

ALL AGE - Stressing and Blessing

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 September 2008

Preacher: Wayne Schuller

[0 : 00] What's worse, I was lied to as a child. Who would lie to a child? The Bible reading said this, and I was not taught this as a child.

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, those who guard it watch in vain. That's not what I was taught as a child.

I was taught, Wayne, no one can make your dreams come true but you. I was taught, never consider the possibility of failure.

As long as you persist, Wayne, you will be successful. Or success comes down to one person, you or me.

Friends, that's at best a half-truth. At worst, that's a very deceitful lie. Because God is God and we are not. Unless God builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

[1 : 00] You could work as hard as you like. But if you do not know and honour God and have his will at your heart, you build in vain. In fact, those lies were told to me by someone who shares my name.

By a man called Robert Shuller. I'm Wayne Shuller. Robert Shuller is a very big church leader. He's a leader in America and his gospel is, think positive.

If you think positive, you can do it. But it's not true. Only God is the one who can make our dreams come true. You see, friends, all of us, whether you are 5 or 95, are created to depend on God. He's actually already wired you in such a way that your life will not work unless you are in 100% dependent trust on him.

You've been made that way. You've been made to pray. You've been made to worship him, made to confess your sins, made to lean on him in all that you do, work and serve and worship him every day of the week.

[2 : 07] If that is what you are not doing, then something will go wrong with you. What will go wrong? Well, you'll be stressed. Here's what the Bible teaches us.

Verse 2. Are you finding yourself growing more and more scared about the future?

Do you stress about what will happen to you in years to come or what will happen to your children or your family? Do you lose sleep about your home or career or income?

Are you stressed? Are you eating the bread of anxiety, of anxious toil? The encouragement today, friends, all of us, is to trust God, is to trust God.

Somebody was sharing with me at the 8 o'clock service and they're suffering and they said, I wonder what God is trying to tell me in my suffering. And then it's like God told them when they were talking to me.

[3 : 23] They said, maybe God just wants me to trust him more. And I sort of said, you've got it. That's it. Being a Christian doesn't mean that you don't have stress, but it means you can have a resolute peace, knowing that God is in control.

Friends, sometimes I think as a church, we don't bring our worries to God. We don't cast our concerns onto God.

So today God is asking us, commanding us to do that. The things we worry about, the things we're stressed about, to bring them to him in deep prayer, in hours of struggle in prayer.

Don't think you've brought something to God just because you've listed it off in a quick five-minute prayer. We need to really come before God's throne of grace and ask him to take care of us.

The gift of God to those who trust him is a wonderful gift. I love this gift. Do you see what it is in verse 2? The gift of God to those who will trust him is sleep.

[4 : 29] I love sleep. Interestingly, the Bible says God never sleeps, and some parents of newborns, but God never sleeps.

We sleep. We need sleep. So why has God made you like that? Sleep is a universal reminder that you need God, isn't it?

Sleep is a universal reminder that you depend on God. Sleep is a universal reminder that you are not God, and that God is God. God does wonderful things while you sleep.

While you sleep, the world turns. People become Christians. You know, things grow. Your food grows while you're asleep. Great things happen. Your body grows. Children, you grow taller when you sleep.

God does great things to show that he is God and we are not. What will happen to us, friends, if we get caught up in the world, forgetting that God is in control, what will happen to our families?

[5 : 34] Well, the psalm tells us. The psalm tells us we will forget that they are a blessing, that our children are a blessing. Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward, like arrows in the hands of a warrior, are the sons of one's youth.

Happy is the man whose quiver is full of them. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies at the gate, when he fights his enemies, when he talks fight and battles with his enemies.

Friends, this is for the parents here today, whether your children are little like mine, or whether they're big and grown up and moved out. Your children are a gift from God, a blessing from God. One day, you will have to give an account for them. Have you raised them in the Lord, and are you continuing to pray for them to know the Lord, wherever they're at?

Unlike what our society thinks, children are not our property. We don't own them. They don't exist for our fulfillment, though they are very fulfilling. They are not an accessory or something to pad out our large houses.

[6 : 43] They are not a burden to be minimized. They are a blessing from God. Made in the image of God, they are a covenantal gift from God to us. You see, friends, God's preferred method of superannuation is not AMP or the share market.

We actually see it here that God's preferred method of super are children who honour parents. That's his preferred way of looking after the elderly and frail.

Children who honour parents, and we would add the Christian church who cares for the widow and the widower. They are the blessing that children are to bring as we raise them to obey and honour parents in the hope that they will honour us when we are old and care for us as we have cared for them.

It just shows in our society, doesn't it, that there is so much emphasis on super and financial independence, and we're debating how much the pension is from the government.

That just is a manifest admission of the failure of families today, that children do not honour parents, that we adults here do not honour our parents, because we expect other people to care for them, or somehow they take care of themselves, when actually God says, our children are our heritage.

[8 : 08] They are the ones who will take care of us. They are our protection from our enemies. Some people might say, some dads fall for this trap.

This is really a big trap for me and for many dads. They say, I love my kids and care for them by working hard for them, by leaving the home and working hard for them.

And that's a good thing in a way. But the danger is that our children will know if we enjoy being away from them more than being with them.

Our children know if we enjoy our career more than them. Our children know if we enjoy being on the golf course more than spending time with them.

God says our children are to be a heritage from him, a blessing. May we honour what God has honoured. May we lift up what God lifts up.

[9 : 06] The Christian gospel is the good news that in Jesus you can repent and have your sins forgiven. And repentance means exchanging bad priorities for good priorities.

I think this psalm is encouraging us to be more centred on God, to be more centred on the blessing of children, and to be more centred on his people, the church.

Whenever we are stressed, we need to remember God is in control. Unless the Lord builds the house, we labour in vain.

If we are fretting about life, we need to come to God and ask him in desperate dependence to take care of us and our children, our heritage. Friends, let me encourage you to have the priorities that God has with him at the centre and the gifts he gives close to heart.

And children, and all of us are children in one sense, may we honour our parents and care for them and protect them. Amen. Let's pray for that. Lord God, we confess our manifest failure to live trusting you.

[10 : 21] We confess that we are stressed unnecessarily because we are trying to run things when you are the God who runs things. So Father, we ask that you would give us your peace now.

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of children. We thank you that they are a heritage from you, that they are a reward and gift from you. We pray that our children will protect and care for us and be a blessing to us and that we would be that to our parents and to the widows and widowers among us as a church.

Dear God, give us your priorities and help us to be, please forgive us for when we haven't done this. In Jesus' name. Amen.