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*prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened his servant's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire. As the Aramean army advanced toward them, Elisha prayed, "O Lord, please make them blind." And the Lord did as Elisha asked. Then Elisha went out and told them, "You have come the wrong way! This isn't the right city! Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria. As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "O Lord, now open their eyes and let them see." And the Lord did, and they discovered that they were in Samaria. When the king of Israel saw them, he shouted to Elisha, "My father, should I kill them?" "Of course not!" Elisha told him. "Do we kill prisoners of war? Give them food and drink and send them home again to their master." So the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their king. After that, the Aramean raiders stayed away from the land of Israel.*

### Discussion Questions

- 1) Can you share a time you were under extreme pressure and God helped you handle it with His peace and joy? What pressure or stress are you feeling right now in your life? How well are you managing it? Take time to review how God helped other believers manage their pressure with His peace and joy. Daniel 3; Acts 16
- 2) What can we learn from Jesus about managing pressure and stress? Review together how He overcame all the pressure on His life. Which of the six aspects of stress management do you already practice? Which ones could really help you if you developed them?
- 3) Read together out loud the 23 Psalm. Do you feel confident in the Lord's management of your life? Are you allowing Him to lead you into times of rest and renewal? Let's read Heb 4:14-16 and then together go to His throne of grace for help with our stress and pressure.



## SERMON NOTES: WEEK TWO



# HOPE & HELP FOR HARD TIMES

## FINDING PEACE AND JOY IN YOUR PAIN, PROBLEMS AND PRESSURE

### Peace and Joy When Under Pressure

**2 Kings 6:8-23** - *When the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, "We will mobilize our forces at such and such a place." But immediately Elisha, the man of God, would warn the king of Israel, "Do not go near that place, for the Arameans are planning to mobilize their troops there." So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of God, warning the people there to be on their guard. This happened several times. The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called in his officers and demanded, "Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?" "It's not us, my lord," one of the officers replied. "Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!" The king commanded, "Go and find out where Elisha is, and we will send troops to seize him." And the report came back: "Elisha is at Dothan." So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. "Ah, my lord, what will we do now?" he cried out to Elisha. "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha*

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## Peace and Joy When Under Pressure

November 8/9, 2008

We are living in a world filled with pressure and stress! Many of us are feeling it big time. What pressures are you feeling most intensely right now? Please circle.

- 1) Financial pressure
- 2) Time pressure
- 3) Relational pressure
- 4) Work pressure
- 5) Health pressure
- 6) Decision pressure
- 7) Sin pressure

**Pressure is not all bad, in fact having the right amount of pressure can be critical to living a healthy life.** Not all stress is bad either! But learning to handle pressure and stress is also critical to maintaining a healthy life - 90% of all illness is caused by the mismanagement of the stress of life! Chronic stress can be extremely damaging and is caused by continual stress overloads in any or all five areas:

- 1) Constant time pressure
- 2) Excessive responsibility
- 3) Lack of relational support
- 4) Excessive expectations from yourself or others.
- 5) Curse, Sin and Satan

**But peace and joy are really possible in Christ even when you are under extreme pressure.** *Daniel 3:13-18, Acts 16:22-25*

**Jesus Christ knows how to help us handle pressure and stress because He experienced it and successfully managed it Himself. He overcame all five sources of intense pressure and stress and successfully fulfilled His life purpose. He will help us do the same.** *Hebrews 4:14-16*

**How did Jesus Christ manage pressure and stress?**

**1) He prayed and processed daily His pressure with His Heavenly Father!** *Mark 1:32-35*

**2) He prioritized His life around His purposes and focused on fulfilling only them** *Mark 1:36-39*

**3) He lived to please an audience of one despite all the peer pressure by others to conform to their expectations.** *Matthew 3:17*

**4) He paced Himself and those who followed Him so that He could finish successfully what He came to do.** *Mark 6:31-32*

**5) He picked people who could support Him as He battled the intense demands of His life, ministry and future suffering.** *Mark 3:13-15*

**6) He pressed into the power of the Holy Spirit when under intense pressure to compromise or cave in.** *Luke 4:1-2, Luke 4:13-14*

**The key to having His peace and joy under life's pressure is bringing your life under Christ's management. He is not only the good shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep but He wants to also guide His sheep into a peace and joy filled lifestyle despite pressure and stress.**

**Living Under the Good Shepherd's Management**

**1) Provision** *Psalms 23:1 - The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

**2) Pace and Restoration** *Psalms 23:2-3 - He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

**3) Priorities and Personal Decisions** *Psalms 23:3 - He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

**4) Protection and His Presence in Pain** *Psalms 23:4-5 - Even though I walk through the [a]valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.*

**5) Personal Prosperity Now and Eternally** *Psalms 23:5-6 - You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

**Is Jesus Christ managing your life or are you trying to manage life's pressures yourself? What has to change in your life for you to experience more of His peace and joy daily?**