

How well do you respond to stress in your life, and in what ways has it been tested lately?

A good friend recently noted that I talk a lot about myself in my column, but usually end up in the Bible, so here goes.

Yes, I did have a stress test last week, and apparently there are different ways to test the way our body reacts to stress. Paul Hunley recently tested on a treadmill, and when Jan McLaughlin heard that I was to have a nuclear test she told me to expect time on the treadmill as well. I was actually looking forward to showing them how good of shape I'm in, but they must have assumed otherwise. All they did was feed me snacks, inject a couple of things in my arm, and take pictures of my heart. I guess I passed because they let me go, and I haven't received a call. Now on to the Bible.

You won't find the word "stress" in your concordance because it's not in the Bible. We do, however, find references to anxiety, worry, trouble, the struggles of life, and how we should respond to such.

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." (John 14:1) Obviously He wants us to trust that our heavenly Father will take care of our needs, and that what He did on the cross should make us confident of His love for us. The Apostle Paul spoke of the peace that will come if we take our needs to the Lord. In Philippians 4:6-7 he wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Noting that we are tested in various ways, James actually said we should consider it all joy when we encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance, and that endurance is what makes us perfect and complete. (James 1:2-3)

The trials you are facing may not bring a smile to your face, but if you believe that God will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able to endure, (1 Cor 10:13) you should still find joy in His promise and provision.

God Bless, Rick



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WHICH IS EASIER?

a communion meditation by Rick Polley

Do you remember the time when four men opened up a roof and lowered a paralytic man down to Jesus—after realizing they couldn't get him inside to where Jesus was teaching because of the size of the crowd? And when Jesus saw their faith, he told the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." The scribes started thinking to themselves "He is blaspheming. Only God can forgive sins."

Picking it up in Mark 2 ⁸ *Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"* ⁹ *Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?* ¹⁰ *But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic,* ¹¹ *"I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home."* ¹² *And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."*

On the surface, it probably appeared to the scribes and the rest of the crowd that saying "your sins are forgiven" was the easier thing to say—since no one could possibly validate such a claim. But deep down, that was not the easier statement for Jesus to say. It was much easier for Jesus to say "pick up your pallet and go home".

Because in order for the statement "your sins are forgiven" to be true, it would require Jesus to go to the cross. Max Lucado, in his book entitled "He Still Moves Stones" states it this way: "Which is easier for Jesus? To forgive a soul or to heal a body? Which caused Jesus less pain—providing this man with health or providing this man with heaven? To heal the man's body took a simple command; to forgive the man's sins took Jesus' blood. The first was done in the house of friends; the second on a hill with thieves. One took a word; the other took His body. One took a moment; the other took His life."

We all have physical aches and pains in our life that we wish we didn't have. And we have probably prayed asking them to be removed. But Jesus is more interested in healing our spiritual affliction than our physical affliction. That is why he first told the paralytic "your sins are forgiven."

As we come around this table this morning, let's give thanks that we have been healed spiritually by Jesus through the Cross of Calvary—and realize that is far more important than any physical healing He might ever give us.

STATISTICS

Worship 123
Offering \$7,016.78

SERVING THIS SUNDAY-5/6/18

Greeters Judy Marlow
Visitors' Stand Bonnie Ruebush
Communion Meditation Jonathan Sperry
Paul Hunley
Ushers Scott Bales
Jake Divjak
Rich Mann
Jim Trimmerger
Bob Williamson
Jeff Edmiston

WORSHIP NURSERY

Toddlers Sara & Regan Bartels
Infants Janet Polley
Kristin Polley
Abbie Divjak
Sunday School
Toddlers Julie Divjak
Infants Bonnie Ruebush
Kileen Huber



Let Us Pray For...

--Dixie Williamson in hospital with intestinal infection.
--Jim Higgins recovering from surgery on an infected finger.
--Nancy Martin with stomach problems.

LIFE OF CHRIST

We brought our study of *Life of Christ* to a close last week, but we did skip a few chapters along the way. If we overlooked anything that some in the class find significant, or have questions about, they have been invited to bring them before the class this Sunday. If nothing is brought before the class, never fear, Rick has something planned. And it isn't playing tidlywinks, as threatened last week.



MAY SERVERS

5/13 : Jonathan Sperry, Paul Hunley
5/20 & 5/27: Chris Luzio, Paul Hunley

MAY PROJECTIONIST

Chris Luzio

MAY GREETERS

5/13 Brad Stirmell
5/20 Jack & Bonnie Ruebush
5/27 Will & Sara Bartels

MAY VISITORS' STAND

5/13 Beryl & Jamella Reese
5/20 Bob & Cixie Williamson
5/27 Judy Marlow

MAY NURSERY

Worship - 5/13

Toddlers: Nikki & Grace Hunley
Infants: Rhonda Luzio
Nicole Moore
Emily Hughes
Sunday School
Infants: Dixie Williamson
Jeni Sperry

Worship - 5/20

Toddlers: Kelly Donaldson
Kate Sperry
Infants: Marilyn Wenneborg
Vicki Small
Anna Hunley
Sunday School
Infants: Karen Mann
Rebecca Smith

Worship - 5/27

Toddlers: Shannon Higgins
Jake Divjak
Infants: Dixie Williamson
Kileen Huber
Courtney Bales
Sunday School
Infants: Kristin Polley
Vicki Small



We are thinking about planning a tubing trip on the Current River, August 5-7. If you are interested, let Rick know ASAP.



For years we played in a local Co-ed softball league out at Sugar Creek before it was disbanded. Last year, we had the opportunity to join a men's league in Rochester and the guys really enjoyed the fellowship. But, this year, let's go back to our historical softball roots and enter the Co-ed league in Rochester.

So, for men and women interested in playing softball this year, there is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway. We play on Sunday afternoons in Rochester. I am attending an Informational meeting this Sunday at 1:30 to gather more details which I will pass along as I receive them.



High School Youth Group

For the final meeting before our finale, we need as many of you to come Sunday night as possible. It will be a craft night to make some items which we will give away to kids during our Mexico missions trip in June. Last week, a few bracelets were completed which turned out really nice. This week, we will continue making bracelets and raid our supply closet to gather material for other ideas. Thank you for your commitment to others through your chemo blanket and crafts for kids projects.



The Greatest Finale

So many of our youth (and adults too) have enjoyed the movie *The Greatest Showman*. It is a musical, which at first didn't really appeal to me, but boy after watching it I had to go back to the theatre a second time. It's a rare movie where all ages seem to enjoy it. Many of our kids have listened to the soundtrack over and over, memorizing most of the songs. If you listen closely, you'll even hear (I like action movies only) Scott Bales whistling a few tunes once in a while from this well done musical.

So, it makes sense to have our Youth Group Finale on May 20th centered around this theme. I'll have different games set up for the kids to do around our cook-out, but the majority of the night will be families making cars out of cardboard boxes for our drive-in movie showing of *The Greatest Showman*. Parents, this is important, I will need you to start gathering and bring large boxes for your children who are participating. While Madison Bales is gathering pictures for her Zach Efron car, that is not necessary for everyone as I will have decorating supplies here. However, I will be giving away a dandy prize for the best car of the evening, so feel free to be creative. The most important thing is that you bring a box for your child.

Also, feel free to dress up as your favorite character from the show and sing/dance along with the movie! I'm still looking for a top hat and tails so if anyone happens to have a set stashed away in a closet, please let me know. It is shaping up to be a fun evening here at the church to close out our youth groups for the summer.