God, or more importantly, let us get the Word of God into us!

The first principle we are going to discuss this morning that causes stress is.

1. I don’t know what to do with my life.

What you need is direction or focus to help keep you pointed in the right direction.

Golf immortal Arnold Palmer recalls a lesson about overconfidence: It was the final hole of the 1961 Masters tournament, and I had a one-stroke lead and had just hit a very satisfying tee shot. I felt I was in pretty good shape. As I approached my ball, I saw an old friend standing at the edge of the gallery. He motioned me over, stuck out his hand and said, "Congratulations." I took his hand and shook it, but as soon as I did, I knew I had lost my focus.

On my next two shots, I hit the ball into a sand trap, and then put it over the edge of the green. I missed a putt and lost the Masters. You don't forget a mistake like that; you just learn from it and become determined that you will never do it again. I haven't in the last 30 years.

The first stressor is not being sure what to pursue in life.
There could be a lot of reasons why you are in this situation.

- ✓ Maybe you just lost a job and you don't know what is next,
- ✓ Maybe you moved to here, and don't know a lot of people,
- ✓ Maybe you have been working in a profession that you thought that was what you were supposed to do, but once you got it, it wasn't what you thought it would be.
- ✓ Now you are beginning to question what to do, you seem lost and are stressed out because you are not sure what you should do next.

God's solution for this first job stressor is so simple people often miss this so, "Write this down" Ask God what He wants you to do.

Sounds too simple, right? Just ask God. The truth is, most people have never actually stopped and asked God the question, what do you want me to do now?

We will ask that question of our...

- ✓ Friends,
- ✓ Parents,

- ✓ Strangers,
- ✓ Co-Workers.

We ask what should we do next?

But have you ever stopped and prayed and asked God, “*God, what do you want me to do now?*”

It says in James 1:5. “If you need wisdom and you want to know what God wants you to do, simply ask Him.

Saints, if you pray and you ask God, God, what do you want me to do, you might be surprised.

God is going to hit me with a lightning bolt, or I am going to hear a loud booming voice and He’s going to hand me my life plan.

Typically, God doesn’t work like that. In fact, most of the time, God tells us just what the next step is going to be. He doesn’t tell us how our whole life is going to play out.

The way that God invites you to join Him in His work is He reveals a need to you that touches your heart. And when God reveals a need to you, when He touches your heart, that’s His invitation for you to jump in and be a part of that.

The problem is many times, we don’t do that because we’re not looking, we’re not paying attention.

We are sitting on the side lines saying, God, what’s your plan? Where’s my life plan?

So what should we do? We should pray and ask God, what do You want me to do?

Pay attention because

- ✓ Maybe God is going to tell us in our prayers,

- ✓ Maybe God is going to tell us to read the Bible,
- ✓ Maybe He's going to use something in our home group to show us,
- ✓ Maybe He's just going to use circumstances in our life.

If you begin earnestly praying, God, what is it you want me to do, and then you pay attention, God is going to show you.

The first stressor is I do not know what to do with my life... the second is...

2. I feel like a failure when I don't succeed at my job.

There is a new bank president who met with his predecessor and said, "I would like to know what have been the keys to your success."

The older gentleman looked at him and replied, "Young man, I can sum it up in two words: **Good Decisions.**"

To that the young man responded, "I thank you immensely for that advice, sir, but how does one come to know which are the good decisions?" "

One word, young man," he replied. **Experience.** "

"That's all well and good," said the younger, "but how does one get experience?" "

Two words," said the elder. **Bad Decisions.**"

Someone once asked Paul Harvey, the journalist and radio commentator, to reveal the secret of his success. "I get up when I fall down," said Harvey.

Many people believe that success is ultimately linked to their jobs or careers.

- ✓ Success in work equals success in life.
- ✓ We see our jobs as the ultimate way to fulfill ourselves.

Here's the problem. The ultimate purpose of your career and of your job isn't to fulfill you. It's not to bring meaning to your life, because you are more than just your job. So it's important that you take this step.

This is God's action to defeat the stressor: separate my identity from my job.

It is extremely challenging at times to separate your identity from your job or career. Imagine the trouble I had adjusting from retiring from 30 years of active duty with the United States Marine Corps to not wearing the uniform and kicking down doors, but dressing in civilian clothes and trying to blend in?

If I were not a Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant who am I? That is something I still struggle with.

It was challenging, not just for me and the family but also for the other Directors and Pastor Rolly, because I think I have threatened to punch a few of them in the face on multiple occasions...

You have to get to a place and see that the source of the stress is caused because we look to our work as our ultimate source of satisfaction and self-worth in our lives.

Don't get me wrong your job or career matters. Your job is important. But your job isn't your life. It's not your identity.

When I took the dress blue uniform I found out I was still the same man that wore the uniform for all those years, I didn't change anything but the uniform I chose to wear.

You could say but Pastor Dave I am a stay at home mom, I would say that's awesome but that's what you do not who you are.

You have a greater purpose than just your job.

That is found in Luke 10:27, (NASB)

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your entire mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

That’s your greatest purpose in life.

Ephesians 2:10 says, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*

Notice it doesn’t say “For we are God’s masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to,” be a US Marine. No, it says, “For we are God’s masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to do” what?

“Good works” which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Listen, if you didn’t have your career tomorrow, if you didn’t have your job tomorrow, understand, that is not what you were created to do.

You were created in Christ Jesus to do good works. So find a way to separate your identity from your job. That’s job stressor number 2.

The first stressor is I do not know what to do with my life...

The second is I feel like a failure when I don’t succeed at my job and the third is...

3. I hate my Job

Now is there anything in this world that could cause more stress than being in a job that you do not like and working with people you do not like?

You know, there are really only two possible solutions to a job that we hate. Number one, we can find a new job and number two, we can learn to love the job we already have.

God’s solution, do what I love and love what I do. Now, the obvious best solution is to do what I love.

Someone said if you choose a job that you love, you will never have to work a day in your life.

If you can find a job where you are doing the things that you are passionate about and you love to do, that's great, consider yourself fortunate.

However there are many here who do not find themselves in that situation so what are we to do?

So what do I do if I'm at a job that I don't like very much? How do I learn to love what I do, when I'm not doing what I love?

Well, the key is to give it your very best.

It says in Ecclesiastes 9:10. *"Whatever presents itself for you to do, do it with all your might."*

You may say Pastor Dave you don't understand my situation. You know, right now, I'm in a temp job, just to hold me over until the right job comes along.

I would respond, it doesn't really matter.

You may say that your goal is to be an actor, or Doctor or Lawyer.

What you need to understand is, in God's eyes, what you are doing right now is right where you need to be, because he is prepping you for something bigger and better.

God might be using where you work to prepare you for something bigger, something better, for a different career, or a different job.

Let me ask you this, if you want God to bring something bigger and better into your life, something that you are passionate about, why would He do that if you're not being faithful with what you have right now?

The answer is, He wouldn't. God is not going to bless you with more responsibility if you're not being faithful, and you're not doing your best at what He has given you right now.

Jesus says this in Matthew 25:23, "His master replied, 'Good job. You are a good and faithful servant. You have proved that you could be trusted with a small amount. I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and share in your master's happiness.'" You have been faithful at the job where I have you now; I'm going to bring you a job with more responsibility.

Understand, if you want God to bless you with more, be faithful with where you are now. Do your best. Make things better. Serve the people at your workplace.

The first stressor is I do not know what to do with my life...

The second is I feel like a failure when I don't succeed at my job

The third is I hate my job and the fourth is.....

4. I don't feel like my job matters

Studies show that more heart attacks happen on Monday than on any other day of the week. It's not even close. 20% more heart attacks happen on Monday than on any other day of the week.

Because I think we spend the weekend dreading going to work on Monday. We think about how we have to please our boss, and we have to please our coworkers. And then we don't do the work for the meaning in the work, we don't see purpose in it.

So we begin to dread it and we begin to feel bad and stressed out over it.

So how can we change that?

One huge way is to look for opportunities to serve God at work.

You see, one of the biggest stress causers is we take God out of work. When we separate the secular part of our life from the spiritual part of our life, it is

almost like saying I'm putting Jesus over here and I'm putting my job over here.

Decide beginning today that you are, from this day forward, you are going to go to work for God.

Your number one goal at work is going to be to please God. Now yes, do your best to succeed. Do your best to climb the ladder of success.

Why? Because, we need more followers of Jesus in places of influence in our country.

I think our country would be a better place if we had Christians who are in places of influence, in media, in entertainment, in politics, in news, in education, in all those areas.

Look at it this way, God may have placed you where you are now, because you might be the only follower of Jesus in your workplace.

You may be God's plan to make a difference in their life, through the way that you live, through the way that you share your faith, by letting them know that you are a follower of Jesus.

Now we are going to do something a little different this morning than we usually do, what we are going to do is take a short amount of time and reflect on the sermon notes and think what is God telling me or the Holy Spirit urging me to do today?

Prayerfully consider how God wants you to apply this message to your life.

- ✓ Maybe you are here today and you are thinking, you know what? I don't know what to do with my life.
- ✓ Maybe your Next Step is just to say, you know, this week, I'm going to pray and I'm going to ask God what do you want me to do?
- ✓ I'm going to look for the opportunities.

- ✓ Maybe right now you are feeling stressed at your job because your identity is too closely tied to your job and that's causing you a lot of stress and maybe you need to make the commitment today to recognize that Jesus can be the only source of satisfaction, you can't depend on you.
- ✓ Maybe your Next Step is to look for opportunities to serve God at work.

Let us pray...

Father God, give us a healthy perspective on work. God, may we look to you as the only source of our self-worth, as our only source of meaning.

Father God may we, beginning tomorrow morning, at work to bring you back into my workplace, and do all I can to serve you in all that I do.

God, I pray that even though we may have come in today stressed out by our work, that you will take the stress out of our work. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.