

## Taking Action Against Anxiety

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 23 April 2023

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0:00] Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass  
Ass Ass Ass I know the video is over and I'm supposed to be up there on the stage.

I'm just not sure I'm ready to preach. I mean, I really needed more prep time this week, but I had all those meetings. What if no one likes the sermon today?

What if it's not as good as last week? What if it's not exegetically accurate and hermeneutically relevant? And what do those words even mean? And what if there's new people here and I say something stupid and they never want to come back?

Why is everybody staring at me? This is really starting to get awkward, Wes. Come on, man. You can do this. You've done this for years. It's not your first rodeo. And besides, this isn't about you anyways.

It's about the gospel. You know that. People are probably confused why you're not on the stage yet, so get up there. Okay, here I go. Here I go.

[ 1 : 49 ]      Now watch your step. Don't trip and look like an idiot. Make sure your clothes are okay. Make sure the stand is in place and perfectly centered to the stage.

Oh, man. I really hope my iPad doesn't stop working in the middle of the sermon and I can't access my notes. Breathe deep. Now look up.

Oh, wow. They actually showed up again this week. That's shocking. And why are they staring at me? Oh, yeah. That's because they're waiting for you to say something, you num-num.

So say something. Oh, and whatever you do, don't mess up, you big loser. If you got your Bibles, turn to Philippians chapter 4. Philippians chapter 4 will be our passage this evening.

I'm not sure why you're looking at me like that. Did you actually just hear everything that was going on inside my mind? That's a little scary. Have you ever wondered what it would be like if everybody could hear your anxious thoughts?

[ 2 : 54 ] If everybody could hear what you worry about, wouldn't that be scary? I mean, that's just a little bit of a taste of what kind of goes through my mind just as I'm getting ready to preach.

And so we're in a series that not only is helping me, I trust it's helping you as well. We're in a series called Anxious. Say it with me. For nothing. Anxious for nothing.

And we're talking about topics like anxiety and stress and worry and depression and things like that that we struggle with so frequently.

Part of the reason why we're dealing with this is because according to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America, 19 million adult Americans suffer from some kind of anxiety disorder.

Anxiety, we mentioned last week, is the number one mental health problem among women, and it's second next to drug and alcohol abuse among men. Stress-related issues make up \$300 billion a year in medical bills.

[ 3 : 58 ] Spending on anti-anxiety medication is \$2.1 billion. And as we mentioned, the United States is the most anxious nation in the world.

Do you think this is a relevant series? It's something we all deal with. And we kicked this off last week, and we're going to be diving into our second week of this tonight. And I talked about how we're approaching this topic holistically.

I'm going to mention this again. Listen, if you struggle with anxiety, if you struggle with depression, it does not mean there's anything wrong with your faith.

Okay? This is something a lot of people deal with, and we've encouraged you. Like, you may be in a situation where you need to seek physical and professional help for your anxiety or depression.

On the other hand, we have to treat issues like this spiritually and biblically, because God, as a gift of grace, has addressed topics like this for us, that we might live in freedom and peace.

[ 5 : 04 ] And so tonight, what we're going to talk about is how to take action against anxiety. How do we take action against anxiety?

And we're going to return to our main text, which is Philippians 4, and begin reading in verse 4. So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Philippians 4, verse 4 through 7. The Apostle Paul here is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He says, Rejoice in the Lord always.

And let me say it again. Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything.

But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God.

[ 6 : 03 ] God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is God's Word. Will you pray with me and for me as we ask God to once again speak to us about this important topic? So, Lord, here we are.

Lord, we're gathered here on Saturday night ready to hear from you. And we ask, Lord, that you would speak to us through your Word. Lord, that you would breathe your peace into this place and into our hearts.

Lord, that this would be an environment where we can be real and honest about our struggle with worry and the stresses of life. But, Lord, as a result of our gathered in this place tonight to worship you, Lord, that you would help us breathe your breath into our lives.

So we're here and we're ready. Talk to us. In Jesus' name we pray and God's people said, amen. Please be seated. Faith family, would you be willing to risk your life for a selfie?

[ 7 : 11 ] Evidently, thousands of people do that every year at Wedding Cake Rock, about an hour outside of Sydney, Australia. There's a rock formation there, which is a part of the Royal National Park, and it's a very popular destination for tourists.

It's a very unique rock structure, as you can see, and it actually looks like a layered wedding cake. That along with, you can see in the background, just a beautiful view of the water.

It makes for a wonderful post on Instagram, and thousands of people do this every year at the risk of their own life.

You see, not long ago, a few years ago, geologists discovered that that rock, which is made of sandstone, has become extremely unstable and could actually collapse at any moment.

In fact, you can even notice that there's already like large cracks that are visible just on the surface of the rock. It's so dangerous that the National Parks and Wildlife Service have put this big fence all the way around it, warning everyone to not go on the rock.

[ 8 : 28 ] And yet it doesn't stop people, time after time again, from climbing the fence and going on to the rock, even though it warns them that if they get caught doing so, they will face fines of over \$3,000.

And yet thousands of Instagram posts every year, hashtag wedding rock, putting their life at risk for a selfie.

I wish this were the only example of this kind of insanity. There are many other examples, like a woman who crossed over a barrier at an Arizona zoo so she could take a picture with this jaguar.

She got the selfie and a trip to the hospital when the jaguar attacked her. You think about people like this and you just want to say, what's wrong with you people?

Like what's going on in your mind? Why would you do things like this? Faith family, aren't you glad tonight that you're not like them? And all God's people said, amen, I am so glad I'm not like those people.

[ 9 : 45 ] You know, we're not like the people that ignore warning signs. Because you and I would never ignore the check engine light or the fuel gauge being low on the dashboard.

You and I would never ignore signs that our body tells us that, hey, you might want to stop eating. We would never ignore signs that would tell us to, you know, slow down.

Like that stuff's optional. Amen? Don't judge me, right? I've been with some of you and you drive, you're worse. You would never ignore the signs that your relationship is in bad shape and you need to talk.

I mean, we're not the kind of people that would ignore signs that in this particular occasion you might want to keep your mouth shut. You and I would never be the kind of people that would ignore warning signs.

Are you picking up on my sarcasm because I'm laying it on pretty thick? And why? Because you and I know what it's like to ignore a warning sign. But why are these warning signs given to us in the first place?

[ 10 : 49 ] Because they're intended to tell us to stop and do something. Stop and get the oil changed. Stop and put gas in the car.

Stop and turn around. Stop and have the conversation. Stop eating. I mean, what's wrong with you? Are you just going to ignore the warning signs? And yet the reality is the same thing happens to us spiritually.

Did you realize, faith family, that there are spiritual warning signs meant to make you stop and do something?

Stop and take action. In fact, the big idea that I want us to think about tonight is this. Anxiety is actually a warning sign telling us we need to stop and spend time with God.

Stop. Anxiety is a warning sign that is yelling at us, stop and spend time with your heavenly Father.

[ 12 : 07 ] And we need to learn that when worry and stress and anxiety begin to surface in our hearts and in our minds, that this is warning us and telling us to do something.

Something's wrong underneath the hood. Something's going on in the mind, the heart, the emotions. And who better to help you with the mental breakdown than the one that created you, loves you, and knows how to give you peace.

So why is it that you and I are ignoring the warning signs? Why are we blazing right on through our anxiety and worry when all along it's telling us to stop and spend time with God?

It's exactly what Paul talks about here in Philippians 4. He tells us to take action against our anxiety. In fact, Faith Family, listen, this is what I'm on a mission about tonight is if we're truly going to be, say it, anxious for nothing, if we're going to be anxious for nothing, what I'm talking about tonight, what the Apostle Paul talks about in Philippians 4, is going to have to become as natural as taking Advil for a headache or whatever it is you take for a headache.

Like, it's just, I've got a headache, I'll take Advil, I'll take ibuprofen, I'll take Tylenol, whatever. That's just a natural reaction for you. The things that we're going to talk about tonight have to become that natural for us if we're going to be anxious for nothing.

[ 13 : 39 ] Before we dive into what these action points are, let's quick review from last week to catch everybody up. First of all, we talked about last week that this word anxious or anxiety in Philippians chapter 4 is a present active imperative, which means it's an ongoing reality.

We discussed this last week, notice here, that the presence of anxiety is unavoidable, but the prison of anxiety is optional. You're going to feel anxious, you're going to get stressed out, you're going to worry at times, but you don't have to live in the prison of that anxiety.

You don't have to be held captive to your stress and worry. Paul is saying, in fact, if you translate this grammatically correct, it's do not be continually anxious about anything.

Don't let anything of this world make you its captive by becoming worried and stressed and anxious about it. So that's the first point.

The second is, we discussed that when we are anxious, we need to remember this, that the Lord is at hand. He's always as close as a whisper.

[ 14 : 53 ] We looked at Elijah and how God was always with him through his stress and anxiety, and we need to remember the calming presence of God. In fact, this was our outline of Philippians 4, the verses that we're looking at, and last week, we looked at the calming presence of God, that we're never alone in our anxiety, that God is always with us.

And this week, we're going to look at this second point, that is the continuous practice. What is the action that we're supposed to do when the warning sign of anxiety comes on?

First one of those is found in verse 4. Look at it. Rejoice in the Lord always. Let me say it again. Rejoice.

Everybody read that verse with me. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. First thing is when the warning sign of anxiety comes on in your life, when you feel anxious, stop and praise.

Stop and praise. Rejoice in the Lord. And again, I say rejoice. This is so unbelievably practical.

[ 16 : 07 ] Paul is saying, listen, you fight anxiety with adoration. You fight worry with worship. You rejoice in the Lord always in whatever circumstance you're in.

In fact, let me say it again. Rejoice. And you say, but pastor, listen, you don't understand. When I'm stressed out, the last thing in the world I want to do is rejoice. I mean, there's nothing in my situation that's joyful.

The apostle Paul doesn't say rejoice in your life. He says rejoice in the Lord. He doesn't say rejoice in your situation, rejoice in your mental abilities.

No, no, no. The object of our joy is God. There very well may be nothing in your situation that's joyful. There may be nothing about your financial situation or relationship status or physical health that brings any kind of joy.

But listen to me, faith family, there is always, always, always something to rejoice in God about. Always. this isn't about our life.

[ 17 : 22 ] This isn't about our circumstances. This is about who God is and we can always find joy in Him. I'll just give you one.

Just one thing we can always rejoice in the Lord about and again, I say rejoice. We can rejoice in the fact that God in our stress and in our worry is absolutely in control.

He's totally in control. I'm rejoicing in the sovereignty of God. I'm not going to rejoice in my financial situation right now.

It is a mess. I'm not going to rejoice in my relationship status. I'm not going to rejoice in what I'm going through. No, no, no. There's nothing joyful about that but there is joy in the fact that God is sovereign over all of it.

Do you see? The object of this rejoicing of this praise is God. Now, why would I mention the sovereignty of God? I could mention others. I mentioned the sovereignty of God because of this.

[ 18 : 24 ] Notice this on the screen. Anxiety is the result of perceived chaos. Isn't it true that the reason why you're anxious is because you feel like you're out of control?

You don't have control of your situation. You don't know how it's going to turn out. You don't know what they're going to say. And so because of this perceived... By the way, I say perceived chaos because it's not chaos in heaven.

God's not looking at your situation like, hey, I don't know how this is going to turn out either. I'm just as nervous as you are. No, no, no. It's perceived chaos to you.

It's not chaos to God. He knows very well how it's all going to work out but to me, it looks like chaos. It looks like life is out of control and that makes me anxious.

That makes me worried. You know this. Listen, when you're at amusement park and you're sitting on the park bench, you're happy. It's pretty easy to rejoice in your life in that moment but how do you feel when you're going over the edge of the roller coaster?

[ 19 : 27 ] You're freaking out! Like life's not in control anymore, man. Like the park bench, I could be calm there but I'm going crazy because now all of a sudden that which I thought was under my control, I realize it isn't.

And this is where anxiety comes from. Anxiety comes from when you feel out of control because by the way, you're not in control. When you have no idea how something's going to turn out because guess what?

Even in your best estimate, you don't know. So rather than letting your mind dwell on the perceived chaos of your situation, you can rejoice in the Lord that He is sovereign.

Do you see? The anxiety is a warning light. You're putting your attention on the wrong thing. You're looking at your life rather than the Lord and so stop being anxious about your life and rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice.

This is what Paul did. Look at Philippians 1 verse 12. He says, The things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel and it has become evident to the whole palace guard and to all the rest that my chains are in Christ.

[ 20 : 50 ] I mean, we were all stressed out about that I was going to go to prison and didn't know how all this was going to turn out. But you know what? My chains are in Christ. He's worked it all out.

What looked like chaos to me was in totally under the control of God. I thought about Ben and Bruce rather and Jan Benson.

They were Bible translators in Peru. One day they were traveling to a nearby village and they saw a pickup truck that was stopped in the middle of the road and they thought it was somebody that had broken down and so they stopped to help.

It ended up being a group of terrorists that grabbed them, took their stuff, threw them in the back of a vehicle and drove them to an unknown location. Bruce and Jan were absolutely certain that they were going to die.

They were certain this would be the last day they would be on planet earth. And for some reason, Jan believed that God, in her mind, gave her a verse out of Psalm 22.

[ 21 : 52 ] And the verse just says, the Lord inhabits the praises of his people. And she's like, God, why did you give me that verse? Because there's nothing in this moment I know what to praise you for.

And so Jan just started singing. Later that night, to their shock, they let Bruce and Jan go. Just let them go free.

They took their supplies, they took a projector they had, and they took all their Jesus films that they were handing out to people. A year later, Jan gets a phone call.

It's a man that must meet in person, one-on-one. It was one of those terrorists. The man informed her that it was their intent that night to kill both her and her husband.

But they, for whatever reason, decided to let them go. Not only that, they started watching the Jesus film over and over and over again. And that man, along with a couple of others, put their faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 23 : 00 ] Now listen, that's awesome. What's ultimately amazing is how God works that out. But that shouldn't surprise us because He's in control.

What encourages me about that story is Jan's ability to praise God in the face of terror.

In fact, this is what she said. Let me quote her. She said, of her giving God praise in that moment, quote, God reassured me He was in control and that nothing could remove me from His loving presence even if death.

Anxiety began to creep into her life. She began to get rightfully worried. But what did she do? She stopped and she praised. She rejoiced in the Lord and He gave her the assurance that one way or the other she'd be okay.

Faith family, when the warning light of anxiety comes on in your life, what's that telling you to do? Just keep trying harder. Keep running faster.

[ 24 : 15 ] Commit to ten more things. No, no, no. That warning light is telling you it's time to stop and spend time with God. Stop and praise.

Here's the second thing we see in terms of taking action against anxiety and we find it in verse 6. Verse 6. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by, say it, prayer and what?

Supplication with what? Thanksgiving. Let your request be made known to God. So when the warning light of anxiety comes on, we stop and praise.

But secondly, when we feel anxious, we stop and pray. We go to God. We come to Him. And listen, this could be a short prayer. It could be a 30-second prayer.

It could be a three-hour prayer. Depends on your level of anxiety. Depends on what you're going through in that moment. But just like you would take Advil for a headache when anxiety and worry and stress and depression begin to creep in, it's time to praise and it's time to pray.

[ 25 : 22 ] Amen? I mean, you would take your car to a mechanic. You would take your health to a doctor. So why wouldn't you take your worry to God? Oh, somebody say preach preacher.

Because listen, listen, I'm actually about to tap on our issue. My issue. Your issue. I'm about to get really close as to why we become prisoners of anxiety.

Are you ready? You ready? Let's be honest. Notice this on the screen. Our lives would have a lot less panic if our lives had a lot more prayer.

Keep that on the screen. Our lives would have a lot less panic if our lives had a lot more prayer.

Let me read this the opposite. One of the reasons your life has so much panic is because your life doesn't have enough prayer. It's so practical and yet it's so true.

[ 26 : 25 ] When the warning light of anxiety comes on, it's telling us to stop and pray. We have not because we ask not.

And you say, okay, well, how am I supposed to pray? Paul gives us three things. I'll hit it quickly. First, is to pray humbly. To pray humbly. The word supplication means to beg.

That doesn't mean we grovel. It just means that we take on the posture of that of a beggar. Prayer, and this is why we don't do it, American. The reason we don't do it is because prayer by its very nature is an act of humility.

And we are a do-it-myself culture. The very essence of prayer is acknowledging you need help.

I need help. And we come with the posture of a beggar. God, I can't do this. God, I can't handle this. God, I cannot have control of this situation.

[ 27 : 31 ] God, I can't even take care of my own anxiety. I need you. I need you. I need you. And God says, you came to the right place. You came to the right source.

Don't you realize, son, that's exactly what the warning light of anxiety was intended to do is to get you to come to the very one that can help you. I was screaming at you through your anxiety and through your worry, come to me.

But you just took on more. You just kept driving harder. And the whole while, I was calling you graciously to myself. Don't be anxious for anything but pray.

The response in anxiety is prayer. Acknowledge the fact that we are weak, we are beggars, and we need God. So pray humbly. Second is pray honestly.

Let your request be made known. Let me translate that for you. Here it is. Let your request be made known. What it means in the Greek is this.

[ 28 : 34 ] Let your request be made known. It's that simple. There's no hidden meaning in the text here. In other words, share your heart with God.

Tell Him how heavy it is. Tell Him how burdened you are. Tell Him that you want to give up. Be like Elijah last week and say, God, I'm not even sure I want to live anymore. I'm so done with this.

Tell Him, tell Him, tell Him, tell Him, tell Him. He wants to know. In fact, He already does. You say, wait a minute. If He already knows, why do I even need to express it?

It's like what Jesus says. I love this in Luke chapter 18. Jesus walks up to a blind man and says, what do you want me to do for you?

Maybe we could start with seeing. Of course, Jesus knows what He wants. Of course, He knows what His needs are, but He wants Him to say it.

[ 29 : 42 ] Why? Why? Notice this on the screen. Listen. The impact of prayer is not getting from God. It's being with God. Do you... I can feel the preacher coming out, alright?

Hang with me. Do you realize the peace that can come just when you're in God's presence being real? It isn't about what God already knows and why would I even say it?

Just shut up. Like, quit overthinking this and just realize that where you need to be is at His feet. And it doesn't matter about the outcome.

What matters is that you're with Him. That you're in His presence. And there's something about just being in God's presence, laying your heart all out that brings you peace.

Sometimes you just gotta say it. Sometimes you just gotta pray it. And that saying it and that praying it and the presence of God regardless of what He does brings peace.

[ 30 : 47 ] Y'all with me? Humbly. Honestly. Third. Sorry, I couldn't think of another H. Gratefully. Gratefully.

We're to do this with thanksgiving. With gratitude. And as I studied and reflected on this passage I thought, didn't Paul get this out of order? This is the order I think it should go.

Make your request. Get your prayer answered. And then be thankful. Doesn't that seem like how it should go? That's not how it goes in the text.

Paul says we make our supplication and we make our prayer and we give our request with gratitude. Meaning we're grateful before we ever get an answer.

We're thankful before He ever does anything. Why is that? Because God wants us to be grateful regardless of the outcome.

[ 31 : 49 ] God wants us to be thankful that we get to come to Him regardless of what He does. You got a warning light going on in your life and it's saying you need to stop and praise.

You need to rejoice in the Lord and you need to come humbly and honestly and gratefully before God God and spend time with the one who knows how to fix you because He knows how He created you.



Why wouldn't you come to Him? In his book *The Dance of Hope* Bill Frey talks about a time when he was an 11 year old boy he was given the assignment to go out and collect firewood for his family and he found an old tree stump out in the woods and he worked on that thing all day he pulled and pushed and crowbarred for hours and hours couldn't do anything it was so deep and later that afternoon his father came home and spotted him off in the woods working on that old tree stump and his father went out to see him and he walked up and he said son I see your problem and his little boy said what's the problem and his dad said you're not using all your strength furious not using all my strength I've been out here for hours pulling and pushing and doing everything I know to do and it won't move an inch what do you mean I haven't used all my strength and his father looked at him and said because you haven't asked me we wonder why we're so anxious when we're doing all of this in our own strength and our heavenly father is saying to us tonight don't you see your anxiety as a warning light telling you to ask me come to me be with me and there's a peace that will surpass your understanding that will guard your heart and mind stop and praise stop and pray here's the last one verse 8 verse 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 on these things so the third thing is this is when that warning light of anxiety comes on we stop and ponder we stop and think in other words we set our minds intentionally on things and of course this makes sense why Paul would mention this because anxiety is a battle of the mind and so he's saying that what I want you to do is I want you to set your mind on what is true and why would Paul say this why would he say to think on these things to ponder what is true and lovely and honorable because I mentioned this last week anxiety is the meteor shower of what ifs the reason why you're anxious is because life is uncertain you don't know how it's going to turn out you don't know what's going to happen and so Paul is saying one of the ways that you take action against that anxiety is you don't dwell on the unknown you dwell on what is known you dwell on what is true notice this on the screen in other words think on what is true not on what is uncertain and I think what Paul means here when he talks about doctrine when he talks about true things is I think he's talking about doctrinal or biblical things in other words

I don't think Paul is saying you know two plus two equals four just think on that that may be true but that's not helpful or the sun is going to come up tomorrow or something like that I think Paul when he's talking about what is true is he's talking about biblical truth so let me see if I can give you an example here like what if he or she leaves me what if he or she leaves me what what what what what if what if what if anxiety anxiety okay but here's what I know is true God will never leave me what if what if I lose my money what if my financial situation takes a really big dive and then I've got these bills to pay and how will I pay for the mortgage and what if what if what if what if what if what I know is true is that God always has and he always will provide for me what if what if they don't accept me what if they don't like me what if they make fun of me what if they hate this sermon what if they don't come back next week here's what

I know is true God has already accepted me in Jesus Christ and those are just a few examples here's the point notice this on the screen faith family there are many things in life that may or may not happen but there's one thing for sure the cross has happened there's a lot of things in life that may or may not happen but there's one thing for sure that has happened and that's the cross in other words the Bible is full of things that are true and honorable and pure and praiseworthy and the battle of the mind listen come here come here come here come this is not easy stuff you know good and well this is a battle this is a fight for the mind I'm not standing up here like you know oh this is just so easy I'll just go do it and it'll it's a fight but the war that's raging is I can either let my mind focus all the things that are uncertain or I can ponder and think on what

[ 37 : 55 ] I know is true and when I praise and when I pray and when I ponder the true things of God I get out of my prison of anxiety I may still be anxious but I'm not going to let anxiety control me I'm not going to continually be in an ongoing state of anxiety I'll be anxious for nothing it is why the Bible continually tells us to set our minds so think about Romans 12 2 don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind look at Colossians 3 2 set your minds on the things that are above not the things on earth Psalm 1 verse 1 blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers but his delight instead is in the law of the

Lord and on his law he meditates day and night and he is like a tree planted by streams of water that yield its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither and all that he does he prospers and all of that was what he meditated!

on he didn't listen to God I tell you you are what you think you've heard the expression you are what you eat that would be scary for a lot of us you are what you think it's a battle of the mind and Paul knows it and he just says listen do you want to not be anxious for anything then you're going to have to think on these things don't you see your anxiety is a warning light just like the little check engine light it's time to go take it to the person who knows how to fix the vehicle anxiety and worry and stress are signs and it could be other things as well but they're signs to at least to go to your creator and to praise and to pray and to ponder I'm going to end with this because last week

I gave you an example in the old testament of a prophet and I want to do the same this week this will be much shorter than last week last week's prophet was a man by the name of Elijah this week's prophet is a man by the name of Habakkuk he struggled with anxiety as well you begin to wonder what it's like to be in ministry Pastor Juan Elijah is a basket!

that's the point so there's another prophet of God called of God to be used of God and he goes through a time of unbelievable stress and worry Habakkuk is serving God at a time when nationally the nation of Judah has forsaken God just like during the times of Elijah but also that he comes to God in Habakkuk chapter 1 and he says God are you going to do something how long are you going to let this go on your people have forsaken your ways your people have forsaken the law of God do something and God says oh it's a verse we quote out of context all the time I'm going to do a great work you hear people quote that and it's like you might want to read what the work is that God is going to do before you put that on a bookmark or whatever God says Habakkuk here's what I'm going to do I'm going to raise up the

[ 41 : 54 ] Chaldeans that is the Babylonians to bring judgment on Judah but they're more wicked than we are how can you use a nation like Babylon to judge Judah now I'm even more messed up I thought you were out of character by not doing anything as your people abandoned your law now I really don't understand how to take you because now you're going to raise up a nation far more wicked than we are to judge us and God says the day is coming and judgment is on its way and we know exactly what happened and I want to show you Habakkuk's anxiety look at it I hear and my body trembles my lips quiver at the sound rottenness enters into my bones and my legs tremble beneath me does that sound like a man who's anxious does it sound like a man who's nervous have you ever had a panic attack like that where your body is trembling!

your legs are trembling in fact the Hebrew is actually more explicit than the English and you need to be thankful for that the Hebrew literally says I am shaking in my bowels God there is there is a modern expression for that of which I will not use but if you have ever seen a kid fill his diaper you know exactly what Habakkuk is saying I am messed in my pants is essentially what the Hebrew is saying I am so scared God you are sending the Babylonians to bring judgment our nation is going to be taken into captivity and he is stressed to the max he is grieved for his people he is wrestling with God's ways he doesn't understand how God's judgment could do this and he is a wreck listen listen listen when the warning light of anxiety came on when the warning light of worry and fear came on this is what he did look here

Habakkuk 3 a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet oh Lord I have heard the report of you and your work oh Lord do I fear in the midst of the years revive it in the midst of the years make it known in wrath remember mercy God came to Teman and the holy one from Mount Pyron and his splendor covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise his brightness was like the light rays flashed from his hand and there he veiled his power I'm not going to read the whole chapter but I encourage you to do you know what Habakkuk does in Habakkuk chapter 3 in fact Habakkuk 3 listen is a prayer written as a psalm a song of praise listen that reminds Habakkuk what God did for his people in the exodus Habakkuk is about to mess himself he's so anxious and what he does is he prays and he praises

God for who he is and he ponders the faithfulness of God to his people right here right here right here this is what he does right now I feel like your people are about to be wiped out right now God I feel like it's over but here's what I know is true you don't forsake your people you don't forsake your people and so you won't forsake us now and look at where this prophet who was freaking out ends up most famous verses in all of Habakkuk though the fig tree should not blossom or fruit beyond the vine or produce of the olive fail or the fields yield no food or the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls yet

I will rejoice! in the Lord and again I say rejoice! I will take joy in the God of my salvation!

[ 47 : 09 ] Habakkuk says I can't control what's going to happen I can't control what God's going to do but here's what I can do rejoice in him and I give you that example just to show you a man whose life was falling apart and through a prayer through some praise and through pondering the faithfulness of God came to a place listen listen where his circumstances were not going to be any different but his joy in God was unmoved that's peace my friend that's the peace that God gives us so faith family please tonight don't ignore the warning light of anxiety in your life it's telling you something go to God stop and praise stop and pray stop and ponder let me say it this way take your cares to the one who cares take your cares to the one who cares so like those who are willing to ignore the warning and put their life at risk why are you and

I ignoring the warning that puts our peace at risk there is a way out of the prison of anxiety it's in the God who created you and loves you and if you doubt for a moment that God can get you out of the prison of anxiety remember he's got a history of opening doors and God's people said amen let's pray God thank you for this very very practical passage these are all things that I'm sure intellectually we knew but our pride keeps us from actually doing them and we wonder why we're so anxious you're warning us through our anxiety that we need to spend time with you and again that might be 30 seconds!

in the rush of the day and it might be 30 minutes in the morning or the evening that's going to look different for different people on different days but the point is still true is that there's a warning light going off saying it's time to spend time with me praise and pray and ponder the true things that I have revealed in my word so help this become as natural as taking Advil for headache that when we're going about our day and we feel anxiety coming on that we stop and take action against our anxiety in Jesus name we pray amen to!

to! we we!! we we Thank you.