

# The Root Cause of Anxiety

by Shane Idleman

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*Jesus teaches us to not worry and to seek first the kingdom of God, and to trust in His sovereignty and provision.*

**Duration:** 53:41

**Scripture:** Proverbs 14:30, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:5-6, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8

**Topics:** "Overcoming Anxiety", "Trust In God"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the root cause of anxiety and fear, emphasizing the importance of seeking God first. It highlights how worry stems from stress and external factors, leading to self-inflicted anxiety. The message urges listeners to bring every thought captive to Christ, cut off sources fueling fear, and prioritize seeking the kingdom of God to overcome anxiety and trust in God's provision.

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## Transcript

We are in the book of Matthew. Turn to chapter 6, verse 25. And you'll see the title there of the message, The Root Cause of Anxiety.

And what I want to do tonight is get to The Root Cause of Anxiety. How many of us want a sermon on that? Anxiety, fear? Hello? Hello? Nobody even wants to go to LAX airport anymore. And then of course, you know, we see on there that he's on the internet reading about the New World Order and he has it against the TSA and comes with a gun and just a mess.

What is creating all this anxiety and fear in people? Because the Bible tells us, fear not. Worry not. So let's talk about that for a minute.

Now, first though, you know, right, that worry is a normal reaction to stress. Worry is a normal reaction to stress, which is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from a very demanding circumstance. And I've actually had a few of those this week in preparing for this sermon.

One of the things is we got a letter in the mail stating we can no longer have our health insurance. Good old, well, I won't go there. So, you know, now we're at \$400 a month and the closest plan, as we looked, was about \$1,800 a month.

So we're definitely calling and looking to place some money. But that came, supplemental tax bill in the mail and all that, it's like, oh my goodness, what is going on? Of course, I'm preparing a sermon on worry and anxiety and all these things. But what happens is our environment or external factors or medical

factors, substance abuse, of course, brain chemistry, all these different things work actually against us in fostering anxiety and fear.

And it's funny that we live in the most blessed nation on the planet. We live in castles. Just look around the world.

We are so blessed here, but why are we so anxious? So let's talk about the root cause of anxiety. And what I'm trying not to do in this sermon, I'm not dismissing, I'm not dismissing the deep emotional pain that we can feel if you have panic attacks or anxiety attacks. I'm not dismissing any of that.

What I'm trying to do is remind us that God makes provision for all of our needs. Scripture is very clear on these issues, and that's what I want to talk about tonight. I want to talk about the self-inflicted anxiety or the self-inflicted worry.

Do you know a lot of our issues are self-inflicted? You've heard that term self-inflicted gunshot wound? Had the .357 a little bit too close to the leg here and wasn't, you know, on safety and accidentally the trigger went off and right into his foot. Happened to a friend of mine. Self-inflicted.

And what's happening a lot of times with worry, with anxiety, with fear, we bring a lot of this onto ourselves. Not everything. Please don't misunderstand.

I don't want you leaving here thinking you should never be depressed or anxious or fearful because those are normal human emotions that occur. But what do we do with those? Now the context, we're going to pick up in Matthew 6, but the context, you remember from last week, no one can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he'll be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and the God of this world.

That's my paraphrase. And what was he talking about there? You cannot. Your affections, your resources, your time, your feelings, everything trying to serve two gods.

You know, I love the God of this world and I'm serving the God of this world and I love the things of the world, but the real living true God is pulling me back and I serve this master. I serve him on Saturday or Sunday. I serve him and I want to serve him, but this other master keeps pulling me back, pulling me back.

Remember how we talked about that last week? And we've got this internal struggle pulling us between two masters. So Jesus said, listen, let's settle the score right now. Let's get the record straight.

This is where the rubber meets the road. You cannot serve both of them. And what happens is when we try, what obviously happens is we don't serve God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength.

We just don't. We are led in this direction. So once Jesus says that, then He uses the word therefore.

And what have we learned? Anytime that word therefore is there, you ask what's it there for? So context is the two masters. Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body or what you put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not more valuable than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubic to His stature? Now when I was reading this, what really jumped out right at the beginning was this, therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life. And I thought if Jesus is telling me not to worry, that must imply by the very statement that He made that we have the ability not to worry. Or do we worry by default? We have to worry.

We always have to be anxious and fearful. We have to. Or does Jesus say, listen, don't worry.

Don't worry about these things. Because what have we learned also that the battlefield is right here. The wars we wager right here.

And Jesus is saying, listen, do not worry. And then also, many of you have studied the last sentence before. I know we've talked about it.

Which of you by worrying can add one cubic to His stature? Well, you know what a cubic is. Measurement to the height. Well, is He really saying that? Maybe.

But if you look at the Greek and you look at commentaries, it could denote the meaning of worry is not productive. You will not mature. You will not add anything to your life by worrying.

You can't mature in the faith. You can't mature. You can't grow.

You can't add anything into your life by worrying. And all of you are saying, yeah, that's great, Shane. I know.

I know. Wonderful. But tell me how.

Well, let's get there. Let's talk about this. So why do you worry about clothing? Verse 28.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all of his glory, even Solomon was not arrayed like one of these.

Now if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you? Oh, you of little faith. So I'm starting to make a connection here. Don't worry, which implies that I can stop the process.

And somehow my faith is involved. If I'm lacking faith, that's somehow linked to worry. Are you making that connection yet? Jesus is going through this.

Verse 31. Therefore, do not worry, saying, what shall I eat? And what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For all these things the Gentiles seek. Basically, all these things unbelievers seek.

And we are to look different. Are we not as Christians? There's a distinction. There's a difference.

We don't look like the world. We shouldn't worry about the same things and get on this fear factor. And we're so anxious and so worried and we look just like the world.

Verse 32. For after all these things the Gentiles seek, for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Now this is interesting.

Jesus doesn't always remove trouble. Sometimes we forget that. And there's been a lot of damage done to the Gospel by saying just come to Jesus.

You'll be happy. You'll be healthy. You'll be wealthy.

All your problems will disappear. Just try Him out. Would you just try Him out? And then what happens? Sure, I'll try Him out.

And He obviously lets us down because we go through things. But what I've noticed is although He protects us and guides us and shelters us, sometimes He lets us walk through the furnace of affliction. He walks through that with us.

So as we're going through some things, it's not that we always avoid this and avoid that. Sometimes we go through it. We go through the difficult times, but He holds us.

He's there to guide us and lead us. That's the true sense of a shepherd. Is it not there with the sheep, guiding them and directing them? So let's talk about three areas from this text.

Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? So worry is born in the mind. This is where it starts. Images and emotions of a negative nature in which mental attempts are made to avoid anticipated potential threats.

So here's what worry is. Uh-oh, I can see where this is going. This is a potential threat.

I better make some adjustments. I better make some adjustments. I better make some of this.

Because here it comes. Here comes the bad news. And we worry and we worry.

So it's all up here. This is where the focus has to be is on Christ and seeking first the Kingdom of God. Because all of us can get caught up on worrying financially, relationally.

You fill in the blanks. Everything. We can worry about everything.

And do you know that most of the things that people worry about never happen? I think it was somewhere like 90% of everything we worry about doesn't even happen. And the other stuff that does happen, guess what? We get right through it. Now, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So worry we see is linked to a lack of faith.

And I like what R.C. Sproul said. It's on your bulletin. Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God, but believe in the sovereignty of man.

Did you catch that? Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God. Yes, I believe it. I believe it.

But we really believe in the sovereignty of man. Because we'll say one thing, but our lifestyle reflects something else. I believe in God, I just don't trust Him.

So I have to have a backup plan. I believe in Jesus, but I don't think He's going to see me through. I think I've got to pull myself out of this one.

And we get worried and caught up, and I see it's always mental. Worrying is mental. Because you can't, it obviously comes out in the physical, but it's a mental thing that's happening in our mind.

When we minimize the sovereignty of God, it will magnify worry. So as soon as God becomes small, what happens to worry? I mean, think, what are the main things we're worried about? Finances? Or marriage? Or, I mean, you fill in the blanks. There's a lot of things to worry about.

But if God's got our back, He's got our back. It's that simple. The God who created the heavens and the earth.

And we're worried that He might not come through on this. And we might have to move in with somebody. Or we might have to budget our bills.

Or we might have to downsize or sell something. And a lot of times what I've noticed, the reason we're worrying is because we want to hold on and keep serving that Master. Is it not? Because somebody who's truly following the sovereignty of God, Lord, I trust you.

I give you everything. Come hell or high water, I'm going to follow Him. Now, of course, that's easier said than done.

I live in the real world as well. But when things happen to our lives, we can say, okay, God, you've got this. You're in control.

Your sovereign plans will prevail. And there's trust in that. What happens, I worry when I don't think He's going to come through.

I don't think He knows how bad it is. I'm worried. Doesn't He know this? And doesn't He know that? And this problem and that? Yes, He knows all of that.

But it starts up here. Look to Him, not the problem. Don't give up, look up.

You know that old saying. And it's like, well, that's pretty simple. But it's true.

We have to look up and refocus our mind. The battlefield is here. If I could get that point across, that would be the biggest point tonight, is the battlefield is your mind.

And stop thinking about worrying. Stop thinking about fear. And all we're doing is feeding that.

And we're feeding that in our culture today. And then Jesus says, therefore, do not worry. So, worry can be controlled and minimized.

If Jesus says don't worry, that tells me that I have the ability not to worry. Right? Or is He mistaken here? But guess what happens at this point? Yeah, Shane, but. You've got to get those butts out of the way.

Anytime you have to say, yeah, but. When we tell somebody, here's what the Bible says. Yeah, but.

No, you shouldn't worry. Yeah, but I was raised this way. Yeah, but you don't know my household.

You don't know my spouse. Yeah, but. The obedience is in God's word, not the buts.

All but sometimes means is, I want to continue worrying. Yeah, that makes sense. But Jesus said don't worry.

Yeah, but. He's not going through what I went through. Oh, I don't know.

He was beaten. He was put on a cross. No temptation.

He went through everything that we suffer with. Times 10, times 100. So He knows that.

He knows what we're going through. Therefore, do not worry. Worry can be controlled and minimized.

And here's where I want to hang my hat for a minute. Romans 12, 2. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, and what is that good and acceptable and perfect thing. So Romans tells us, Paul tells us, be not conformed to this world.

So how am I conformed to this world, Paul? My mind is being shaped by the culture. All the junk that's in the culture. All the news.

All the Hollywood. All that stuff. That's why we come out against it.

Because if you allow it to, it will conform you. That's why Christians look more like Hollywood than the Holy Spirit. Let that sink in for a minute.

Why do most people look just like Hollywood, not like the Holy Spirit? Because they're being conformed to that image. Sure, they name the name of Christ, but when it comes to what's influencing their mind, what is influencing them? All this junk. And that's why I have such a beef against all this stuff that's out there, is because it is feeding anxiety and feeding fear and feeding all these frenzies that's happening in our culture.

You guys see that, right? It's not just me. We turn on the news, our stress level just jumps. Iran's got a bomb, TSA, shooting here, this, this, this.

We just walk around paralyzed. It says, don't be paralyzed. Jesus Christ actually said, don't worry, do business until I return.

I can't do business because I'm too scared. I'm too scared of everything. I've got to hide and I've got to cower.

The government's coming at me. Everybody's coming at me. Jesus says, don't worry.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Either you believe that or you don't. And I get emails all the time.

This is happening. This is great. Bring it on because Christ is still on the throne.

God is still sovereign. He holds the world in the palm of his hand. But we're feeding this stuff.

And I've talked to people before with fear and anxiety. Okay, how's your devotional and prayer life? You know what happens? I don't have one. But all this grotesque and all these crime scenes and all these movies, every single night, well, you might want to start there.

Think about it. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. You go to bed with murder and chaos and illicit sex.

You wonder, why am I so fearful? Where's God at? I have no time to read, no time to study, no time to pray. Right, because do not be conformed. You're being conformed and you're being fashioned.

You're being shaped by this world. You have no time for God's word, no time for holiness, and that's why you're in many of these situations. Now, again, I'm not saying we're taking a broad brush and painting everybody, oh, it's just because of this.

But I would start there. When somebody tells me that they struggle with fear and anxiety, and you look at their mental diet, their mental diet will tell you about their spiritual health. I mean, I can't even watch.

I mean, American horror stories, and there's girls up in the air levitating with swords through her arms and legs. People post on Facebook. They're so excited about it.

I'm saying, oh, my gosh. Turn that junk off. No wonder.

No wonder you got to pop pills and you can't get into the word of God, and you're so anxious and fearful. It's because you're feeding a bunch of garbage all night long and all week long. That's just the truth.

Be not conformed to this world. Be not conformed. How are you conformed? By opening up your mind to the influence and being entertained by that influence.

If something entertains me, it's influencing me. And all these reports go online. Young adults, suicide rate, pandemic, epidemic, fear.

All these young adults and teenagers, Prozac, all these things. Why? I don't know. Why is the big craze now witches and vampire in the occult? I don't know.

They're casting spells. They're not reading Scripture. We've got to wake up.

This isn't just some loud pastor upset at Hollywood. I'm upset at the spiritual condition of the church, and it's just a reflection of our people. We should be the most joyful, loving people.

Instead, we're fearful. We're anxious. We're feeding our mind with all this darkness, and we wonder what's happening, what's happening.

So we go to a psychiatrist to prescribe a pill when we don't go to this great psychiatrist and say, help me. Now, let me interject again here because I can tell all the emails I'm going to get when this radio goes. I'm not saying that you might need something now and then if God is leading you in that direction.

The great physician maybe has other. I don't know. I'm not saying that.

But all the people I talk to, well, let me say not say all. My mom told me not to ever say all. I would say 99.9% of the people I talk to who are fearful and anxious and all these things, they have no prayer life.

They have no devotional life. They're watching a bunch of junk on TV. They have no worship on at their home.

Is there a connection there? I don't know. I mean, start there. Start in the Word of God.

Start worshiping. I've talked to people even with disorders and all these things and they can't get out of it. Tell me about your prayer life.

I don't have one. I don't want one. I don't know.

I would start there. I would start there, Lord, even when I don't feel like it. Yeah, even when you don't feel like it because many times you're not going to feel like it.

The enemy comes in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard against him. It doesn't feel good to read the Word of God sometimes, but you press through. I'd rather experience the pain of discipline than the pain of regret.

And that's what the human mind is being in our culture. I see so many Christians, especially on Halloween, all this junk and all this garbage. No matter what your view is on it, I'm saying how can darkness entertain the church? How can darkness entertain when it's supposed to have the light of the world? All these grotesque and gruesome things, all these images are feeding our mind on a nightly basis because the flesh enjoys it.

The Spirit is grieving, sitting there saying, no, come back to a loving Father. You want to get rid of fear and anxiety? Turn that garbage off. No, my flesh loves it.

And we go back to what Jesus said. Elijah said, how long will you waver between two opinions? But Jesus said, how long will you waver between two masters? You cannot serve one and then the other. And maybe it's just me, but I've seen it so much.

I've never talked to somebody with a powerful prayer life, loves the Lord on fire for God, worship in their car, worship at home. They can't get enough of God. They're praying at home, praying with their family.

And then still, if they struggle with something like this, then yes, get some counseling. Maybe there's some medication or something to balance out because I know like insulin in the body, there's brain chemistry issues. I'm not stupid.

I was raised in the health and fitness industry. I know that the body sometimes goes haywire and it's okay to fix that. But everybody now seems to run to the pill first.

First, that's the answer. I'm severely anxious. I'm severely this.

I've got to get something. Well, why don't you stop with that 800 milligrams of caffeine from Starbucks? Oh, don't get me started. What we're feeding our body, what we're feeding our mind directly affects our spiritual life.

Flippings 4-8. Uh-oh, here we go. Finally, brethren, whatever things are noble and true and honest and upright, meditate on these things.

Can I be upfront and honest right now? Most of what you're feeding your mind right now is not holy. It's not righteous. It's not noble.

It's not good. It's not pleasant. It doesn't please God.

If you're hooked on our culture and on Hollywood, on the media, it is pulling you away from God. So you have a choice tonight. I'm also not stupid.

I know many of you will leave here and nothing will change. Nothing will change. Oh, that's true.

Yeah, that's a good point. Nothing will change. Yeah, it's a little frustrating, but that's all right.

I'll get over it. But for that small percentage of people tonight who will say, you know what, I've got to make some changes. I've got to lead my family in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Paul leaves the church in Philippi with these final words. Finally, brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and honest and upright, meditate on these things. There's not a month that goes by that somebody from somewhere in the United States asks me about all these different things, twilight and zombies.

And I say, listen, if there's a fascination for witchcraft and the occult and zombies, something's wrong with your heart. I'll go on record saying that by the word of God, those things should not entertain the church. That's darkness.

There's no such thing as good witches and good magic and casting good spells and honoring darkness and the demonic. There's just nothing pleasant about that. You might not like to hear it, but you need to hear it.

Those things do not please God. And allowing those things into our mind and our children at that age, it's inexcusable. It doesn't fit with Scripture.

You can't give me any proof text to support that. Well, you can go to Romans. Oh, look, brother, no, you're not to judge another servant.

Yeah, I know all that. But when you look at your mental diet, if the things don't glorify Christ and they're pulling you away from him and they're demonic at its core, and you're watching these things, vampires and zombies and all this gross stuff that should be, oh, it should make you. Oh, my spirit doesn't like that.

There's something wrong here. If it doesn't, then you're dying on the vine spiritually. And that's why you might be suffering with a lot of these things, this darkness and the depression that comes on you because you're fueling your mind.

There's a spiritual battle. Do you realize that? For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

They're not here. We can't see them. But they're mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds and casting down arguments and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into obedience.

See, I'm supposed to bring my thoughts into obedience. My thoughts are not supposed to bring me into following them. I'm supposed to take my thoughts captive.

More on that in just a minute after I got worked up about the media. It is hard because I'll be honest with you. One of the hardest things, you've heard me talk about this before, and pastoring is not necessarily, you know, funerals are tough and sickness and all these things.

But one of the things that really stands out is you see living water, you know, you see living water right here. People will just not take it. Take it.

Take the living water that Christ spoke of. Dedicate your life. Fully surrender everything.

What did you just take of this living water? No, I don't want it. So they're dying on the vine. Marriages are falling apart.

They're growing distant from God because they don't want what's being offered. And we see this in what's playing out in the media and the news and all these things. All the media and the news and all that Hollywood, all it does is it reflects what's going on in the culture.

It reflects the culture and influences the culture, and it will influence the believer. There's no way around it. So that's why I preach against this is because it doesn't.

If something isn't building you up and pulling you towards God, guess what direction it's taking you. Yeah, it's a no brainer. I went and looked at the top 10, you know, if you take out Duck Dynasty, the top 10 TV shows.

And if it's not about illicit sex, homosexuality and darkness and perversion, it's not up there. It's not even on there. So we go to bed watching these things and thinking, oh, that's going to bring me closer to Christ.

When it really quenches and grieves the spirit of God. Finally, brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and honest, meditate on these things. Now, here's the battleground.

For though we walk in the flesh, which I said, we do not work according to the flesh. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. He goes on to say in Second Corinthians, bringing every thought into captivity, not allowing your thoughts to take you captive, which we know.

Now, this is an interesting word. Casting down arguments. Logos, I believe it is in the Greek arguments.

It's a heated exchange of conflicting views. If you look up that word, casting down arguments. Well, in the Greek language, it's a heated exchange of opposing views.

Light and darkness, good and bad, truth and error, competing. This competing force within us, this battle of the mind that Paul says, I'm never free from this conflict. Oh, wretched man that I am.

Who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? For with the mind. Did you catch that? For with the mind, I serve the law of God. Paul just said, he goes back and forth.

And the things I want to do, I don't do. The things I don't want to do, I do. Oh, wretched man that I am.

Who will deliver me? Well, I thank God that the battle is here. I submit myself, my mind. I'm casting down arguments, this conflict that's going on in my mind.

I take the side of good, not evil. My mind, I'm not going to allow it to go there. Do you know that all church splits start in the mind? All affairs start in the mind.

All arguments start in the mind. Everything starts here. So that's why you've got to take it captive and say, no, I know what God's word said.

This is not right. Enemy, you will flee. You will have no control over me.

Resist the devil and he has to flee. Casting down arguments. Romans 8.5, what about this? For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

Do you want to know if you live according to the spirit or according to the flesh? What do you set your mind on? Show me your phone, your websites, what you view in the media all day long, what you listen to. You'll see if you're walking in the spirit or walking in the flesh. It's that simple.

Now, if people are convicted right now, it's a good thing. God's saying, listen, get that out of your life. For though we live according to the flesh.

Oh, I'm sorry. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Peace, anxiety, peace and fear. Right here, guys.

Think about that. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.

You realize that? The carnal mind is at war with God. So my carnal nature is at war with God. The spirit says, come back, bring me back.

My carnal mind says, I'm at war with God. So what do we choose? What master do we choose to obey? What master do we choose to obey? The carnal mind or the spiritual side? Let me give you some examples. This is what happens.

In our minds, here's how this battle plays out. Adultery. It doesn't start with adultery.

It starts with this. This other person makes me feel loved and respected and appreciated. My spouse doesn't.

And those thoughts just dwell, and they just rise up daily. Look at how they're treating me. I hate this other person.

Look at how they're, oh, isn't this great? I should have met this one. I think I married the wrong person. Oh, you've never heard that? I just don't love them anymore.

Oh, okay. Yeah, that's 1 Corinthians 8.10. You can divorce because you don't love them anymore. Well, it's still up here.

So every day, this person, I don't love them anymore. They're mean. How did I end up in this relationship? Look at all my other friends on Facebook having such a perfect life.

They don't tell you all the bad stuff. They just show you the good stuff. It's all up here.

Look at recent studies on what Facebook does to people. It actually elevates anxiety and fear and jealousy and bitterness. I get on there.

I said, look, everybody's on vacation. Everybody loves their latte. Everybody's going to the gym.

Everybody's down by the beach. Everybody's out by the pool. Everybody's got perfect husbands and perfect wives and perfect kids.

They're just praising everything, everything, everything. Look at my life. It stinks.

It does. I get irritated. Why? Because it's just the perfect things.

And where's it starting? Up here. All broken marriages are happening here. I'm sure my wife has felt, I don't love that guy anymore.

He's being a jerk. Ask her. I'm sure.

Because we all have. Have we not? So if I keep thinking that, she's being mean this week. Somebody else is being very nice.

I wonder if I married, did I marry the wrong person? And then we go back and we play that game. That's what he says. Bring every thought captive.

Wrong thought. Come back. Wrong thought.

Come back. You bring it captive. Wrong thought.

Come back. That's what we have. That's bringing that thought captive back to the obedience of Christ.

Now, here's also what happens on this side. As people are moving towards an affair or divorce court or problems in their marriage. As they're moving.

It's not just overnight. It's slipping. One day, one compromise, one bad choice.

And they're slipping. And then guess what comes with this? Fear. And anxiety.

And depression. And instead of saying, I must be out of God's will. They say, see, if I could break free of this, it would alleviate the fear, anxiety, and depression.

Then they get to the point of no return and all hell breaks loose. And it's ugly. Why? Because they didn't bring their minds captive.

The thoughts captive. Because we all know, should I dwell on these things or should I not? Next example. Oh, it's the people who are always complaining.

Life stinks. The government sucks. Life stinks.

Everybody's out to get me. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Charlie Brown.

Always so negative. Always so negative. All the time.

They get around this. Can you believe this? Can you believe? God, I didn't want to be around them. Every thought captive.

Saying, this is not right. We should be thankful. The Bible says, yes, difficult times are coming.

But like I said, Jesus says, do business until I return. Do business until I return. Do not worry.

Then if we're not supposed to worry, why are we in fear factor mode? Remember I said earlier this year, our gun safes are full, but our prayer closets are empty. We have plenty of time for Hannity and O'Reilly and CNN for you CNN fans and all this stuff. But no time for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Why? We're feeding that fear frenzy. We're feeding it. And that's what happens on this issue.

What about people at work? They get this way. I should have been promoted by now. How did they get that position? God, I can't believe I've been here.

And we just start festering. All these thoughts begin to creep in. Guess what happens? Bitterness, jealousy, envy.

And there we are. So instead of you taking your thoughts captive, now your thoughts are controlling you. You go to work upset.

You stay at work upset. You leave upset. You take that upsetness, if I can use that word, back home to your spouse and your kids.

Now you're upset all day. Now you're upset all week. Listen, take every thought captive.

Thank God for a job. Thank God for an income. Thank God for a house over your head.

Maybe you're supposed to minister to this person. Maybe God is checking your heart by telling you no. Do you know that you can see somebody's heart when you tell them no? No, I don't think so right now.

If they go into mode, then we're in trouble. I just got chewed out on email last week because a guy in Canada or wherever emailed me, said I need to talk to you about something. And I said, okay, how about a couple days? He got mad at me.

Well, you're not some mega pastor. You can't just return my call right now. Well, guess what? Now I'm not going to call you back.

I told him no, not right now. Maybe tomorrow, unless it's emergency, of course. And they just get upset.

I will watch. I can see the spiritual condition of your heart by how you handle no. A little insight to this church.

When we first started this church, I told some people no to the position of elder because I don't think they're ready right now. You want to just take a guess at how many of them are still coming. Yeah, big zero.

What happened? They got my back. They're on my side. We're still on the same page.

We'll be there with you forever. What happened? What happened? No, not right now. How do they know I wasn't saying, yeah, that's a good idea a little bit.

Let's see how you handle this. See, it reveals the heart. There's bitterness.

So God will test. He tests me all the time, all the time, testing our heart. I should have been promoted.

Oh, that happens in the church too. You know that? Uh-oh, I better not touch that one. Do you know this happens in the church now? I should have been promoted.

Why don't they recognize me? Why is my name not on the PowerPoint? Oh, if you're saying those things, you better go home and repent. This is not a place for jockeying for position. It's a place for broken hearts seeking God.

John the Baptist said he must increase, but I must decrease. We are servant leaders. Any time you're wanting a position or a promotion, be careful.

Because you have to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Bring it back. You can say and I can say these thoughts are not right.

Can we? But we love to keep people in that bondage, don't we? I can't let that go. I've got to keep that person on my hit list. This also happens in church, in the workplace.

I don't like them. I just don't like that person. Bitter jealousy comes in, maybe career, maybe money, maybe status, whatever it is, and we allow these thoughts to come in.

How many of you are upset at me right now? Don't raise your hand. What are you going to do with these thoughts? All I'm trying to do is help you. This is what God's Word says.

I don't have an axe to grind. I'm not trying to upset anybody. As a matter of fact, I wish we could leave here and everybody say, oh, thank you, that was a Joelstein sermon.

You didn't upset anybody. I mean, that would be ideal, would it not, poor guy? He's a millionaire. Don't feel bad about him.

So my goal is to say, what is God, where is he directing our heart, not what do we want to hear? And that's another reason why a lot of people haven't stayed here, because they don't like what they're hearing. And change comes by obeying the Word of God, not running from it. I have a strong sense that that is for somebody tonight.

I don't know why. But you've got to stop running from God's Word and start obeying it. If you want to see genuine change take place, if you want to genuinely know him, stop running from the very God who wants to save you or he wants to call you back.

That's your only hope. The next thing, what we have to do is we have to cut the fuel source. Now let me get to this.

If you're worrying and you're anxious and you're fearful, you've got to cut the fuel source. More often than not, if somebody's worried and anxious and this, they've got to make some lifestyle changes. When you get up in the morning, put on some good worship music, not the drudge report.

Get into this for an hour. Fox News will still be there tomorrow. Unplug the television.

Turn off Netflix. Go to unhook all devices and just take a fast and just seek God. Because a lot of these things are building worry and fear into our lives.

So we've got to cut the fuel off at its source. What is feeding that? What about friends? I could do a whole sermon on this topic right here. Texting, calling, all that.

Did you hear? Did you see? Did you hear? They're coming to get us. The government's this. Big daddy, big mama.

All these things are coming to get you. That's a Tyler Perry word probably. Listen, conspiracy theories, all this stuff might be valid.

I don't know. All I know is I'm supposed to do business till he comes home and not worry about it. But if you're constantly feeding your mind with these things, you're going to be in fear factor mode.

You've got to kill the things that are fueling fear and begin putting the word of God and worship into your heart. That's how you change a fearful heart. The fruit of the spirit, fear, anxiety, depression.

Oh, well, what's going on then? If you're a spirit-filled believer, now again, we all struggle with, I was pretty depressed when I got the medical results, or the medical insurance and supplemental tax bill. Wow, but then what do you do with that? God, you're good. I'm going to praise you in this storm.

So we still struggle with Charles Spurgeon. I love the man, one of the greatest preachers I think that ever lived. 150 years ago, struggled with depression.

Now I have some thoughts about his health and how he took care of his body that I'll keep to myself. But how many of these things are we bringing on? And how many of these things are spiritual attacks? How many of these things are chemical imbalances? I don't mind using that word because it can happen. You can't just tell somebody who is insulin-dependent, ah, come on, geez, stop that stuff.

However, I would say that nine out of ten people, when I was in the fitness business, nine out of ten people who began to treat their body correctly were able to get off of all that type of medication. I saw it firsthand. They would come in so excited.

Jane, spend a couple months. I don't need, doctor says I don't need any. So why don't we start with the good things? Why don't we start with the right things and then allow God to direct us from there? Bad decisions, oh my goodness.

Bad decisions bring on worry. Proverbs says hard is the way of the transgressor. So a person that is transgressing against God, they will not be a happy camper.

They will not be happy. If you are transgressing against God, you are an open rebellion to God, life will be difficult. Life will be difficult.

How can these guys just go shoot people? When I was growing up, you never heard of a school shooting? Oh my goodness. Now it's every month. Somebody's AR-15s, they're walking to places, just taking out people.

Where does this come from? And then you kind of read some of the stories. Remember what I told you a few weeks ago? The Navy shooter, the gunman, the Navy shooter, I was preparing my sermon. I clicked on dredge report.

I know I'm not supposed to do that, but I do it sometimes. And you know what? Now that I think about it, I never click off in a good mood. I don't.

It's depressing. Click that article, read it. Oh, he was addicted to violent video games.

Wow, who would have ever guessed? The guy who kidnapped those three girls for 10 years? Click this story. Addicted to hardcore porn. Hmm.

Come on folks, fill in the blanks. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. We're not this neutral soldier who can serve both gods.

Either the god of this world is pulling you down or the god of this world is pulling you up. There's no middle ground. We think, oh, I'm a tough guy.

No, you're not a tough guy. You're being either led by the flesh or you're being led by the spirit. You are being created in the image of God, but because of sin and our fallen nature, we have this disease called sin that pulls us away from God.

So if you feed that disease, guess what you're gonna die with? That's how it works. And the final thing on this, look at your, and I don't even, I bring this up a lot, but it's very relevant. The health of our bodies.

Let me just read an email I got some time ago. My children are overweight. The oldest was just diagnosed with diabetes, her kid.

My poor health is also taking a toll on me. Help, help. It's no wonder she's depressed and fearful and anxious.

Why? You see how all these things work together. I believe that you take care of your spirit, which is first and foremost, and you take care of your body. You're not feeding it those things like abusing it and alcohol and drugs and all these things.

And if you look on, the funny thing is if you look on medication, some medication for stress or anxiety, you look at the adverse reactions and they're almost just as bad as what it's trying to prevent. Hallucinations, suicidal thoughts. So I'm going to take this to get rid of this.

And I've told you before that studies on nicotine or caffeine in high levels, all these things do is they put your body in a fight or flight in a stress mode. So you're constantly in stress. You get up and you put in this supercharged Christian crack and then you get to work and you got to have some more because you're getting so tired and then you got to have some more.

And you're, why am I so high strung? Why am I so upset? Well, the world's coming down. Why, why, why? Because you're feeding your body things that do that. That's just the truth.

I can't come up here and avoid this topic. It's funny too, last week, now I don't want to make a mountain out of a molehill. I went just for fun, looked at what is that Starbucks little logo.

It's called a siren from a Greek goddess. And her job was to seduce wayward soldiers or wayward people or their vessels or ships. Well, that's interesting.

Seduction, seduce. Now, am I saying all these things are bad? Of course, in moderation. But if you have a problem with fear and anxiety and you're pumping yourself with things, even the diagnostic manual for mental disorders lists caffeine-induced disorders above 500 milligrams.

Most of you are getting over that a day. You know why I'm gonna preach that? Because I did. And it almost canceled my and Morgan's courting relationship.

Because I was big old pot of coffee in the morning, big old pot of coffee at night. And I was going through some weird, just depression, anxiety. And then I read, oh, I know this, I know this, but I don't care.

It just tastes so good. I need to stay up. I need to, you know.

So my whole point of bringing that up is be careful what you're putting in. Because it affects you. And let's just think about that.

Nicotine, right? Alcohol or caffeine, let's say, at high levels, it puts your body in a very high-strung state. So you're taking in something that increases, actually the better word is magnifies, it magnifies stress. Cortisol, adrenaline, all these different things.

So that's why you see somebody on high caffeine, they get obsessed. Somebody takes your parking spot. They wanna ram them.

Somebody else, nothing, fine, no problem, we'll go to this next spot. Why is that? Because our body was not meant to be in that fight or flight stress all day long. Don't worry, I'm not gonna get on diet sodas and all those things today.

But I believe that those things, now, here's another side note. Talking to people who struggle with anxiety, depression, and all those things, nine times out of 10, nine times out of 10, their diet stinks. It stinks.

Let's just be honest. Half a pot of coffee in the morning, four Diet Cokes later. So let's start there.

Let's get the body, because God created us, the most incredible engine ever designed. He designed us to be a certain way, and when we pervert those things, don't take care of our physical, don't take care of our spiritual, don't take care of our emotional, and we wonder why we're struggling with all these things. Well, let's start with what we do know.

These things will take us back to God. Now, of course, I could go on on this, but I just want to make this closing point. The root cause of anxiety is right here.

Jesus said it. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

And we say, yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah. I've heard that a hundred times. Think about how profound that is.

When I'm truly seeking God, when I'm seeking God, you can send me a bill in the mail that says my health insurance is being discontinued because I trust a great provider. You can say I'm out of a career next week, and I don't care. I'm seeking.

He's in charge. He's leading me. It's his job.

If it's his will, it's his bill. Where he guides, he provides. I've got a lot of little cute sayings, but it doesn't matter unless you apply them to your heart.

If I'm seeking God, listen, Shane, the church tells me, hey, we need this building. You're out next month. I don't care.

It's God's church. I'm seeking Him. There's no stress involved.

Doesn't mean we don't struggle with it still, but when you're seeking God, here's what happens. We turn from seeking God, and we seek ourselves. We seek the things of the world.

We seek our flesh, and the flesh always lets us down. Your flesh says feed me so I can destroy you. You realize that? Your flesh, my flesh, says feed me so I can destroy you.

He's not our friend. He's not our buddy. He's not my little vice.

My little vice wants to turn into a big vice and sink this ship. Does it not? Oh, I came fired up tonight. I'm just telling you.

Because when people are seeking first the kingdom of God, come hell or high water. Though the rivers come up, they will not overtake me. Though I walk through the flames, I will not be burned.

Why? Because the Lord upholds me with His hand. He who watches over Israel doesn't sleep or slumber. Though the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, if he falls, he will not be utterly cast down because God upholds him with His right hand.

I will guide you. I'm the shepherd. I'm the loving father.

Doesn't matter what you go through. I am still on the throne. No government, no senate, no council, no news.

Nothing can take you away from me. God is in control. When we look to that, come hell or high water, no depression, no anxiety can take where God is leading me.

The reason we get all these things foster in us is because we get off of that track. We get off of the right track and we start to focus on my money. I need a big savings.

I need a big retirement. Versus, Lord, what do you want? You can provide for me. I'm trusting you.

No, no, no. I've got to do it. But, but, but, Shane, the Bible says store up.

Sure, but God says He'll bless you in His time and His way. No, but, but, but, but. And we worry about the buts and we get in trouble.

It's like I said last week, the drift away from God starts here. Where does the drift back to God have to start? Right here. So many of you, if you've been drifting away, guess what? Bring every captive, come back to the obedience of Christ and turn to Him and say, Lord, I've been wrong.

Take me in these areas. As the song says, He rescues the souls of men. And if He rescues our souls, if He saves us, God is calling us.

And some of you, if you don't know Him tonight, God is calling you through the message, through the conviction of the Spirit, calling you to surrender your life and saying, come to a loving Father who wants to go through life with you. He rescues the soul of men. And then He's gonna say, now I don't care.

Once He saves us and redeems us and secure us, now He's going to guide us and lead us until we meet Him face to face. That's how powerful seek ye first the kingdom of God is. That is the root cause of depression and anxiety and fear is because we are not seeking God.

Oh you of little faith, Jesus said.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/NbQE8cdwXZs.mp4>

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