

Burdened with Anxiety (Phil 4:6-9)

Deets:

- Get FB Live going
- Kids to the playground then Ms Elisha will lead a Sprouts time just for the kids
- WELCOME to TG Church
 - We're glad you're here – yall too watching on FB Live
- My name is Dave Geldart – Associate Pastor at TG
- We're going to start with a song: I Surrender All
 - Lyrics at tallgrass.church, scroll down to events, Church in the park, then scroll to the bottom
- While we sing, come grab a sheet notebook paper, Bible

SING: I SURRENDER ALL

1. We're gonna help close the gap with some Q & R – live. And yes I want you to shout out answers!
2. **What are some things that can get you anxious?**
 - a. (me: covid, getting behind on work, fear of failure – especially if others will see it!, when my kids are all over me, everyone talking to me at once, driving on trail ridge road right by the edge, when other people waste food!, overwhelmed by big projects, when I don't know how to do something, when I cant remember someone's name, when water is leaking through my basement ceiling or window!, not having enough money, political conversation)
3. **What's it like for you when you get anxious?**
 - a. Some talked about last week....
4. **Me and anxiety**
 - a. I have increasingly struggled with anxiety
 - b. Especially the last 10 years or so.
 - c. I've always been a bit type A
 - i. Control-oriented
 - d. The more I've experienced pain and difficulty in my life, the more I'm recognizing my struggle with anxiety
 - i. And its connected issues: depression (the flipside of anxiety)
 1. And insomnia → a particularly FUN aspect of it
 - e. I tend to feel it as a tightness in my chest
 - f. And a worried distractedness.... Hard to be really present with people in the moment, always thinking through issues im anxious about
 - g. I've noticed that it's the things I CANT CONTROL that I get most anxious about
5. **There's no denying that one of the strongest things we have in common these days, black and white, rich and poor, man and woman, young and old – is our anxiety**
 - a. We are an ANXIOUS people
 - b. And increasingly so.
6. **What does God say about being anxious?**
 - a. Phil 4:6
 - b. Do not be anxious about anything (stop)
 - c. Solves it, right?
 - d. Go home all you, and don't be anxious.
 - e. Amen. Thank you Jesus. Next slide.

f. No we need to THINK about this a little. Because it's important.

7. How does that verse hit you?

- a. How does God say those words to you?
- b. What's the tone of his voice?
- c. What's the look on his face?
- d. For many of us, consciously or not, we default to seeing God as frustrated with us. Warning us not to get anxious. And chastising us if we do.
- e. WHEN we do.
- f. Because as we've already heard: we do get anxious.
 - i. We are anxious

8. This is the double whammy for many believers.

- a. Not only are you weighed down with worry, stress, and anxiety
- b. But you also feel guilty about it.

9. The Bible says I'm not supposed to be anxious about anything

- a. But I'm anxious. About this thing. And this thing. AND EVERYTHING during pandemic.
- b. And God's mad at me. Because I'm sinning.
- c. God's frustrated with me because I'm not obeying his command not to be anxious.
- d. God's disappointed in me because I'm supposed to be a Christian and I can't even follow this basic command not to be anxious.

10. **And so we pull back.** Don't tell him about it. Don't tell others. Because we think it's shameful. We're supposed to trust God and not be anxious. And we're failing. So we hide it. And Smile on Sunday. And Say I'm Fine How are you?

11. But we're not fine.

12. **We're anxious.** Worried. We're depressed (the flipside of anxiety). And profoundly burdened

- a. Can you relate to that?
- b. What part specifically?
- c. Have you ever felt guilty about being anxious or depressed?

13. But what if we've gotten God wrong on this one?

14. What if God, rather than looking at you in your anxiety and being frustrated or disappointed, what if he looks on you with deep and tender compassion?

- a. **What if he loves you.**
- b. Deeply
- c. What if he wants to lift your burdens away, and carry them for you?
 - i. All of them
 - ii. Your sin, your shame, your pain, your fears, and your anxiety
- d. **What if that's what he's been saying in his Word all along?**

15. PRAY

16. Yes, we're in this new series on LIFTING BURDENS.

- a. Looking at the burdens we're all lifting and carrying around these days
- b. AND we're looking at the incredible kindness of God, who wants to stoop down and lift away our burdens

17. And that's where we're going this morning.

18. Lets think about what anxiety is for a minute or two

- a. **What is anxiety?**
 - i. at root it's a physiological response to an imminent danger.
- b. And it's not a bad thing.
 - i. It's actually a very good thing.

- c. Anxiety and stress help us respond to danger and threats against our life and wellbeing, helps protect us from dying. Or running out of food. Or being eaten. Or getting injured.
- d. This stress response makes your core tighten up, heart beat faster, focus sharpen in on the threat. Your hearing locks in. You look around. Looking for threats.
- e. So when you round that corner and see the BEWARE OF DOG sign. When that Doberman Pinscher jumps over that fence and starts chasing you, YOU'RE READY TO RUN!
- f. This is a very good thing. Especially in a world of real threats.
 - i. God gave you this response to help you survive in this world
- g. To be anxious in the face of a threat is normal and human.

19. Jesus Himself experienced anxiety

- a. Pause for a moment – Do you think that's true?

20. If it's true, it would be a death strike against the notion that experiencing the physical response of anxiety is a sin!

- a. Matt 26 + Luke 22
- b. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing the cross was coming, was GREATLY DISTRESSED and troubled, to the point of death! Agony. A threat was coming right around the corner that was very real. Greater than any doberman or machine gun.
- c. His blood pressure got so high that his capillaries in his skin burst and blood mixed with sweat dripped out.
 - i. A rare but documented medical occurrence called HEMATOHIDROSIS

21. So, did Jesus sin?

- a. And this is the question
 - i. And the answer has dire consequences for you
- b. To the Glory of God – thank the Lord – NO
- c. Yes he experienced the physical anxiety in response to the imminent threat on his life.
- d. **But he didn't stop there.** He exercised his will, and brought it to his Father in prayer.
- e. and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.
- f. **Heb 4:15, speaking about Jesus: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**
- g. We all experience stress and anxiety. We're all tempted by it
- h. So perhaps it's not as much about never experiencing stress or anxiety.
- i. But about what you do WITH it when it comes

22. Lets look back in Phil 4:6

- a. Lets keep reading.
- b. **do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication (asking) with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**
- c. So we see here the emphasis is about not STAYING in anxiety.
 - i. Its about what to do WHEN you're anxious
 - ii. When you experience anxiety, bring it to God in prayer
 - 1. Simple..... but how many of us really, regularly deal with our anxiety this way?
 - 2. By bringing it to God. With asking and thanksgivings

d. ⁷ **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

e. **See here the KINDNESS of God.**

- i. He wants you to bring your burdened soul to him. Your anxious heart, burdened with fear and worry.
- ii. And he wants to lift that burden off your back. Off your chest.
- iii. And what's more, he wants to move in, move toward, cover you with his supernatural peace that's beyond what we can fully understand, and PROTECT US FROM HARM.
- iv. He not only wants to lift off your burden, he wants to circle around you and give you his protection.... Guarding your heart and mind like a doberman.
- v. **Dobermans** are extremely gentle and caring toward their own.
- vi. But will fight to the death anyone who tries to come and mess with their family.

f. **God wants to be like that, for you.**

23. **Even when you don't do it perfectly.**

24. Even when you don't choose well when you're anxious.

25. **When you run this way and that to try to protect yourself.**

- a. To addictions like alcohol or pornography
- b. Amusements and distractions that numb you out for a moment but can't really touch the ache inside
- c. When you try to save yourself through working harder, trying harder, being better, I'll never do that again. This time will be different.

26. **When you collapse in on yourself like a dying star, giving up and giving in.**

- a. When you lose all hope that things can ever be different
- b. That you'll ever get free
- c. When you let the darkness close in on you.

27. Even then God's loving kindness moves toward you, inviting you to lay down your burdens.

28. **Jesus did it perfectly so we don't have to.**

- a. Jesus carried the full weight of your sins, your failures, your fears, your hurts, your anxieties
- b. So that you didn't have to.
- c. He didn't make your shoulders strong enough to hold up the world
- d. Little ones

29. **Every moment of anxiety, big or small, is an invitation** to lay down your burdens again and let him carry them for you

- a. Because you're not strong enough. And he is.

30. **Now we're in a pandemic season.** And the threat of disease and death is real and present.

- a. And so we're anxious about that
- b. And on some level this fear is reasonable. You're not crazy to want to avoid getting a scary virus!

31. **And the problem is made even murkier in that we are frequently and sometimes perpetually anxious, even when we're not in imminent danger.**

- a. Our basic, physical stress response is now hyper sensitive, and switched on nearly all the time.
- b. We're getting ready for the attacking Doberman, when in fact we're wondering if we'll be able to pay the mortgage a year from now.

- c. Our cardiovascular systems are pumped up to sprint for our lives, when in reality we've not gotten as many likes as we'd hoped with that latest facebook post.
- d. How we got here as a society and as a culture is a fascinating topic for another time.
- e. But as a result, our fight or flight reflexes are way out of wack.
 - i. We are living our lives in perpetual stress and anxiety, fearing about tomorrow and next month and next year and terrified that it's all up to us to secure our lives.
 - ii. Of course we're anxious.
- f. But hear again the words of your Kind King Jesus:
 - i. **Matthew 6: 25-33** ²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
 - ii. **Matthew 11: 28-30** ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- g. **Lay down your burdens, little ones**, and let Jesus carry them for you instead.

32. So how do we do this?

- a. **Take out your pad of paper or your phone and write these down**
- b. **CALMING YOUR BODY: Breathing Box**
 - i. 4sec a side 4x
 - ii. Helps you take more direct control over your physical systems and responses to help calm your body down.
- c. **CALM YOUR MIND:**
 - i. memorize Phil 4:6-7, and practice what it says
 - ii. When you feel anxiety in your body
 - iii. **Bring it to God in prayer**
 - 1. Tell him about it
 - 2. As best you can, tell him where you think it's coming from
 - iv. **Then ASK HIM for something**
 - 1. We're commanded to ASK – bring your requests
 - 2. What do you want God to DO for you?
 - v. **And practice thanksgiving**
 - 1. Gratitude
 - 2. Praying real thanksgivings

3. It's a discipline, takes practice
4. But the secular studies are overwhelmingly clear about its psychological benefits. Simple practicing gratitude increases your happiness and decreases your anxiety.
5. Lots more about that _____

vi. So v 6-7 give a simple invitation to PRAY about your anxiety

d. Then go 2 more verses

i. **⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned[Ⓜ] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

ii. I grew up watching TNG – the borg are so famous to say, you will be assimilated –
RESISTENCE IS FUTILE

e. They're right. Resistance is futile.

i. It's not enough (or even possible) to just resist a way of thinking.

ii. You have to REPLACE it with something new

iii. So remember: **RESISTENCE WITHOUT REPLACEMENT IS FUTILE**

f. It's not enough to just pull up your worry weeds. Or Axe your Anxieties

i. **You must THEN replace them with better thoughts**

1. Plant something NEW there!

a. Otherwise the weeds will grow back

2. Not mere positivity

3. Holy Realism!

ii. **Instead of tunnel focusing in on your threats, real or perceived, choose to remember that you're beloved and protected by God.** And that Jesus is coming back soon to make all things new

iii. So, in light of THAT REALITY, focus on the thing making you anxious

1. And practice thinking differently about it

2. Whatever is TRUE, Honorable, Just, Pure, Lovely, Commendable, excellent, praiseworthy.....

3. PRACTICE making yourself think differently.

4. Disciplining your mind and heart to live in the reality of Christ and God's lovingkindness.

5. Taking your thoughts captive, and making them obey Christ. (2 Cor 10:5)

g. And the God of peace will be with you.

33. Brothers and Sisters we're in a time where so much is largely out of our control

a. Racial tension

b. The virus

c. Schooling this fall

d. Your job, the economy

e. SO MUCH is up in the air.

f. Listen to your anxiety—it's trying to TELL you something

i. It's an indicator light trying to tell you something's wrong

ii. You can't change what's going on around you

iii. **BUT YOU CAN CHANGE** what happens inside you

iv. Your will in concert with God's power

v. You don't have to live in anxiety, even now.

vi. You do have a choice not to LIVE THERE

g. To coin Martin Luther, I can't stop the birds from circling, but I CAN keep them from building a nest in my hair!

i. The birds of uncertainty and anxiety will likely continue to circle for a while longer

ii. It's futile trying to stop them circling

iii. BUT YOU CAN CHOOSE NOT TO LET THEM LIVE WITH YOU

iv. You can actually live in peace during this pandemic.

h. But you must choose to

i. You MUST choose to exercise self-leadership and fight AGAINST the anxiety

ii. Practice what God says

iii. And see what He does.

iv. You take the step – HE takes it from there

34. Brothers and sisters, what the world so DESPERATELY needs right now is men and women of God living at peace in the midst of chaos.

a. Singing in the midst of the storm

b. Dancing IN the dark

c. Boldly declaring by their un-anxious living that God might really be real after all

d. And hope sparks in the dark

e. We desperately need to testify to our friends and neighbors that we have REAL HOPE this week.

f. This year. ...Today!

g. And there's not much that would shine quite as brightly today as a life of real peace

h. Go and fight for peace

i. Go and lay down your burdens at Jesus' feet

j. Practice bringing your anxieties to God through prayer, with supplication and thanksgiving

k. NOT JUST FOR YOURSELVES

l. But for others.

m. For others. Who so desperately need to see God. In you.

35. For the rest of you, we're going to **write some prayers to Jesus about our anxieties.** Practice Phil 4

a. **Write down some of your top anxieties** in life right now (not someone else's list... YOURS)

b. Tell Jesus what you're anxious about this morning

c. Ask Jesus to do something about them. Get as specific as you'd like.

i. If you're here today and you've never chosen to trust Jesus with your life, I want to invite you to do that. Your Greatest source of anxiety is your disconnection from your creator

ii. Frantically trying to make your life work on your own

iii. To lay down the heavy weight of trying to control your life without God, and let Jesus carry your life for you.

iv. Accept the free offer from him for forgiveness of your sins and invitation into a secure and loving relationship with your creator that begins now, and will last for eternity.

v. Ask God to forgive your sins because of Jesus' finished work for you on the cross.

vi. And ask Him to become the Lord and leader of your life.

d. Finally, write down 3 things you're thankful for. The closer connected to your anxieties the better.

36. *Have folks share some of the things they wrote, prayed?*

SING: -- Lord I Need You -- Tis so Sweet

37. OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS:

38. Pastoral counseling and Soul Care

- a. Ben and I are happy to be available to you to meet if you'd like help thinking through your battle with anxiety and depression.
- b. We're not therapists! But have training to offer you presence and perspective. And to help you connect with God and others on your journey.
- c. So please don't hesitate to contact us or a LG Leader or Elder at TG.
- d. We're also excited about the opportunities to help people work through some of the pain and traumas of their childhood that are hindering their ability to connect healthily with God and others...through a process called Soul Care
 - i. This is something we're in the process of being trained in and developing internally.
 - ii. Still in beginning stages, but a number of TGians have gone through this process at varying levels and are beginning to learn how to offer it to others.
 - iii. Something pretty powerful about this approach that takes seriously the perspective of the Scriptures and the best of scientific and psychological research.
 - iv. Typically a 8-10 week process.
 - v. Pray with us that God would open up this more and more in our church
 - vi. And if you're interested in hearing more let us know.

39. Place for medication, therapy

- a. The fall has affected us all.
- b. We experience brokenness on every level.
- c. Some born with predisposition toward anxiety
 - i. Epigenetic modification
 1. Inherited from 3-4 generations!
 - ii. Or other physical abnormalities or imbalances in the brain
- d. Others (most) train our bodies and brains to respond to life with anxiety and stress so that it deals disproportionately now
- e. We know anxiety and depression have connected physical and emotional and spiritual aspects
 - i. ALL THAT TO SAY, there is a real physical aspect to our anxiety struggles
 - ii. Often these can be corrected with patience as we focus our minds on the renewing patterns described in Phil 4!
 - iii. And with the help of others in community
- f. It's also reasonable that sometimes more help is needed
 - i. Through medications that help stabilize imbalanced brain chemicals
 - ii. And professional therapy to help more difficult traumas and thought patterns
 - iii. THERE IS NO SHAME FOR THE CHRISTIAN who seeks and finds help through therapy and/or medications. We are holistic beings. And wouldn't feel shame in needing blood pressure medication or physical therapy.