

# More Trust, Less Anxiety

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning and Merry Christmas. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, if you'd like to learn more about us, you can go to FCCGreensburg.com or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, thank you so much for tuning in on this Sunday before Christmas. We just pray that as we get into the Word, the Word will get into us and transform these hearts more and more into the image of Christ.

Now, for several years, a certain woman was having trouble getting to sleep at night because she had such anxiety that someone would break in, steal their stuff, and even try to hurt them.

It really did keep her up at night. Well, one night her husband heard a strange noise, so he went downstairs to investigate. And sure enough, he found a burglar and he kind of caught the guy off guard.

But their conversation went a little differently than you might expect. He was able to sneak up on the thief and say, okay, just relax. No one has to get hurt.

[ 1 : 05 ] Believe it or not, I'm actually pleased to see you. So why don't you just come upstairs? I'll introduce you to my wife because, listen, she has been waiting 10 years to meet you.

Anxiety, right? Did you know on average 40% of what we worry about will never happen? 30% of our anxiety are things from the past that we now have no control over.

12% are criticisms from others that are mostly untrue or at least embellished. 10% is our worries about our physical health, which, by the way, only gets worse when we worry.

And only 8% of our anxieties are real problems we face. Last week, I went to social media to ask this question.

What gives you the most anxiety at Christmastime? And I'm always a big fan of people being very real and transparent. And here are some of the answers that I got.

[ 2 : 05 ] And I have a feeling that we all can relate. Of course, the most common answer was anxiety over money. And then all the busyness of the places you have to be to appease everyone.

And then one person actually said they get anxiety because of spelling and punctuation. They said they just don't want to misspell a name on a gift tag. Another simply put Walmart.

And there's no question it's intense in there this time of year. Another got very real and said that after losing a loved one, this time of year can be very stressful, especially with all the changes.

Others said they get anxiety over making sure they buy the perfect gift and don't forget anyone.

One dad said it's waiting until Christmas Eve to wrap the gifts.

Others said it's all the cooking and the baking. One man even said he gets anxiety over whether to choose ham or turkey. My suggestion would be just take some of both. A young mother even said that it's hard to balance the festivities of Christmas while teaching our children that it's really all about Jesus.

[ 3 : 12 ] And EMT said that they get anxious over something bad happening at Christmas time because we see it too much. Another simply typed family stress.

And we all can nod our heads to that one. And of course, I think we all can struggle with missing those who are no longer with us or even not being able to get all the family together.

You know, to be honest, there's a lot right now that we can be overwhelmed about this Christmas season as we come to this last Sunday message in our series called More and Less.

Because to have more of what matters, you must have less of what doesn't. See, in a culture that can often become very lackadaisical where we hear things like, eh, more or less, this Christmas we as the church are choosing to be bold by saying no.

It's more praise and less panic. More action and less talk. At our Christmas Eve services on the 23rd and 24th, more Jesus and less of me.

[ 4 : 15 ] And then today, more trust and less anxiety. Now go ahead and grab your Bible. If you've got a Bible app, you can go to that as well. But go to Matthew chapter 1.

Matthew 1, first book of the New Testament. And as you're going to Matthew 1, I was curious how dictionary.com defined these two words. Anxiety is distress or uneasiness of mind caused by fear, danger, or misfortune.

And yet trust is quite the opposite. It's defined as to expect confidently to believe. And I hope as we walk through Scripture today that you can see that you are loved by the God of the universe, that he is more than worthy of our trust as we see that anxiety fade and our dependence or trust increase. Here's the first point on the outline. And by the way, you can always go to the YouVersion Bible app. Go to events. Go to First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana.

And you can see our outline that way if you'd like to follow along. But here's the first thing. You can trust God's power over your limitations. We all have limitations.

[ 5 : 32 ] You can trust God's power over those limitations. Most people, when they come to Matthew 1, they have the quick ability to jump over the first 17 verses because it can often be seen as the boring genealogy of Jesus, right?

And yet I think it's fascinating when you know the stories of these people that God put in the line of Jesus to usher the Savior of the world in. And probably the most famous name on that list would be David or King David.

So look at me here, Matthew 1, starting in verse 1, then we'll jump to verse 5. This is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Verse 5. Now, in my opinion, David is one of the best examples in all the Bible of God's power over our limitations.

When we meet him in 1 Samuel 16, we see a young man that appears to not be living up to daddy's standards. He's not as tall and strong and battle-tested as his brothers.

[ 6 : 52 ] He's the youngest that they sent out to do the job that a servant could do and take care of the flock of sheep. He's most likely a young teenager. He appears destined for a life as a shepherd.

And he's content. He really is content in the Lord and serving his God no matter where he is placed. And that's when God speaks into the heart of Samuel the prophet as he's been sent to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next king over Israel.

And even Samuel is falling into this trap of looking at the physical stature of Jesse's sons to decide who he thinks should be the king. But here's what 1 Samuel 16, 7 says.

The Lord does not look at the things that people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. And we see David here, the most unlikely of characters, anointed to be the next king.

And then it's not much longer before David's dad packs him up with all kinds of items. And he sends him to the front lines of the battle to check on his brothers who are fighting the dreaded Philistines.

[ 8 : 01 ] And as David approaches the battle site, he sees both armies camped at opposite sides with this valley in between them.

And as he's talking with his brothers, this giant Philistine warrior named Goliath, standing over nine foot tall, looking like a Mack truck, he starts to taunt Israel.

He starts to taunt their soldiers, their king, even their God. And David looks around and he sees all these battle-tested soldiers scared, unwilling to challenge him.

And David is ticked off that no one will stand up to this guy in the power of God. And that's when he goes to King Saul. And here's what he says in 1 Samuel 17, starting in verse 34.

Here's why.

[ 9 : 14 ] And guess what?

With a slingshot and a stone, David took down that giant because he recognized that he could trust God's power over his own limitations.

You know, I also appreciate a man named John Knox, who lived during the 1500s. This man risked his life to preach and lead a Protestant Reformation in Scotland that led so many people to follow Christ.

But probably my favorite thing about him comes from a quote by Thomas Smeaton, who said, I know not if God ever placed a more godly and great spirit in a body so little and frail.

And this sickly man took a bold stand against Mary, the Queen of Scots, who stood opposed to the Protestant faith, who persecuted them. Okay? And yet she couldn't help but see the power of God in his life as she even said these words.

[10:23] She said, I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe. What a fantastic example of 2 Corinthians 12, where Paul is talking about this thorn in the flesh that he's been dealing with, that God is allowing to remain in his life for a reason.

And then here's what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12, 9 and 10. He says, But he said to me, talking about God, But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. And then he says, That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. So what does all that mean? It means we can be a people of more trust and less anxiety as we submit to his power over our limitations.

So basically, your weaknesses, your inadequacies, your limitations, your shyness, your bluntness, your quirkiness, your health struggles, whatever it is, it's okay if we let the Holy Spirit fill us with his mighty power, that same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

[11:52] See, just like David, who was the run of the litter and even failed in enormous ways, just like John Knox, whose body let him down mightily, God wants to go beyond what you and I can do in our own power, and he wants to show us what he can do through us, our weaknesses, as we step out in faith and let him use us.

And I'm convinced the reason you recognize names like Billy Graham, D.L. Moody, John Knox, Corrie ten Boom, John Wesley, and more, is not because they were just extra holy and we're trying to actually put them on a pedestal.

Not at all. The reason why we recognize these faithful Christ followers is because they put their trust in Christ and let his power reign over their limitations.

They were fantastic examples for us to learn from. And I love this quote from D.L. Moody. He said, The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him.

And then he said, By God's help, I aim to be that man. Translation, God, I give you my weakness. Let your power be made perfect in them, and may the world see you through me and through this weakness.

[13:11] So let's get to the Christmas story today, okay? Because I know you didn't come to listen to this on December 22nd to hear me preach about David, okay? So let's move along here.

Here's the second thing I want you to see. You can trust God's plans over your own. You can trust God's plans over your own. So let's continue to look here in Matthew 1, but this time starting in verse 18.

It says, This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. Now, I'm going to take a little venture out on the thickest limb ever and say that Joseph never in a million years could have ever envisioned his future wife getting pregnant with the Savior of the world through the power of the Holy Spirit as she's still a virgin, okay?

[14:36] And he, like everyone else around, didn't foresee the Messiah coming into the world as a baby to a Nazareth couple from very humble beginnings. I'm sure Joseph simply pictured himself working hard, marrying his sweetie, having some kids, living a quiet life, and yet here we are 2,000-ish years later talking about this couple alongside every other church in the world because that quiet life really didn't happen.

And can you imagine how that conversation between Joseph and Mary went when she revealed that she was pregnant? And of course, who's buying that story about an angel appearing and the Holy Spirit coming upon her anyways, right?

Heard that one before, lady, right? See, he had to be utterly heartbroken thinking that the girl that he'd spend the rest of his life with had just betrayed him.

And the next part shows his godly character because in their culture, once you were engaged to marry someone, it could only be broken through divorce, which brought about such public humiliation.

So Joseph, being a godly man, not wanting to bring that quote-unquote scarlet letter upon Mary, he decides to divorce her quietly to spare her from that shame. But then an angel appeared to him in that dream, confirmed everything Mary had said was true, and it's amazing how Joseph submitted to God's plans, even though I can't imagine how scared he had to be.

[16:09] Think about the amount of anxiety you could have raising the Messiah, right? I mean, it's hard enough with regular kids that, I mean, we got three of them, so I get it. And I wonder if Jesus' younger siblings ever said to Joseph, well, you just think Jesus is perfect.

Yeah, he kind of is. But I'll tell you what, although Scripture doesn't talk much about Joseph beyond Jesus' childhood, I'm amazed at how faithful Joseph was to abandon his own plans and follow the Lord.

to Bethlehem, where he traveled close to a week with a very pregnant Mary, then delivered his own child in a manger, unexpectedly to Egypt to escape Herod after he got word from the magi of Jesus' birth.

God's plan was not at all what Joseph had envisioned, and yet he faithfully said yes. And what a great example to us. See, in Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, it says, trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. You could even translate that last part that said he will make your paths straight as he will direct your paths. So for those of us who are currently, and that would not be me, how I just made it sound, for those of you who are currently dating or engaged, it's so easy to go about your relationship just like the world.

[17:40] And yet, when you do it God's way, he will direct your path. It's easy to parent your kids like the world, letting them go down all kinds of path of immorality, of immodesty, of impurity, and yet when you do it God's way, he will direct their paths.

It's easy to make Christmas about everything Walmart or Amazon advertises and never mention Jesus, and yet, when you do it God's way, he will direct your path. It's easy to never allow God in your marriage, even if you're churchgoers.

I see this all the time. And yet, if you put him in the center, if you let him truly lead you as a couple, he will direct your path. Even for those among us who are single, it's easy to be lonely.

It's easy to let that cause you to lower your standards. But if you will stop trying so hard and let him lead, he will direct your path. And when it comes to anxiety, it's easy to get worked up.

It's easy to let your fear guide you. But when you surrender it all to him, he will give you wisdom and direct your path. And then here's the last thing I want you to see today. You can trust God's presence over being alone.

[18:51] I like how Mark Batterson, a well-known pastor, put this. He says, He is God most high and God most nigh or near. He exists outside of time and space, but he's also Emmanuel, God with us.

See, we've been talking about how awesome he is in power. And that's true. We've been talking about his plans and how they're perfect. And that's true as well. And yet, that same God chooses to be personal in our lives, to walk with you and me each day through every up and down that we'll ever go through with the goal of shaping us into the image of Jesus.

So listen to me for a second. You don't have to keep trudging through life in your own strength and wisdom. You have a Messiah, a Savior, who came in the most unexpected of ways to say to each of us that we matter to him, that he can and will lead us if our hearts are fully surrendered to his lordship, to his word, to his will, to his ways.

So let's pick back up here where we left off in Matthew 1 verse 22. It says, All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet.

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us.

[20:15] There was a lady named Grace Davidson who took her four-year-old granddaughter to big church for the first time. She had been to children's church, but this was big church.

She sat quietly, taking in every aspect of the service, when finally towards the end, her curiosity got the best of her during a prayer. See, the pastor prayed this.

He said, We thank you, Lord, for your presence. The little girl's eyes flew open, and she whispered into her grandmother, Granny, we're going to get presents.

And you know what? There's no greater present than Christmas. There's no, let me say it again.

There's no greater present this Christmas or ever than the presence of your Savior in your life.

Even the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of you, guiding, directing, convicting, encouraging, comforting. And that starts with trust. Not doing life my way and watching everything go up in flames and then saying, Okay, God, I trust you.

[ 21 : 18 ] Put out the fire. And while he is a God who can rescue us in our darkest moments, and I'm so thankful for that because he's done that for me, but as followers of Christ, our trust starts from the beginning with sincere hearts ready to follow, not just people trying to escape the consequences of our actions.

You know, I love to read biographies that tell the life stories of real ordinary people who did the extraordinary through the Lord. One that stands above the rest for me is George Mueller.

He was raised in wealth and privilege, and honestly, this, in his young adult years, he behaved like a spoiled brat. He even went to seminary to study theology because it was considered an honorable path and it paid well in the church tradition he was raised in.

And yet, he wasn't even a follower of Christ. He was caught up in a life of unhealthy gambling, thievery, sexual immorality, drunkenness, all while studying for the ministry.

Isn't that crazy? And one day, he went to this kind of quiet, small Bible study. He met some real Christians who lived it out, who looked differently than others he had seen.

[ 22 : 29 ] And in short time, he repented of his sins and he followed Christ for the right reasons. He truly became a man of prayer who wasn't afraid to step out in faith and trust Jesus for every need.

In fact, as someone who grew up with all the luxuries, he became quite content living a simple life, taking in more and more kids off the street in his orphanages where they were given a great life raised in the power of Christ.

As you can imagine, it was expensive to take care of these kids. And yet, each time when they didn't have the money to build a larger facility or pay the bills, he would pray and trust and the money would arrive.

And one story that always sticks in my mind is when his kitchen crew came to him one morning and they said they literally had nothing to feed the 300 kids that were in their care for breakfast.

George Mueller got on his knees and he prayed. He thanked God for how he would supply. He had the kids even brought to the table having no idea nothing was prepared. And yet, then there was a knock, heard at the door.

[ 23 : 36 ] When they answered, it was the local baker who said that God had woke him up at two or three in the morning, he could not go back to sleep, and he felt so strong on his heart that he needed to go bake a lot of bread and give it to the orphanage.

And sure enough, it was enough. Right after that, there was another knock at the door. And this time, a milkman delivering to his daily customers said that his wagon wheel had broken right outside the orphanage.

Huh. And to fix it, they had to unload the milk that wouldn't last long anyways. And he wanted to know if they could use the milk at the orphanage.

Well, sure enough, it was plenty for all of them. See, what an amazing heart of trust in the Lord's power, his plans, and his presence. And I love George Mueller's words here.

He said, The beginning of anxiety is the end of trust. And the beginning of true trust is the end of anxiety. Church, this Christmas, as I imagine you probably like me, we can easily be overwhelmed with everything in front of us right now.

[ 24 : 49 ] This Christmas, we choose more trust and less anxiety. Say that with me. More trust and less anxiety. And now say it like you mean it.

Ready? More trust and less anxiety. His power, his plans, his presence is more than enough this Christmas season.

Pray with me. Father, we are just so very grateful for your power, for your plans, for your presence. Father, we are so incredibly thankful and grateful for Jesus who came in this world to essentially die. He was born to die for us so that we could know true freedom, true forgiveness, and your

grace, Lord.

So help us. Help us. Help us as we look at these hearts and we wrestle with our anxieties. Help us to surrender them over to you and to trust you more.

[ 25 : 55 ] Because that is our heart's desire completely. So, Father, thank you for Jesus. And thank you for the hope that he brought so that we could walk in your presence.

We pray all of this in the name above all names, the name of Jesus, our Savior. And God's people said, amen and amen. Hey, I want to share just a quick invitation with you.

If you are listening to this, maybe you're a first-time listener and God brought you here and you had no idea you'd be listening. Or maybe you've been listening every Sunday or most Sundays for a long time.

Either way, we're so thankful that you are. And I just want to offer you this invitation. Maybe you have some questions about First Christian Church of Greensburg. We would love to answer those for you.

Maybe you have faith questions that we can maybe sit down and discuss. Maybe you have questions about what it means to follow Jesus. We would love to come alongside you and help you get in the Word, see what God's Word teaches, and truly follow Jesus the way that you are meant to.

[ 27 : 05 ] So here's a couple ways you can reach out to us and we can begin that journey. So 812, phone number 812-663-8488. That's 812-663-8488.

Or you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com. Hey, thank you for tuning in and we wish you a very Merry Christmas.