

On Edge | Protected by Peace

Petie Kinder | Philippians 4:6-7

Question of the day: Are you still full from Thanksgiving? I would say that that's a weird question except for I've experienced it. I'm still a little bit full. I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. I hope you enjoyed a ton of food and fun and family and all that good stuff that comes with Thanksgiving.

My name's Petie. I'm one of the pastors here. If this is your first time, we're thrilled to have you.

I love this time of year so much. I love this five-week stretch, like from Thanksgiving through to New Year. I love it so much for so many reasons, but one of the big reasons I love it is what happens here in the life of our church over the next five weeks.

We do this thing every year called year-end giving where we all pray about how much we're going to give above what we typically give financially to make a big difference in the world.

While we're all doing Christmas shopping and everybody around the world's doing Christmas shopping and buying all kinds of stuff that might make you happy or might make the people you love happy for like a week, a month if you're lucky, we're going to pool our money together and we're going to do something that's going to have eternal impact. It's going to have an eternal significance.

So this year I get the honor of telling you that our year-end giving is going to go in two directions: One, it's going to go toward helping us launch more Traders Point campuses throughout the city in these next couple years, and I can't wait to tell you more about that in the weeks and months to come. It's going to be an exciting couple years here at the church.

But then also, a portion of our year-end giving is going to go to helping serve vulnerable kids in our own backyard. We're partnering with an organization called Hands of Hope, and Hands of Hope is at the tip of the spear when it comes to caring for vulnerable children here in our city.

I don't know if you knew this or not but in Indiana, we're in the middle of a foster care crisis in our city and in our state. Within Indiana, we've actually seen a 67 percent increase since 2012 in the number of kids who are going into the foster care system—67 percent. That's so many kids who this time of year have nobody, have no family, have nowhere to turn, and we just know that as the Church we're called to do something about that and to serve vulnerable children.

So through your giving and through our partnership with Hands of Hope, this is going to do two things: It's going to enable Hands of Hope to start up more care communities all around the city at all kinds of churches so that our current fostering families are really well cared for.

But it's also going to enable them to do something called an online care portal. This is so exciting because what this is going to do is this will enable families to communicate their most desperate physical needs before they reach the point of crisis and they would need to turn their kids over to the foster care system.

This is actually going to be something that can be preventive. It's going to keep kids from entering the foster care system altogether to begin with, which is a beautiful thing that we should celebrate. Absolutely. Cannot wait to see what God does with this, so man, just pray big and give big. You guys have always been such a generous church. This church is known for its generosity so continue to give big.

If you've never been a part of year-end giving, anything you give from now through the end of the year goes toward year-end giving and you can just use the normal ways we always give—the wall boxes, our church app, or our website to give—so pray about how much you're going to give as a family and let's go big this year and let's make a big eternal difference in the lives of some kids.

Grab a Bible, get to Philippians chapter 4. We're going to be in Philippians 4 today. If you don't have a Bible with you, that's all right, Google it on your phone or look at a Bible app or something. I don't have the TV screen with the slides for you, so if you don't have any of those things, just listen really close. Philippians 4, we're going to get there in just a second.

We've been in this series called *On Edge* where we're dealing with something that we should've dealt with a long time ago truthfully. Our society, and specifically within church culture, has been too silent on the issues of mental health and depression and anxiety, so we've been digging into this because this really affects all of us.

Whether or not you've ever been clinically diagnosed as depressed or as anxious—we all end up on edge especially around the holidays. I mean, come on, y'all know this is true, and there's actually science to back it up.

Back in 2011, there was a journal published called *Innovations and Clinical Neuroscience* and they did a study that correlated the amount of reported instances of mental health issues with the holidays, like did you see an increase in reported instances of anxiety and mental health issues or a decrease?

What they found was that before Christmas, there is a decrease; that fewer people go to see mental health professionals before Christmas. But then after Christmas, there's a massive spike up. So what that tells us is that we all think that Christmas is going to make everything better. We all think a cup of Christmas cheer and a few presents exchanged are going to solve all of our

problems, but really what it does is we end up getting put on edge around the holidays and some of you guys know that all too well because of Thursday, because you just survived an awkward family dinner and you are walking in today on edge.

Maybe you had that crazy uncle who wouldn't stop talking politics. You're like, "Ah, sweet mother, can we please not do that this year?"

Or maybe your kids were super messy and you and your spouse are just fighting and bickering back and forth and you found yourself underneath the dining room table cleaning up your kids' messes, fighting with your spouse. You're like, "This is something out of a movie."

Or maybe you're single and this was the year that you officially reached your limit of the amount of times you're going to get asked, "When are you going to get married?" You're like, "Ask it again. Ask it again and see what I do."

Whatever it is, the holidays have a way of putting you on edge. And let me say this, a side note, if you made it through your Thanksgiving dinner and you weren't put on edge, you might be the one who's putting everyone on edge. It's a possibility. I just want to submit that for your consideration.

Either way, we all end up on edge at some point, and so the question is what do we do with that? What do we do with our fears and our anxieties and our depression? What do we do when we end up on edge?

So today, what I want to show you is I want to show you what the earliest followers of Jesus did with their anxiety. And that's a really big deal because the earliest followers of Jesus had every reason to be anxious. See, the earliest followers of Jesus were being persecuted for their faith.

Many of them were actually shunned by their families because of their decision to follow Jesus. They were being physically hunted down and many of them were murdered because of their faith in Jesus.

So if anyone had a reason to be anxious, it was the earliest followers of Jesus, so I want to show you what the earliest followers of Jesus did with anxiety and then I want to just speak to you from my own story for a bit and the stories of many people whom I've counseled over the years of how this verse that we're going to study has played out in my life and how I've dealt as a fellow struggler with depression and anxiety and mental health issues.

My hope for you today, if you walked in here today and you would consider yourself a follower of Jesus, my hope for you is that you walk out of here with a real practical path to peace, that you have something you can do with your anxiety—you have something like, "You know I can do this with my anxiety" because anxiety is coming knocking at your door one way or another. So I want you to have a real practical path toward peace today.

If you're here and you wouldn't consider yourself a follower of Jesus, my hope for you is that you just see that there are more than just reasons of eternal security to consider following Jesus; that Jesus is not just concerned with your eternal salvation, Jesus is also concerned with your peace of mind.

So with that in mind, let's read Philippians chapter 4. I'm going to take you on a different book today. I made you go to Philippians; we're going to go to Ephesians. No, we're back to Philippians.

Philippians chapter 4. We're going to read verses 6 and 7. Then we're going to pray and we're going to unpack this thing and dig into it and get everything we can out of it.

Here's what Philippians 4 says. It says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

I'm going to read it one more time to you. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Let's pray and ask Jesus to teach us today.

Lord, we love you and we're trusting in you today. We're trusting that what you said about your Word is true, that it's not irrelevant and outdated, but that it's living and active and that it's sharper than any double-edged sword—that it can pierce our minds and pierce our hearts and it can change us from the inside out. So Jesus, we're asking you to do that today to teach us because there's a room full of us at every campus right now that who are struggling with anxiety. We're struggling with depression and we're struggling with these issues, and we need you to teach us.

God, we pray that you would break the chains of depression today, that people would walk out of here with a path to peace, not because of anything wise I say, but because of your Word, but Jesus, we need you to show up today, so we open our minds and our hearts to you, and it's in your name that the church prays together. Amen.

Paul says don't be anxious about anything. Don't you love it when people say that? If you're anxious or depressed and someone's like, "Just stop." Gee thanks. Super helpful, right? Like I'm choosing to be Eeyore right now. That's what I want. Of all the Winnie the Pooh characters I could pick to be, I would choose Eeyore. No, come on. Everybody knows Tigger's the man. Everybody wants to be Tigger. It's not as easy as flipping a switch and being Tigger.

And truthfully, we've heard that message for so long, like if you're anxious just stop worrying. If you're depressed, just stop being so sad, just lift your head up and think better thoughts, just think about good stuff. We've heard that message over and over and it's not super helpful.

But that's not what Paul says. He says don't be anxious about anything and then he actually gives you a path. He gives you a path to follow and he says here's what you need to do. In every situation, you need to go to God first.

That's so key because he says in every situation you need to go to God first. You need to go to God **first**, not WebMD that's going to convince you that you're dead in like two-and-a-half hours, not Google, not social media, not your group text just yet, and truthfully, not first in order is even going to counseling or therapy or medication.

I want to be very careful when I'm saying that because just like Aaron said last week, and as someone who's been to therapy and been to counseling and my wife and I have been down the path of medication—as someone who's been there, that is God's gift. God's gift to the world is people who are brilliant enough to counsel us and give us therapy and people who are brilliant enough to come up with medication that can help solve chemical imbalances that are in our brains.

That is a beautiful thing and it's not a sin at all to go. We should all be in counseling all the time. You know that, right? We should all be in counseling all the time. Whether you're going through it or it's preventative, we should all be in it all the time. All the counselors are like, "Yeah, preach, boy. I hear you. Say it."

We should all be there, but all Paul's saying and all I'm trying to say is we shouldn't go there first, that when you feel anxious and when you feel scared and when you feel depressed your first stop, first order of business, should be to go to God.

I love the phrase he uses. He says in every situation. Oh man, in every situation. Phew. Because we don't treat God like that, I mean, come on now. Let's cut through the Christianese. Let's cut through the spiritual mumbo jumbo. Let's cut through acting like we're better than we really are.

What we typically do is we take the worst of the worst situations to God, don't we? We take the situations to him that we've tried every other way to solve it and nothing else is working and so hike the ball, throw the Hail Mary pass to the end zone, hope that God catches it.

But truthfully, again, let's just cut through. Let's get real. When we go and take God those situations, we don't actually believe he's going to do anything.

It got super quiet in here.

We don't actually believe. It's like a desperation attempt, right? Because we wait to take anything to God until it's just the crisis that can't be solved, the massive issue. Paul says: No, no. That's actually not how it should work.

Actually what you should do and what I should do is we should take **every situation** to God—the big ones and the small ones and everything in between. Every time you feel the slightest bit of anxiety or fear or depression you should take it to God, no matter how big or how small it is, because Paul knew that what we need more than anything else is a shared history with God.

We need a shared history. We need to be able to look back on some times when God has carried us through so that we can have the confidence to stand firm in our current circumstances, so that we can have the confidence to face our current anxieties.

We need some shared history.

I liken this to my dad. Maybe you've got a dad like this. My dad was like this when I was growing up and he's still like this to this day. He's a very handy man—very handy man, very hard worker—and so growing up, he hated to pay anyone, like a professional, to come and fix something at the house that he could fix on his own. Anybody else like this? Anybody else have a dad like this? Yeah.

So I just always saw him with like a strong work ethic, figuring stuff out, and not paying professionals to do it. I've tried to apply the same principles in my adult life and it is not working out. My wife doesn't even think it's attractive anymore when I try. She's like, "Babe, babe, just stop. Gosh. Just call the contractor. You're awful at this." But I'm trying. I'm trying.

My dad never wanted to pay for someone else to come and do the work that he could do himself—that he could figure out on his own, except for when it came to cars. Cars were the one spot that my dad was like, "Uh-uh. Out of my skill set. Out of my range. Above my pay grade. No way. What you need to do is you need to go to Tommy."

Now Tommy was the mechanic that my dad went to when I was growing up, all the time. Now Tommy had no teeth, but Tommy could fix cars like a beast. He was a wizard as a mechanic. He was incredible. And so my dad, he always went to Tommy. Any car issue, take it to Tommy. Anytime my car had an issue, "Hey, no worries. Take it to Tommy." Anytime my mom's car had an issue, "Take it to Tommy. He's got it."

You see, my dad had taken the cars to him for so long that they had a shared history and so my dad knew he could probably fix it and he's not going to give him a bad deal. He's not going to charge him too much. There was trust there, right? There was a shared history, and that's what Paul's saying you need to have with God.

You need to take every situation, both big and small, to God and say, "God, here it is," because shared history develops trust. And oh man, you want to put your anxiety at ease? Trust. Oh,

you want to put your fears at ease? Trust. Trust is the path. Trust like you know that it's going to be okay. Even if it doesn't turn out like I think it's going to, it's going to be okay.

Take that mechanic illustration and go the other route with it. How many of you by a show of hands at all of our campuses have ever taken your car to a mechanic whom you'd never been to before? You know how anxiety inducing that is, right?

You're going to take your car to a mechanic and say, "Hey, it's not working right," and you know what's going to happen. Four hours later, that dude is calling you and he is for sure going to rattle off a list of things that are broken with your car, none of which sound like car parts, like the rotary binary snake tube is broken in half. The flux capacitor is leaking nuclear waste. It's going to cost five grand at least until I get in there and take this thing apart. I don't know, it could be ten grand, somewhere in the five to ten grand..."

You're like, "Wait a minute! What is happening?" and you don't trust him. Even if you pay the money to that guy to get it fixed, you still don't leave feeling at peace because you have no shared history.

See, you need to take every situation, big and small, to God—not just the big things, but the big and the small ones—and say, "God, what do I do with this anxiety? What do I do with it?"

And what I've found in my own life and in many of the lives of people whom I've ministered to over the years is that when you take your anxiety to God and you let God speak into it first, you start to understand why Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, called God a wonderful counselor. Because that's what he is. Oh, he is a wonderful counselor. Oh man, he'll help you understand reality.

And you understand that's the most important question to answer here. When you take your anxiety and your fear and your depression to God, you need to have God help you understand the answer to this all-important question, which is, "God, why am I feeling this way?" That's the question you need to get to the bottom of.

When you've got an anxiety coming your way, depression coming your way, fear coming your way, ask, "Why am I feeling this, God?"

M. Scott Peck, a famous American psychiatrist, he had this quote that I thought was fascinating. He said mental health is the constant pursuit of reality, the relentless commitment to reality at all costs. Like you're going to dedicate yourself to figuring out "What's really going on in my life? What's really happening?" Because when you know what's really going on, when you know why you feel the way you feel, you can start to actually find answers. You can actually start to do something about it and it provides a path to peace.

So what I want to do with the rest of our time is just to walk you through what happens when you take your anxiety to God and what I've found in my own life personally happens when you

take your anxiety to God because typically there are one of three things that God has pointed out to me in my life and in the lives of many people whom I've worked with—when you feel anxious or when you feel afraid, there are three buckets, usually, that are the root cause of your anxiety and your fear.

See, sometimes when you take it to God and you ask him why you feel this way what you end up realizing, with his help, is that you are actually being convinced of some lies. That you're feeling anxious because you're buying into and you have bought hook, line, and sinker a lie.

The devil himself, our enemy, is a liar. That's like his profession. Jesus would say in John 8:44 the devil is a liar. When he lies it is consistent with his character. I don't know if there's a more condemning accusation. When you lie, it's consistent with your character. That's the devil. He says he's the father of lies. That's what he does.

Many of us are feeling anxious and depressed and afraid on a regular basis because we have bought some lies. There are some lies that the enemy has fed us, like your past defines you. Your past defines you, and not just that, your past disqualifies you. You'll never make a difference now. You could never be used by God again. Your future is ruined because of your past. That's a lie and it feeds our anxiety.

Many of us have been fed this terrible, terrible lie that the way you feel right now is the way you're always going to feel. Oh man, if there's one lie that the enemy would just love to convince you of and stir up all kinds of fear and anxiety, it's that you'll feel this way forever and it's never going away.

Some of us right now are being convinced of the lie that the worst possible scenario for your future is going to happen. How many of us sit around at night and our mind wanders to the worst possible thing happening to you or your family or your kids and we just get paralyzed by this fear of the unknown and the future, and the enemy just convinces you that your future is dark, it's not bright, that your best days are behind you, that you're headed for heartache and hurt.

There are some lies in there. There are little lies in there that you've been convinced of. So when you take your anxiety to God and he points out a lie that you're being convinced of, the only thing that you can do, and the thing you should do in response, is to reject it. You should reject the lie. You should put it in its place.

What I find so fascinating about this is that when it comes to our relationship with God, what happens mostly is that we typically, as followers of Jesus, we talk to God but we listen to our lies. We talk to God like crazy about our issues. "God, why do I feel this way? God, please take it away. God, I wish I didn't think these crazy thoughts. God, please help me not feel so sad. God, help me to not be so anxious. God, please take it away."

We talk to God about it, but then in the quiet moments, we actually listen to the lie. We let the lie tell us how we should feel. We let the lie tell us what's reality. We let the lie guide us and determine our steps.

You see, if you want to reject the lies of the enemy, you need to flip those. Instead of talking to God and listening to your lies, you need to listen to God and talk to your lies. You need to listen to God. You can talk to him for sure, but you should probably do more listening.

We would be well served to sit down with our Bibles and just like let God tell us what truth is and just listen to him a little bit and say, "God, what do you think about my situation?" We should listen to God more and then I'm telling you we should talk to our lies. Even if it makes you look like a crazy person. I'm talking like you should talk out loud to your lies.

If you're worried about how you're going to look to the car next to you or the person in the grocery store, just throw in some headphones; it'll look like you're on a phone call. You're just pushing your grocery cart, doing your thing. Like, "Man, that person's having a really intense conversation." "You're right. I'm talking to the devil right now."

You need to talk to your lies though. You need to put them in their proper place. When you have the lie whispered in your ear that your past defines you and your past disqualifies you, you need to, in your car before you get out and go to work every morning, say out loud, "No, I am forgiven. I am loved. I am redeemed. I am not my past. God has a future for me. He has a purpose for me. There's no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No! That's a lie! I reject it."

When you feel the lie whispered in your ear that you're going to feel this way forever, you say, "No, no, no, no, no, no," out loud. I'm speaking some truth right now. Out loud you say to that lie, "My heart is deceitful and wicked above all else. It can't be trusted. No emotion lasts forever. The Holy Spirit is alive and active in me, which means I'm being grown. I'm being changed. There is nothing about me that will stay the same forever. God is doing a work inside of me and he's not going to quit until it's done."

You keep talking out loud. You become a preacher in your car. Tell the lie what's up. Put it in its place.

When you feel the lie that the worst of the worst is going to happen to you, you need to speak out loud, "No. I actually serve a God who calls himself a good father, and he's a good father who loves to give good gifts to his children, and that doesn't mean that everything's going to turn out perfect, but it does mean that he's going to be with me always and it does mean that he has a plan to prosper me, to give me a hope, to give me a future, that God has good things in store for me, that I can trust him. I can look to the future with great anticipation, not dread."

I'm telling you, when you get convinced of some lies and you start rejecting them... I had to straighten that up because that was bothering me. Some stuff just gets at me, man. We're talking about being on edge; when those lines aren't straight, I'm on edge! Back off!

When you get convinced of some lies and you start rejecting them and you start listening to God and talking to your lies and putting them in their place, you watch. Peace will follow. I'm not saying it's going to solve everything, but watch peace that transcends understanding, that you can't even truly explain, watch peace follow.

There are some times when it's not that. And I want to say this next one very carefully. I say this as someone who has personal experience. I'm not saying this about something I have not experienced. But this next one has been abused and misapplied oftentimes, so I want to be careful with it.

But oftentimes when you take your anxiety and your fears to God and you say, "God, why do I feel this way," it's not that you're being convinced of a lie, it's actually that you're being convicted of some truth.

I want to be very careful on this one though because I'm telling you, so many of us for so long have heard the message that you're anxious and depressed because there's sin in your life, and that was actually for many of us a lie that we were being convinced of and that wasn't true.

Just because it's been misapplied and abused doesn't mean that we should dismiss it entirely because what I've found is that sometimes when sin in our life goes unchecked and we are unrepentant and we do not address it, we do not confess it, it actually can have a physical effect on our bodies.

In Psalms chapter 38, King David, the most prominent character in the Old Testament, he actually speaks to this when he talks about his sin. He says this. I find this fascinating. He says, "Your arrows," God, "have struck deep and your blows are crushing me. Because of your anger, my whole body is sick;" and here it is. "My health is broken because of my sin. My guilt overwhelms me—it is a burden too heavy to bear." Have you ever felt that before?

"My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins. I am bent over and racked with pain. All day long I walk around filled with grief. A raging fever burns within me. My health is broken. I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart."

David had some sin in his life, some things he was being convicted of that needed to change and it was causing him to have such remorse. It was like a physical reaction. He was anxious! He was overwhelmed with it!

So many times when I'm meeting with people I'll sit there and listen to a person who looks like he's got his life all together and then I'll hear him talk and he's like, "Man, I'm just so miserable.

I know it all looks like I'm put together, but I'm anxious. I have no peace. I'm miserable. I hate my life. I hate my job. It's all going bad. I don't have any peace. I hate the way I feel."

Only to find out a little bit deeper in the conversation that he's neck deep in a porn addiction that's spanned multiple decades. It's like, "Man, yeah. You're not going to feel right. You keep walking through the mud like that and living so far from the life that God wants for you, it's going to hurt."

You keep hopping on the gossip train and talking about your coworkers and your friends and your family in a disparaging way, you're going to feel anxious. You keep cutting corners at work and cheating to get ahead, maybe cheating people out of some money or some promotions, yeah, you're not going to feel right when you lay your head on your pillow because God's trying to convict you of some things that need to change in your life.

So when we take our anxiety to God and he gently reveals this to us, the only thing that we have to do, and I know this is a word that a lot of people don't like, but I actually find it to be a beautiful word now, but the thing we need to do is we need to repent.

We need to look at that sin in our life and we need to express our remorse to God and then we need to do everything we can to walk away from it. You know, that's what the word repent means. This word has gotten such a bad wrap in our culture because of so many churches that have misused it. It's so associated with hatred of people.

The word *repent* means to turn and walk away. Turn and go in a different direction. God convicts you that something needs to change in your life and then you do everything you can to walk away from it, everything you can to build the boundaries in your life so that you never go back.

You take your sin and you drag it out into the light kicking and screaming and you confess it to a trusted brother or sister. And let me tell you, this is why I say repent is such a beautiful word, because when you do that, when you walk away from the sin in your life that you're being convicted of and you repent of it and you do everything you can to kill it—you confess it—you will experience freedom like you have never experienced before.

You will experience joy and hope and peace and life. You'll have a pep in your step. Man, you'll come in to worship like raising both hands, trying to raise your feet to worship. It's going to get crazy in here because the weight will be lifted off of you because you're starting to walk in the ways of the Lord.

That's what happens when God tells you, "Hey, I want something to change," and you react to it. That's why it's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing. It's the grace of God at work in your life. God loves you too much to let you stay there.

There's still one more, because sometimes it's not a lie that we're being convinced of, it's not a truth we're being convicted of, sometimes when we feel anxious and depressed, and this next one's so hard—it's not a fun one to talk about—sometimes what's happening in our lives when we feel anxious or fearful or depressed, we're not being convinced of a lie, we're not being convicted of a truth, we're being confronted by reality.

We're being confronted by something that... I mean, there's no easy explanation for it. It's just hard. Like cancer sucks. There's nothing else you can say about it. Betrayal is the worst. You didn't do anything to deserve it. Getting laid off at work, not because of poor performance but because of budget cuts—you didn't do anything to deserve that. It's just horrible. You didn't plan on that happening. It's just a reality of our broken world that you get confronted by.

Some of this stuff that God walks us through, I mean some of us are going to take our anxieties and walk it through and we're going to get confronted with the reality that we have some things within our minds and our bodies, some chemical imbalances that we need to get treated, and that's a reality that we could be confronted by and that's really tough. That hurts. It's just part of the fragile nature of our bodies.

On this side of eternity, this is the stuff we have to deal with, like death. I mean, suffering through the death of a loved one is a reality that you get confronted by and it is painful. Painful. When you've gone through stuff like this, you understand why King Solomon would write this in Ecclesiastes 3. He says there's a time for everything and he pairs all these good things that happen in life with all these bad things that happen in life.

In Ecclesiastes 3, he says this. He says, "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant," which is hard work and difficult, "and a time to harvest," which is awesome. "A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up." To cry, to laugh. To grieve, to dance. To scatter stones and gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to quit searching. A time to keep, to throw away, to tear, to mend, to be quiet, to speak, to love, to hate, a time for war, a time for peace.

There are just some things in life that are so awesome and they're so joy filled and they're incredible. It's like nothing could get you down in those moments because it's incredible! Life is awesome! And then there are some things in life that are just very, very difficult and it's just a reality you get confronted by and there's nothing you can do to change it. But that's why in those moments the thing that you can do, and the thing that is helpful, that leads to peace, is to remember the promises of God.

See, some of you all right now are going through some really, really difficult circumstances. Some of you right now are quite frankly just exhausted because of the life that you've had to walk through over this past season. And in the back of your mind, you've got this question, this fear, this anxiety of like, "Will I ever recover from this or will I always be this exhausted? Will I always be this hurt? Will I always be this sad?"

You're confronted by a tough reality; you didn't do anything to deserve that, but you need to remember the promises of God. You need to remember in Matthew 11 when Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I **will** give you rest." Not I might, not I'll try, I **will** give you rest. You will recover from what you're currently going through. It's a promise that God has given you. He's given you that, and you've got to remember it.

Some of you right now are facing some sickness in your family or personally, some death, some loss, some grief. That's a reality you're confronted by, but you need to remember Revelation 21 where he says there is coming a day when he will wipe away every tear from every eye. There will be no more sickness, no more sadness, no more death. All those things will be gone. It's a guarantee. It's a promise. What we're living through right now will not last forever.

Some of you right now are in the middle of circumstances that you can't logically solve on your own and how it's going to work out. You're looking to your future right now and you're super worried. You're worried about like how the money's going to work out. You're worried about how the whole family thing's going to work out. You're worried about your career, and you don't know what's going to happen.

In Romans 8, you need to remember that God has promised us that he will work **all** things together for the good of those who love him, that if you love him he's going to take your circumstances and he's going to work them together for your good. You can look to the future with confidence!

That's a tough reality to be confronted with, but you can remember that when life hits you like a ton of bricks, God says: I love you and I know this hurts, but I've been through a ton of hurt myself, God would say: I've lost a child before. I've watched children who I love walk away from me. I've endured all kinds of hardship, and I promise you right now, I promise you, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I will be with you to the end. And you need to remember that when life confronts you.

This is a path to peace right here. You take your anxiety, your fear, your depression, and you say, "God, help me. Wonderful counselor, help me understand why I'm feeling this way," and he either says: Hey, you're being convinced of some lies that you need to reject. Or you're being convicted of some truth, some sin in your life that you need to repent of. Or you're being confronted with a reality that I'm going to walk through with you. You need to remember my promises to you.

This is the path to peace. And it's not the path to peace because it's like Petie, brilliant brainchild, has solved peace. All who want peace come to Petie. No. It's because this is just hope. You know that, right? Like that's the word we're talking about. Hope.

There's hope if you'll walk away from your sin. God can lead you out of it. There's hope when you remember God's promises. He is not done. He is very much still at work, and he wins in the

end. And there is hope when you reject the lies of the enemy and you live in his truth. There is hope!

And man, hope is the word because so much of our mental health issues are a result of hopelessness. When you're anxious, when you're fearful, when you're afraid, it's because you don't have hope. That's why I just believe, man I believe so confidently, that right now the Church is poised to shine like never before.

You know that one in five Americans say that they struggle with mental health issues like depression and anxiety. So let me do the math for you. That's 65 million. There are 65 million people in our country who are looking for peace, who are looking for hope and they don't know where to turn.

That's what gives me so much confidence that God has the Church positioned for such a time as this. Because you want to know who's got the market cornered on hope? The Church. When Jesus walked out of a grave, a dead man came back to life. The worst circumstances, it was over. He said: No, it's not over. Trust me. There's hope.

Hope on that day received a name, the name of Jesus, and we've got the market cornered on it. We can share it with the world. We get to shine bright right now, I'm telling you. That's why I'm not afraid of depression anymore. I'm not afraid of anxiety. I have seen God do too much, and I believe he still has work to do. I believe there's still work to be done.

Can you imagine 65 million people coming to know Jesus all because the Church stood up and said, "Yep, we struggle too and we've found peace. We've found hope. And the path to peace, the path to hope runs through Jesus. Come and follow with us. Come and see with us." That's what I'm telling you right now.

No matter what campus you're at, if you struggle with mental health issues, we need to flip the script on this thing. I mean, for too long, when you find out that someone struggles with depression or anxiety, it's like, "Aw, poor him. What a victim." You know what? I'm kind of done with the victim mentality because I actually think that I'm poised and positioned for impact.

I think I'm poised and positioned because of my misery to do great ministry. I think there are people who need to hear the message of hope, so I'm saying right now, if you struggle, God wants to use you in that struggle. God wants to use you to impact people all across your neighborhood, all across your workplace. I'm telling you, we are the hope of the world because we've got Jesus.

So right now, I want to pray for us in that. I want to pray that God would use us. I want to pray a prayer of empowerment and courage over anyone who's struggling right now, so I want, at all of our campuses, all of our heads bowed, eyes closed.

And if you struggle with anxiety, depression, any sort of mental health issue, I just want you really quietly in your lap, just kind of open your hands up like you're about to receive something. I just want to pray that God gives you the courage and the strength to take this mess that you feel like you're in and to let him use it to be your message to the world that needs it.

Jesus, we love you, and we're so grateful for you. Jesus, if you never did another thing for us, we would have all we need in you, but we know that you want more for us, that you weren't just here to save us for all of eternity, that you actually want to give us peace that transcends all understanding and then you want to use us. You don't just want to give us peace for our benefit. You want to give us peace for the benefit of the world that needs you. So, God, we come before you now as a church fully surrendered, ready to be used by you.

God, I pray for everyone in the audience right now at every campus who's struggling with depression right now that you'd break those chains, who's struggling with anxiety that you'd break those chains. God, that you would help them to walk down a path toward a peace that transcends all understanding.

And then, God, send us out and use us. Help us to be ambassadors of hope in a world that desperately needs it. God, we need you to meet us in these moments and minister to our hearts. We love you, Jesus. And the church prays together. Amen.