

GOD'S SEVENTH STRESSBUSTER

Psalm 23:6

September 2, 2007 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

A. Today we conclude our series called, "God's Stressbusters. They are found in Psalm 23 along with God's antidotes or answers.

1. We've already looked at the first six.

- Worry
- Busyness
- Emotional Damage
- Indecision
- Dark Valleys
- Hurt.

2. Today we look the at seventh and last: fear of the future—v.6.

B. **City Slickers** recounts the adventures of three friends having mid-life crises. They escape the city and head west for a two-week cattle run to discover what's important in life.

Before they leave, Mitch (played by Billy Crystal) shares what he does for a living at Dad's Day at his son's school. Instead of talking about his work as a salesman, Mitch bewilders the third graders with a monologue about how bleak their future is.

He says:

Value this time in your life, kids, because this is the time in your life when you still have your choices, and it goes by so quickly. When you're a teenager, you think you can do anything, and you do.

Your **20s** are a blur.

Your **30s**, you raise your family, you make a little money, and you think to yourself, *What happened to my 30s?*

Your **40s**, you grow a little pot belly. You grow another chin. The music starts to get too loud, and one of your old girlfriends from high school becomes a grandmother.

Your **50s**, you have a minor surgery. You'll call it a procedure, but it's a surgery.

Your **60s**, you have a major surgery; the music is still loud, but it doesn't matter because you can't hear it anyway.

Your **70s**, you and the wife retire to Fort Lauderdale. You start eating dinner at 2:00, lunch around 10:00, breakfast the night before. And you spend most of your time wandering around malls looking for the ultimate in soft yogurt and muttering, "How come the kids don't call?"

By your **80s**, you've had a major stroke, and you end up babbling to some Jamaican nurse who your wife can't stand but who you call mama.

Any questions?

C. Many people invest a lot of time and energy worrying about the future.

1. David wasn't one of these. He was confident about his future.

2. Why? Consider three assurances David had about the future.

I. FIRST, WE DON'T NEED TO FEAR THE FUTURE BECAUSE GOD IS WATCHING OVER US.

A. David—"Surely **goodness** and love will follow me all the days of my life".

He was convinced God cared about him and his future.

B. God cares about us and our future too.

1. This is the message of Psalm 145:18-20.

2. This doesn't mean David was invincible or lived a charmed life. None of us are.

3. He's not saying only good things will happen to him in the future.

4. Rather he is saying that God will ultimately bring good out of everything that happens to him.

5. This is also the message of Romans 8:28.

6. There will be times, however, when its hard to see God’s goodness and presence. Even Jesus experienced this from the cross (“My God...”).
- C. How does God watch over and protect us? One way is with angels—Psalm 91:11.
 1. In his book, “Angels Among Us”, Ron Rhoades clears up some common misconceptions about angels.
 - a. One, people don’t become angels when they die, this is a Hollywood idea—Psalm 8:5.
 - b. Two, angels are spirit beings and for the most part are invisible.
 - c. Three, we have more than one guardian angel—Psalm 91:11 (“angels”—plural).
 2. Rhoades goes on in his book to list four ways angels watch over and protect us.
 - a. One, angels guard us against harm and injury—Daniel in the lion’s den in Daniel 6.
 - b. Two, angels guard us by restraining evil—Elijah and the Arameans in 2 Kings 6.
 - c. Three, angels guard us from dangerous circumstances—Paul and the shipwreck in Acts 27.
 - d. Four, angels guard us against despair and discouragement.

One pastor tells the true story of counseling with a lady who was going to give birth to a child with Down’s Syndrome. After she left he wrote her a postcard to encourage her. The postcard was delivered to the wrong address. The lady who received it decided to hand deliver the card. When the pregnant woman answered the door the woman gave her the card and said “I couldn’t help reading your pastor encourage you about the birth of your child with Down’s Syndrome. I have a child with Down’s and I would be glad to help you myself. That wrong address wasn’t an accident. Perhaps an angel directed that card exactly where it needed to go.

II. SECOND, WE DON’T NEED TO FEAR THE FUTURE BECAUSE GOD LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY.

- A. David—“Goodness and **love** will follow me all the days of my life.
 1. KJV—“mercy”.
 2. Literally—unconditional love.
 3. What’s the difference between love and mercy?
 - a. “Justice” is getting what you deserve (i.e. “punishment”).
 - b. “Grace” is getting what you don’t deserve (“forgiveness”).
 - c. “Mercy” is not getting what you deserve (“judgment”).
 4. Mercy, then, is God’s unconditional love for us regardless of what we do or don’t do.
- B. This means we can never do anything that will cause God to reject us—Romans 8:35, 37-39.
 1. David confirms this—“all the days of my life”.
 2. God loves you forever—Jeremiah 33:11.

III. THIRD, WE DON’T NEED TO FEAR THE FUTURE BECAUSE HEAVEN IS WAITING FOR US.

- A. David—“and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”.
- B. Regardless of what happens in this life, good or bad, God assures us that heaven is waiting for us—John 14:1-3.
- C. Ruth Graham’s recent death powerfully illustrated just how good the confident assurance of heaven is. Speaking to mourners in Charlotte, North Carolina Billy Graham said, “She had a wonderful reception in heaven.” Graham went on to say: “Ruth was my life partner, and we were called by God as a team. No one else could have borne the load that she carried. She was a vital and integral part of our ministry, and my work through the years would have been impossible without her encouragement and support. I am so grateful to the Lord that He gave me Ruth, and especially for these last few years we’ve had in the mountains together. We’ve rekindled the romance of our youth, and my love for her continued to grow deeper every day. I will miss her terribly, and look forward even more to the day I can join her in Heaven.” (CNN)

CONCLUSION

- A. This is a wonderful promise to end the 23rd Psalm with.
- B. But I must tell us its not a promise for everyone. Its only for those who are in God's flock. Is the Lord your shepherd? He can be today.