

Daniel Waldschmidt Mark 13:24-27 11/13/2016

What things usually make you stressed? It is the day of the School Social Studies Fair, maybe some parents and students were stressed about getting that project done on time.

I think people in general are very stressed out. Whether it's obligations at work or bills that pile up, it's never hard to find something to be stressed about.

The worst is when stress turns into distress. What do I mean by that? How can stress turn into distress? Well, just before our Bible passage for today, Jesus talked about a time when the love of most would grow cold. Have you ever noticed that when the obligations at work become too much and the bills become too much, do you ever notice that we tend to take it out on those around us? Our love grows cold. Our stress becomes distress.

When stress becomes distress, we lose sight of our loved ones and most importantly, we lose sight of Jesus. What should we do in times of distress? In times of distress we should remember two things: 1) Jesus triumphs. 2) You will triumph.

First, we should remember that **Jesus triumphs**. Just a few days before Jesus died, Jesus told his disciples what would happen at the end of the world. Jesus was leaving the Temple in Jerusalem. And the Temple in Jerusalem was a magnificent building and the disciples were saying, "Wow, look at this magnificent Temple." Well, Jesus was a prophet, he could look into the future and so he told his disciples, "Actually this temple is going to be destroyed. Not one stone will be left on top of another." This alarmed the disciples and so the disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us more about this." And Jesus told them more about the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Jesus' prophecy about the Jerusalem temple would be fulfilled 40 years later in 70 AD. But Jesus also took the opportunity to tell his disciples about what would happen at the end of the world. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple was just a foreshadowing of the destruction of this entire world. Jesus says, <sup>24</sup> **"But in those days, following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky" (Mark 13:24-25)**. In the front yard of my house there is an enormous tree with many many leaves. And since it is fall, each one of those leaves, one at a time, fell to the ground. Jesus says that one Judgment Day the stars are going to fall just like leaves. In fact, the prophet Isaiah said, **All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.** (Isaiah 34:4)

You know how after a play, all of the stage work is taken down, that's what Judgment Day is going to be like. All the things in this universe are stage props and on Judgment Day they will be taken down. And you know how, when you take the stage props down, it reveals what is back stage. Well, on Judgment Day, when all of these stage props are taken down, it will reveal the one who has been backstage the whole time. And the one who has been backstage the whole time is the Lord Jesus Christ. **"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."** (Mark 13:26)

When we get distressed we might think, "Where did Jesus go?" Well, he's right back stage. When all the staging is taken away, it will reveal the one who has been here the whole time: the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Jesus is the one who triumphs. Look at the description of Jesus: **"coming in clouds with great power and glory."** (Mark 13:26) What has Jesus triumphed over? Well, on the cross he triumphed over all of our sins. On the cross, paid the penalty for all of our sins so that we will never have to. And then three days after Jesus triumphed over death. He was raised to new life with power and glory.

And because Jesus has triumphed, that's means anyone who believes in him will also triumph. **"And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens." (Mark 13:27)** Notice that the angels are called, "His angels." This tells us that Jesus is God. God is the one who commands the angels. And what will Jesus command his angels to do on the Last Day? It says, **"he will send his angels and gather his elect."** (Mark 13:27) Have you ever seen those super hero shows or movies, when someone is in distress and right at the last moment the superhero swoops down, WHOOSH!, and saves the person? Well, on the last day the angels are going to swoop down, WHOOSH! and carry you and me up to Jesus side in heaven.

Jesus calls believers **his elect (Mark 13:27)**. His "elect" means "those whom he has chosen." And he chose, not because we're such great people. The Bible says that we are sinners. No, he chose us simply because he loves us. Many times this word "elect" is used in the Bible of believers who are suffering. For example Peter wrote a letter to some Christians who were suffering persecution and he started the letter by saying, **"To God's elect, ... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood." (1 Peter 1:1-2)** When Christians are suffering distress they need to be reminded, "You are Jesus' elect. He has chosen you. And because Jesus triumphs, you too will triumph with him."

So what kind of things make you feel stressed? Does work make you feel stressed? How am I going to get all these things done? Well, Jesus is right back stage. He has power and great glory. He's going to help you out. Are you stressed out about money? You have an enormous inheritance waiting for you in heaven. And if God provided for your biggest need, your need of eternal life, then he's definitely going to provide for your smaller needs as well. Are you stressed about your health? Jesus healed people when he was walked on earth, he can still do that today, either through miraculous means or through the regular means of medicine. And he was raised with power and great glory and someday he will raise us in power and great glory as well. Are you stressed about your sins? Jesus took them away on the cross. Jesus triumphed in every possible way. And because he triumphed, believers also will triumph. Jesus is the one who takes us from distress to triumph. Amen.

#### **Mark 13:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> **"But in those days, following that distress,**

**"the sun will be darkened,**

**and the moon will not give its light;**

<sup>25</sup> **the stars will fall from the sky,**

**and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'**

<sup>26</sup> **"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.**