



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Christmas Eve Service Times

Mark your calendars:

Christmas Eve will be at 5pm, 7pm, 9pm & 11pm
With nursery-preschool childcare at 5 & 7pm only

Christmas For Kids!

Help us bless Delta High School!

This year, in lieu of Christmas for Kids program where we take kids shopping, we want to bless our new neighbors: Delta High School, by providing a Christmas gift on their last day of school. This gift will include a movie ticket pass, some candy, and Element bookmark.

Monetary Donations needed, please see the Welcome Center or give online at:
www.ourelement.org/cfk

E1 Help Needed!

Two ways to help!

- 1) Demo Team tearing out some walls we added
 - 2) Rummage Sale on December 9th
- Email connect@ourelement.org for more information for both.

Jingle ^{all} the Way

Week 1 - Stressed Out Families

Today's Verses:

Luke 1:30-31
Matthew 1:18-19
Isaiah 7:14
John 8:19

John 8:41
Luke 2:1-4
1 John 3:1
John 1:12

Romans 16:33
Jeremiah 29:11
Romans 8:28
Philippians 4:13

Week 1 - Stressed Out Families

If you have a physical copy of these notes in your hand then CONGRATULATIONS! You are at our official first service in our new-to-us-property. It has been a lot of work and you found a parking spot; we hope all of that hasn't been too difficult for you. Our very first study in our new home is a short Christmas series about families and different ways we encounter the holidays. Today we talk about stressed out situations and families.

What is the most stressful thing about the Christmas holiday season? Who is the most stressed person in your family? Why?

We tend to look back at the birth of Jesus (and the first Christmas) as a completely serene and peaceful event, we even sing songs about Jesus' birth where we say, "All is calm, all is bright." When we read the scriptures we actually see that everything surrounding the birth of Jesus was a stressful event for everyone involved.

- Mary and Joseph encounter a pregnancy before the actual wedding vows
- Joseph was not the father of this baby
- Joseph was prepared to divorce Mary
- An angel appears to Joseph to tell him to stick with Mary
- The town doesn't get this angelic visit, so Joseph and Mary get judged for the rest of their lives

Has God ever led you to do something that someone else thought was crazy? What did you do?

After Joseph and Mary trust God and stay together they then are required to travel to Bethlehem for a government-imposed census from Rome. Mary is so far along in her pregnancy that she gives birth to Jesus while in Bethlehem. After the birth, they go to the temple for the required sacrifice of worship and give doves; a sacrifice that the poor gave because they couldn't afford anything else.

Have you ever been stressed about money? How often? How does that stress overflow into relationships around you?

There are some things we can control in regards to stressors (work less, eat better, spend less), and some we cannot (judgment of others); but through it all, who and how we see ourselves in Christ is going to be the true indicator of our response to stress. In the scriptures, we are reminded over and over again that God has called us, saved us, and adopted us as His children...our identity is children of God.

Read 1 John 3:1, John 1:12, Romans 8:16

Why do you think God constantly reminds us in the Scriptures of our identity?

Too often when stress happens it begins to overwhelm us, and as a result, we lash out. In the Bible, Jesus never once promised that we wouldn't have stress (He actually promises the opposite), but He did remind us in John 16:33: "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." We are to have peace in Him by trusting Him, surrendering to Him, laying our will at His feet, and understanding who we are because we have trusted and believe in His promises...we are children of God.

At Element there was a lot of stress about our new home, where we were going to land, and how we would be a light to our city once we landed. On the backside of that stress we get to see God's faithfulness in providing and guiding us to where He wanted us to be. Many times that is how life works, we see what God is doing on the backside. It is why we are a people who are called to live in faith in Jesus.

What areas have you seen God move only after everything was "said and done?"

How often do you question God in the middle of a stressful situation?

How can we learn to be a people of hope and peace even in the midst of stressful situations?