

Introduction:

- Last week: When The Rats Get Bigger, Rest. Types of rats: busy rats, guilty rats, grief rats, grudge rats, indecisive rat, and weary rats. Three things Jesus said to do: Come To Me, Take My Yoke, Learn From Me. Foundational things to overcoming stress.
- Let's go deeper tonight. What can we learn from Jesus that will help us in overcoming stress?
 - Jesus was always under pressure. Rats were always trying to get at Him, yet He lived in a place of peace.
 - Because of His popularity, he was always surrounded by people. He was constantly misunderstood. He was criticized and made fun of. People were trying to discredit Him, lying about Him and even trying to kill Him. His disciples were slow learners and He only had about three years to prepare them to lead His church.
 - Most of us would cave under that pressure. But in observing Jesus' life, He stayed calm. Never seemed to be in a hurry. Remained at peace. The rats could not get to Him. What can we learn from Jesus? What did Jesus know that we need to know? Five things.

I. Jesus Knew Who He Was, Identification

- A. Identification - Knowing who you are. I am what God says I am! This is militant confession of faith. It is spiritual declaration of war—on sickness, defeat, weakness, etc. This is how you take the war into the gates of hell!
1. *"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."" (John 8:12, NKJV)*
 2. *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."" (John 14:6, NKJV)*
 3. In order to handle stress in your life, you have to know who you are. Notice what Jesus is declaring...I Am Light, And Life! Who are you in Christ!?!
- B. If you do not know who you are, you will let others pressure you into being someone you are not. When you try to be someone you are not, you are living life with a mask. This causes us to live two lives:
1. The real you...
 2. And, the other 'you' created by other people. The second buries the first and when the real you is hidden it causes great internal stress.
 3. We have to answer the question, "Who am I?," by reading the word of God and 'mining' out what the Word has to say about us. Mining out how God sees us. This is a powerful first step in living a stress free life. Know who you are.
 4. I am a child of God! I am deeply loved by Him. He takes incredibly great joy and delight in me. I am not an accident. I am here for a purpose. My life matters! I am His workmanship, I am a new creation, I am filled with love, ...
 5. And your life matters too: *"...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light."* (1 Peter 2:9, NLT)

II. Jesus Knew Whose He Was, Direction

- A. Direction - Jesus knew who He was living for and who He was seeking to please.
1. *"I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.* (Jn 5:30)
 2. *"Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."* (John 4:34, ESV)
 3. This is a picture of person living for an Audience of One! He knows whose He is and He lives to please Him.
 - a) The Father had declared, *"This is my son in whom I am well pleased."* Mt 3:17. We can say, "I am a son of God!" I am the apple of His eye. Ps 17:8, I am made in His image Gen 1:26-27. I do what my Father does. I have been delivered from the devil, I don't walk in darkness. Like my Savior, I am the Light of the world.
 - b) Jesus' direction to us is the same: *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33, ESV) Living to please God has the promise of Him taking care of me.
- B. If my main goal is to please God, three things should be happening:
- a) He will take care of me.
 - b) I will always be doing the right thing.
 - c) I shouldn't worry about what anybody else thinks or says about me. It is God, and God alone, that I am dedicated to and He will take care of me. Knowing whose you are relieves a lot of stress in your life.

III. Jesus Knew Where He Was Going, Destination

- A. Destination - is to have mission, a goal, an assignment from God. He knew what must be accomplished. You get this mission from God and godly desires he plants in you.
1. *"Jesus answered, ...I know where I came from and where I am going..."* (John 8:14, ESV)
 2. Unless you know where you are going—how will you know if you ever get there?
 - a) Plan your life
 - b) Set your priorities
 - c) Pursue your goals. If you know what you want to accomplish it will help relieve a lot of pressure in your life. (This addresses the indecisive rat we spoke of last week.)
- B. This lets you set the priorities of your life. If you do not set them, other people will set what is important for you.
1. It is easy to operate in business, but are you getting anything done? Have you accomplished anything?
 2. If you know where you are going, you set little steps/goals along the way to get there. You are able to tell if you are making progress.
- C. We exist to bring Freedom and Life to People and Glory to God!

IV. Jesus Knew How To Stay Focused, Concentration

- A. Focus is the ability to concentrate or direct one's attention *"And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the*

kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.” (Luke 4:42-44, ESV)

1. People moved by need tried to detour Jesus.
 2. Others tried to distract him from His focus.
- B. He remembered His mandate to preach the Kingdom and rested in the fact that this was his purpose.
1. Jesus seemed to always be doing just one thing at a time. He did not let everyone else’s ‘plan B’ get in the way.
 2. He was doing what God called Him to do.
 3. He did not allow others to cause Him to be tense, stressed or irritated. He focused on the task at hand.

V. Jesus Knew Where His ‘Life’ Connection Was, Meditation

- A. Meditation is the practice of prayer, reading the Word and worship.
1. *“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”* (Mark 1:35, ESV)
 2. Jesus was often found before a ‘stressful’ day or after a ‘stressful’ day in the place of prayer...and praying all night. If Jesus specifically made time for prayer in His ‘stressful life’. How much more do you and I need to practice the art of prayer?
 - a) *“Be still, and know that I am God...”* (Psalm 46:10, ESV)
 - b) So many of us can’t handle being still—it seems so unproductive.
 - c) Here is the Message Bible: *“Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.”* Ps 46:10 Sometimes it’s hard to step out of the “traffic”—out of the “rat race”—we want to race the rats rather than run with the Lion.
- B. Prayer is a powerful place to off load stress or potential stress. It is amazing how our anxieties roll away when we are in the presence of God.
1. *“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”* (1 Peter 5:7, NLT)
 2. Jesus went from one place of prayer to the next, and in between—killed ‘rats.’

Conclusion:

- You now have two messages to help you overcome stress. Mt 11:28-30
- And tonight, we started drilling down.
- Jesus knew:
 - Who He was
 - Whose He was
 - Where He was going
 - How to stay focused
 - How to stay connected