

**HEALING JOURNEY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022**

SERIES: "KNOWING GOD IN MY PAIN"

HEALING MY ANXIOUS MIND

Anxiety has increased tremendously in the last two years. Are you personally dealing with anxious thoughts? You're not alone. Anxiety has increased tremendously in the last 2 years. Between things like financial pressure, health problems, job stress, government restrictions and global issues, it can feel overwhelming at times, and anxiety seems like the only option. But your mind matters to God and He wants more for you. He wants you to be at peace regardless of the circumstances all around you. In tonight's message, we'll learn how to address anxiety from a spiritual standpoint.

VIDEO NOTES

(Introduction of Pastor Craig's beginning in ministry, and his initial anxiety attack.)

If you ever feel like you're battling with anxiety, and you feel there's plenty to be anxious about, you're not _____. In 2019, a study reported that 2 out of 3 Americans said they were _____ or _____ anxious. And that was BEFORE the world got crazy!

Since the pandemic, the numbers have only gotten _____ and the frequency and intensity of people dealing with anxiety is hitting record levels, especially for the _____ generation. One study shows that ____% of high school age group have consistent and significant levels of anxiety associated with stress - perhaps one of the most common and prolific mental health issues of the day.

We all have different levels of anxiety. We're all on different points of the _____ spectrum. For some, it's occasional, there's uneasiness, discomfort and stress around a present situation. For others, anxiety is "minor" – not always significant. But yet for others, it can be _____. It can be debilitating. There can be a constant sense of dread, shortness of breath, heartrate rising, feel like the walls are closing in, and you can't function in a normal capacity anymore.

Wherever you are in the spectrum. _____ about you, and He wants to help!

(Prayer for healing.)

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

In 2 Chronicles 20, we read the story of King Jehoshaphat, and how three different enemy groups at one time joined forces to attack the king and all his people. It's the multiple attacks at the same time that create the most anxiety in us.

Know this – anxiety is NOT a _____. Even Jesus begged God to take away the suffering that was coming to Him. Jesus said He was in agony - in deep anguish and agony. He sweat literal drops of blood in agony, but yet, He submitted to the will of God, saying, "not my will, but yours be done."

Anxiety is actually a _____, or a signal. It's a symptom of an issue that needs to be discovered and fixed.

IT'S A SIGNAL ALERTING YOU TO DO 3 THINGS (3 Ps):

1. IT'S TIME TO P_____.

2 Chronicles 20:3, "Jehoshaphat was _____ by this news and begged the Lord for _____. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting."

(verse 6) The king's prayer was, "Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over _____ the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in _____ hand, and _____ can withstand you."

(verse 9) "If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your name, and will cry out to you in our _____, and you _____ us and save us."

You can pray like that when you feel anxious. You can get brutally honest with God. You can cry out to God, and have _____ that He'll hear the cries of your heart, and He'll _____ you.

Dr. Caroline Leaf says, "It has been found that _____ of daily focused prayer over an 8-week period, can change the brain to such an extent that it can be _____ on a brain scan.

Not only does prayer touch the heart of God, but prayer changes the _____ of your brain. Our brain is not fixed, meaning it can be changed. That's great news!

The alarm in our brain (amygdala) is there for our protection. But when we start to dwell on the alarm, it causes anxiety. "Merimnao" means dwelling or pondering on _____ or anxious thoughts. It's meditating on the _____. Some of us are training our brains to be anxious. We're training the neural pathways in our brain to focus on the negative.

Prayer is NOT _____. Prayer is _____ - _____. Super-natural prayer breaks the cycle. It takes our mind _____ of what we are afraid of. "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of _____, and of a _____ mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)

Prayer breaks the cycle. It doesn't only touch the heart of God, it changes your _____. It's a signal telling you, "Take it to God."

(verse 12) "For we have no _____ to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our _____ are on _____."

1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your _____ (cares) on Him because He cares for you."

By faith, you take your struggles to Him. And you take it to Him again, and again. You cast your cares because He cares for YOU. If it's on your mind, it's on His _____. If it's big enough for you to worry about, it's big enough to _____ about.

2. IT'S TIME TO P_____.

(verses 12-13) King Jehoshaphat said, "We do not know what to do, but our _____ are on you. All the men of Judah, with their wives and children, and little ones, stood there before the Lord."

Some of us respond after prayer with, "Don't just stand there, do something." But God sometimes says,

“Don’t just do something, _____ there.” There are times when God will tell you to just be still. Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” He cares. He is with you and He is God. Sometimes He just wants us to be still, and sometimes it’s a bit of a process. Sometimes He directs you and takes you to a Bible verse, He starts to renew your mind, and sometimes He helps you make changes so that the chemistry in your body is better, or He helps you find a doctor or a therapist. Sometimes He leads you to do the hard work of retraining your brain. Sometimes it’s instant and sometimes it’s a process, but it always _____ with God, is directed by God and is a result of God. Take it to God!

(verses 15, 17) “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not _____, but _____. Go out to face them tomorrow and the Lord _____ you.” So don’t be afraid! The battle is NOT yours. It’s the Lord’s.

3. **IT’S TIME TO P_____.**

It’s time to thank Him for who He is. King Jehoshaphat prayed, he paused, and then... he sent the worship team to the frontline. A bizarre move of God that caused the enemies to turn on one another and destroy themselves. It’s a miracle! They praised BEFORE the victory, and AFTER the victory.

It takes tremendous faith when you’re hurting, when you’re feeling anxiety, when you don’t know what to do because you don’t see a way out – it takes tremendous faith to praise before the blessing comes, before the anxiety is gone.

(verses 29-30) “The fear of God came on all the surrounding kingdoms when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at _____, for His God had given him _____ on every side.”

(Pastor Craig shares his testimony of the last 3 years.)

Closing Encouragement

Don’t be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer, take it to God and the peace of God (the rest of God), that transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds. THIS is how we fight our battles!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We heard tonight how Pastor Craig learned to fight his battles. How do you currently fight your battles?
2. What do you find yourself dwelling on that causes anxious thoughts? What keeps you up at night?
3. If it’s on your mind, it’s on His heart. Do you believe this? How does this speak to you?
4. Are you an “activator”, like Pastor Craig said, always feeling the need to DO something, rather than just wait on the Lord to do something? If so, how can you change that?
5. Have you ever had a time when resolution to some struggle looked impossible, and yet by faith, you followed God’s lead and He brought you victory? Did victory come quickly, or take more time than you preferred?
6. Is there a battle in your life right now that we can take to God with you?