



Peace be Still  
Focusing our minds - Building our faith



# #4 In the Mastermind Series Peace Be still

Forest Park Church

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Your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts.

- Good news if thoughts are good
- Bad news if your thoughts are negative

## Phil 4:6-9

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> ...And the God of peace will be with you.*

## Let's talk about how worry and anxiety affect the MIND

For the purposes of this lesson, we will explore the two main sources of anxiety and stress and see how the Lord calls us to deal with it.

## I. Stress in My Mess

Many times, we overlook Sin as a primary cause of Depression and anxiety despite its significant contribution to these conditions.

While the concept of Sin may seem outdated or irrelevant to some, research has shown a strong link between Sin and mental health.

- One study published in the Journal of Religion and Health found that people who felt guilty about their sins were more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety and Depression than those who did not feel guilty.
- This is because guilt can lead to negative self-talk, worthlessness, and feeling disconnected from others and God.

## Shame and Guilt

- Sin can also lead to shame, which is a powerful emotion that can have a significant influence on a person's mental health.
- Guilt can lead to isolation, self-loathing, and a sense of being unworthy of love and connection.
- Guilt arises when an individual recognizes they have committed a wrong or harmful act.
- On the other hand, shame is a more profound feeling of inadequacy or unworthiness resulting from a perceived failure to live up to societal or personal expectations.
- When left unchecked, these feelings can contribute to Depression and anxiety.

These emotions could raise the chance of getting mental health complications such as Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### **Psalm 32**

*For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.*

*<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up<sup>l</sup> as by the heat of summer. Selah*

*<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my iniquity;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"  
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

## Anxiety of consequences

Anxiety is another common consequence of Sin, particularly for those who engage in behavior that they know is wrong. The fear of being caught or facing the consequences of sinful behavior can be a significant source of anxiety, leading to obsessive thoughts, social isolation, and other symptoms of anxiety disorders.

This Psalm points to the way out of this mess.

- It begins by declaring that we are blessed by God when our sins are forgiven.
- The gospel reminds us that we have a guarantee that our sins are forgiven. Jesus paid the debt in full.
- The Psalm concludes by assuring us that the steadfast love of the Lord surrounds us.
- God so loved the world he sent Jesus for us. Jesus invites us to abide in his love so that our joy may be full (see John 15:1-11).
- Peter says one of the reasons we fail to grow in the Christian life is because we forget we've been cleansed from our former sins

## 2 Peter 1:3-9

*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.*

## II. Life and Anxiety

So much of our stress, worry, and anxiety we bring on ourselves, but much is also the natural response to life.

There is a Little almond-shaped portion of the brain called the Amygdala.

- Part Brain Wired for Survival—Fight or Flight.
- If there's danger—the Amygdala kicks in and sends body strong doses of adrenalin.
- Snake—Run \* Texting—Swerve \* Asleep—Alarm off randomly.

The problem is that the Amygdala is not objective. It's hard-wired to protect and trigger.

- Amygdala needs help—Prefrontal Cortex—Logic part brain

You hear a noise night

- Amygdala—Going die
- Prefrontal Cortex—Cat

Without the Prefrontal Cortex, the Amygdala responds according to preprogramming.

Jesus had had a very long day of ministry just like every day.

### **Mark 4:1-2**

*“Jesus began to teach by the sea. The crowd that gathered around Him was so large that He got into a boat and sat in it out on the sea while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables.”*

**The Sea of Galilee is one of the most fascinating bodies of water in the world.**

- It's a freshwater lake that is, at the lowest altitude of any such lake in the world, approximately 690 feet below sea level.
- It measures about 13 miles long, 7 miles wide, and about 150 feet deep at its deepest point.
- It's fed partially by underwater springs but mostly by the Jordan River, which flows north to south from Mount Hermon, which stands 9,200 feet above sea level.
- The biggest issues with the Sea of Galilee are the geography and the weather.
- The lake is in the center of a deep geological rift that cuts a gash in the surface of the Earth, running 4,500 miles long down through Africa,
- The rift causes steep hills and cliffs on each side of the Sea of Galilee, making it effectively sit down in a deep bowl
- The narrow confines of the lake multiply exponentially the effect of these winds and storms, making the Sea of Galilee a very dangerous place in a storm.
- In the 90s, one storm in the Sea of Galilee generated a 10-foot wave that overwhelmed and flooded the city of Tiberius.

*And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”*

Without the Prefrontal Cortex, the Amygdala responds according to preprogramming, and in this case, there was nowhere to run, so the assumption was DEATH!

*And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"*

So what does Paul mean when he says. **From a Roman prison: *Do not be anxious...***

*Do not be anxious about anything, (\*)<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Phil 4:6-7**

**What tools does God give us to overcome worry and anxiety?**

**A: The Power of Prayer**

*"but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."*

Prayer is the key to escaping the snare of sinful anxiety.

- Don't listen to your anxieties, and don't talk back to them.
- Especially beware of anxieties in disguise.
- Direct your talk to God and cast all your "what if" concerns on him because only he can give you the assurance that everything will ultimately be okay.

Prayer changes your brain. (Dr. Caroline Leaf book/quote)

"It has been found that 12 minutes of daily focused prayer over an 8-week period can change the brain to such an extent that it can be measured on a brain scan." Dr.

Caroline Leaf, *Switch On Your Brain*

- Just as toxic—Negative thoughts—Hurt brain.
- Prayer Heals—Transforms—Renews mind.

**B: Focus On Spiritual Truth**

The Bible promises that “in this life you will have trouble.”  
But it also promises that peace is possible because Jesus has “overcome the world!”  
(John 16:33).

We do well to remember that the kind of peace God promises isn't a freedom from anxiety so that we can build our own kingdom.

- God's peace comes so that we can hold fast to His word, worship Christ, and press on in mission!
- Instead of letting my sinful nature control my mind.
- Choose to let the Spirit direct my thinking.

Let the logical part of my brain choose what is spiritual.

### **Romans 8:5-6**

*<sup>5</sup> Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.*

### **Take every thought captive.**

- The prefrontal cortex grabs the Amygdala with faith.

### **PEACE BE STILL**

- Do what I can do. – (Eat right. Study. Budget)
- Give God what I can't do.
- Trust God no matter what.

Imagine a heart at peace—Life filled with Joy—Peaceful Mind—By just trusting in God.

It's possible. And it's also a choice.

- You are not a hostage to your unhealthy thoughts. The weapons you fight with are not the weapons of this world.
- You have the divine power to demolish strongholds. Demolish every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

### **C: Live in Peace**

The Bible talks about two types of hearts: one that's just behaving right and one that's deeply changed by God's power.

## What is peace?

Peace is the opposite of anxiety and fear.

- According to Philippians 4:6, God's peace isn't just not being scared, it's a deep calm and balance that doesn't come from getting rid of all your worries, but from God being with you.
- Just like Paul, who was able to stay calm even when facing death,
- God's peace is a real power that helps us overcome tough times, feel safe, and know that God is with us even when things go wrong.

## How can we cultivate peace?

1. First, we need to discipline our mind to think about things that are true, noble, and right according to the Bible, instead of just trying to avoid stress.
2. We also need to see life as a gift from God and be thankful no matter what happens.
3. Real peace comes from loving God more than anything else.
4. If we don't hold back our love for God, He won't hold back His love for us.

## The secret to peace

True peace comes from seeing how wonderful Jesus is and loving the never-changing nature of God.

- This peace, which is beyond anything we can understand, is found when we focus our heart and mind on Jesus, not just in our thoughts, but in our genuine love for Him.
- This peace isn't something we're born with.
- It requires disciplined practice of thinking deeply, being thankful, and loving God.
- And all this is made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

## Conclusion:

**Whose idea was it to get in the boat in the first place?**

Go back and read the text. *The answer is very plain.* When evening came, at the end of a long day of ministry, after Jesus and his disciples had spent hours ministering to the needs of people, after giving and giving and giving of themselves for the needs of others, **it was Jesus himself who said, “Let us go across to the other side.”**

- Lord, don't you care that my child is sick?
- Lord, don't you care that my marriage is falling apart?
- Lord, don't you care that my friends have deserted me?
- Lord, don't you care that I have no money?
- Lord, don't you care that I feel so alone?
- Lord, don't you care that I want to give up?
- Lord, don't you care that my husband has died?
- Lord, don't you care that I lost my job?

We have all asked that question in a million ways a million times. We never question the Lord's compassion when things are going well.

- But God's compassion is not measured by our circumstances nor is his kindness limited to our understanding.*
- God cares just as much when the tempest is raging as when the seas are calm and the sun is shining.
- His mercy is not limited to the sunlight nor this mercy to the stillness of the waves.

### **“Peace, be still**

- The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass.”
- And just like that the storm ended.

**Jesus rebuked the storm—not the terrified disciples.**

To them he simply said, **“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”**

Evident in those words is a lesson we all need to learn.

*The disciples were afraid because they were men who were used to being in control of life.*

- They knew how to handle hard situations.
- There wasn't a weakling among them.
- But when you walk with Jesus, you will encounter storms that are bigger than you are.

Instead of putting them down, Jesus simply says, “Have you still no faith?”

The answer is yes and no.



Their faith, though real, was not yet full-grown.

And how do you get the faith that enables you to survive the storms of life? *The only answer I know is to get in the boat with Jesus and ride with him wherever he wants to go.*

Can't control what happens to— Can control how you frame it.  
Cover everything you do in prayer!