

Celebrate God's Goodness

American statistics on anxiety (from Max Lucado's *Anxious for Nothing*)

- Anxiety disorders in the United States are the number one mental health problem among women and are second only to alcohol and drug abuse among men.
- The United States is now the most anxious nation in the world.
- Citizens in other countries ironically enjoy more tranquility. They experience one-fifth the anxiety levels of Americans, despite having less resources to pursue their "happiness."
- The average child today exhibits the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the 1950s.

What is anxiety? (from Google Dictionary)

- "to be troubled with cares" or "to take thought"—to be distracted in thought.
- "a **feeling** of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome."
- "a nervous disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks."

Where does it come from?

- Anxiety is the fruit of a root problem (belief problem).
- The root problem is fear.
- Fear comes from unbelief (lack of trusting God).
- Our actions are the fruit of what we believe.

Now what do we do?

- Experiencing some level of anxiety and worry is normal.
- Since anxiety is a **fruit** problem, we've got to go after the **root**—our beliefs.

Romans 12:2 (NLT) *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Key Passage for this Series:

Philippians 4:4-8 (NIV) *⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, 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.*

"The presence of anxiety is unavoidable, but the prison of anxiety is optional." – Max Lucado, *Anxious for Nothing*

Practical "How-to's" on overcoming Anxiety – C.A.L.M.

- **Celebrate** - God's goodness
- **Ask** – God for help
- **Leave** - it with Him
- **Meditate** - on good things/truth/who He is

Celebrate – Who He is

- **He is Able** (powerful, sovereign)
- **He is Good** (gracious, kind, loving)

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

- What is something you can rejoice in the Lord about: _____.

Mark 4:35-41 (NLT) *³⁵As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake." ³⁶So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed). ³⁷But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. ³⁸Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting,*

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“Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?” ³⁹*When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.* ⁴⁰*Then he asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”* ⁴¹*The disciples were absolutely terrified. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “Even the wind and waves obey him!”*

- What is your most recent “storm”? _____
- How did you/are you seeing His ability and Goodness at work? _____

Psalm 13:1-6 (NLT) ¹*O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?* ²*How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand?* ³*Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.* ⁴*Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!” Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.* ⁵*But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me.* ⁶*I will sing to the Lord because he is good to me.*

Psalm 34:1-6 (NLT) ¹*I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.* ²*I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart.* ³*Come, let us tell of the Lord’s greatness; let us exalt his name together.* ⁴*I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.* ⁵*Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.* ⁶*In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me from all my troubles.*

Next Steps

- **We, as a church:**
 - Be a people that Celebrates God’s Goodness as often as we can.
 - Be a people of His Word.
 - Be a people of empathy, that we’d be gracious and patient with those struggling with anxiety.
- **You, as an individual:**
 - Humble yourself to live in light of God’s word... to submit to Him.
 - Do your part of Celebrating God together.
 - Sharing your stories
 - Listening to others, not fixing, praying, inviting, sharing
 - Practices of daily Celebration.

Discussion questions for home, or Life Group:

Choose a passage from the sermon or consider using: **Acts 17:22-28**

1. **Share what was significant to you from the sermon.**
2. **In what ways do you recognize anxiety impacting you or those around you?**
3. **How do you tend to manage stress and anxiety?**
4. **What does celebrating God’s goodness look like for you?**
5. **How do you remind yourself of God’s character and presence?**

Practical step: Take 5 minutes each day this week to stop and remember who God is.

BONUS: Read **Philippians 4:4-8** two or three times this week.