

Finding Thankful
Praying Through The Pain
Philippians 4:4-7

Often the biggest battles that we are going through are battles others just don't see. They are the battles that we keep hidden in the darkness and keep our minds held captive. So often we will show that we look very confident on the outside but on the inside, we are secretly insecure and struggling. Our social media proclaims that we are #Blessed but the truth is we feel anxious, worried, and there is a heaviness on us that keeps us captive in fear and dread.

What do we do when we find ourselves battling anxiety?

Before I read the text to you this morning, I want to give you a bit of background in context of this particular portion of scripture. Context matters doesn't it? The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was in Prison. 24 hours a day he was chained up to a Roman guard awaiting his trial. He didn't know what was going to happen to him. If there was anyone anywhere that had a right to be anxious it was Paul and yet under that kind of stress he pinned these words to the Philippian church.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will Guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

So, what is anxiety?

This is a very complicated answer, so I want to be careful. Anxiety can be physiological, emotional, and situational. I would argue that it is always spiritual. Because of the many facets of anxiety, I want to take a holistic approach. Meaning, we are always going to pray, we may seek professional help through counseling or a Doctor Who may give us advice about our diet or exercise and under professional care take certain medications.

For time sake I wanna focus on the spiritual side because I can't prescribe medication to you nor would you want me to prescribe medication to you. But I can prescribe a spiritual prescription to you that will be transformative to you so here we go.

So, what is anxiety? It's like the check engine light that goes off in your car. When that check engine light goes off it makes me anxious! What is the check engine light? First of all, the check engine light is not the problem. It's signals that there is a problem somewhere else. So, if we are smart, we will take it to the manufacturer because the one who made it is the one who knows how to fix it, are you with me?

Anxiety is the signal alerting you that it's time to pray! In other words, it's time to go to the manufacturer, the one who created you. If it's big enough to worry about then it's big enough to pray about! If it's on your mind then it's on God's heart, remember, ***"Be anxious for nothing, but with prayer and petition, with Thanksgiving present your requests to God."***

If you are worried about your upcoming doctors' appointment, pray about it. If you were worried about a decision you need to make then pray about it. ***"Present your requests to God."***

So how do I pray? Do I pray in the king James language? Do I pray long prayers? Have you ever been around praying ninjas? You know, people who just know how to pray! They're quoting scripture, they're taking

things captive, they are praying in faith! I heard a pastor say once when he was just learning how to pray, ***“Lord you are good to the last drop. Like a good neighbor you’re always there.”***

You do not have to be a praying ninja to reach up and grab a hold of God! It is as simple as presenting your request to God. In your own way make your needs known. You can write it down, you can sing your request to God, you can say and groan because he knows your heart. You can shout for joy or you can shout with anger. He is big enough to handle your temper.

As all of you know I’ve been in a very difficult season of life for a year. I sought out counseling to make sure that I was processing grief and loss in a healthy way and that has help me adjust my pace and I see things differently but here’s the thing, you will not Seek out help until you humble yourself and admit you need help. If you are in hot pursuit to find your thankful then humble your self.

I love how Peter handled his anxiety. Peter said, ***“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time.”***

It’s always good to give context behind scripture so let me give you context to this portion of scripture that Peter wrote. Peter was the one who had the audacity to get out of the boat and walk on the water when Jesus said come. Once Peter left the boat and started walking on the water he became anxious when he saw the wind and the waves, anxiety took over, he took his eyes off of Jesus and he began to sink. Jesus reached out his hand. ***“Humble yourself under his mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time.”*** Come on somebody that’s good preaching right there! It wasn’t until Peter reached out his hand that God reached down with his mighty hand and lifted him up.

As the worship team comes and sings the song called Trimble, I want you to lift up your hands. Lifted hands symbolize two things. First it represents surrender and second it represents victory and today I believe you're going to receive both as we sing.