
Thank you so much. Well, does anyone else feel like they need mosquito spray after watching that? I had the idea that we release mosquitos in the room during that video, but it got shot down.

What's up everybody? It's so good to see you. I want to welcome all our guests, all our first time visitors across our campuses. If we haven't had a chance to meet or if this is your first time, my name is Aaron and I get to be one of the pastors around here. I've been away over the last several weeks, as you've probably heard, on study break.

And really what that is, I kind of divided that time into thirds. A third of that time was spent with family. My wife Lindsay and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary, so that was very, very cool.

A portion of that time has been me taking the hours I normally spend during the week preparing the weekly message to pray, plan, and forecast out ahead. I've been able to get 90 percent of our message series planned out through next summer. So I'm just excited about where God is leading us in all of that.

And then about a third of the time I've been able to travel and visit some of our global partners around the world. What I want you to know is that you are a part of something much, much bigger than what you see in front of you.

Traders Point, by God's grace, we are able to reach out and partner with people all around the world. So I got a chance to visit with two of our partners. The first one is in Nairobi, Kenya. There is a great organization there called Missions of Hope. We've been working with them since 2008, and they are just doing an incredible thing working in one of the largest slums in the world—the Mathare Valley in Nairobi, Kenya.

What they do is they go in and provide education for children who would never receive an education. There is healthcare and they start churches. It's amazing what they do. And at the time we started working with them in 2008 they had about 1,000 children in schools across the Mathare Valley. Today they have over 18,000 children in schools. So it is amazing to see what is happening.

What our church has done, we went over there in 2008 kind of like on a vision trip. They took us to this area of the slums known as Bondeni. They said it was far too dangerous to get out of the car, they just drove through it. This was where they wanted to start a school. It was back in 2008.

We've sent some short term mission trip teams there over the years. A school got started and built up. Tragically a couple of years ago that school caught on fire and burned to the ground. And we ended up sending more resources for them to rebuild that school bigger and better. While I was over there last month there was a ribbon cutting for the new facility. We were able to come together and do all that.

I want to show you a picture of a young man we got to pray over. This young man is a student in that school we helped to build. He is a talented artist and he wants to go to Oxford to be an architect. It was just amazing to see the hope in his eyes. We were able to pray over him.

It was so moving to me to be able to be there because we could get out of the car and walk around freely. People in that area know our church name. They know who we are. It is amazing to see what God has done in and through that school.

This is a bit of a vision trip as well. We got on another plane and we went to the coast of Kenya to a place called Mombasa. Missions of Hope wants to expand out of Nairobi to other places around Kenya, and even other places in the continent of Africa.

So, we were able to go around and meet different villages of people who are asking us to come and help start a school and church for their community. We took a whole day to meet as many people as we could. I want to show you this short video clip of these people who have learned who our church is.

It was amazing to be able to go in and have some vision for where God is leading us as a church. We were able to scout around and see where short-term teams might stay if we go over to serve there. I want to place that in front of you. Maybe God is going to stir that in your heart already. I've had a few people after the earlier service say, "I want to go," so be looking for more information about this in the future as we continue to partner with them.

And then I got on a plane and flew up to Germany. There is a new church plant, about three years old, in East Germany that has gotten started. It's amazing what God is doing there. Did you know East Germany is one of the most atheistic regions on the face of the earth, right behind North Korea.

The average church size in Germany is 35 people. The irony of all that, if you know anything about church history, is East Germany is sort of where the reformation started. There is this church that got started there, and we've come along beside them in the last year to support them. I was so encouraged spending the weekend with them because they are so alive, so on fire.

They asked me five days before I got there if I would preach. I was like, "Alright," so we showed up to preach and I was able to share a message with them. They had over 600 people that Sunday and they are already multi-site. They were like, "By the way, today is

Baptism Sunday so could you preach towards baptism?" I was like, "How is this going to go with an interpreter?" By God's grace, 28 people got baptized that day and it was really incredible to see.

I brought a real quick video clip of one of the baptisms, and I want you to take a look at it. Isn't that incredible? It is amazing. Did you see the girl get hit? You didn't see that, it was awesome.

I would say the average age of the people in that church was about 25. It was amazing to see all the young people who were excited. I was the old man in the room. I didn't know how to feel about that. But there was a couple who were in their late 60s who were there. I had a chance to have a conversation with them. She spoke English, he didn't.

I was talking to them and they said, "We live about an hour away from here and we grew up in the Brethren Church. It is more of a traditional church background, but we've been coming here for the last couple of years."

I said, "Why are you coming here?"

They said, "We have been praying for decades that God would allow us to see revival in East Germany in our lifetime." And through tears they said, "It is happening. It is happening through all these young people, and we just want to come to encourage them."

I was so moved by that. So, both people in Kenya and Germany sent me back with a message for you. They just simply said, "Would you just thank your church for inspiring us and coming alongside of us." I want you to know you are a part of something much, much bigger than yourself. When you're on mission with us, and when you are generous around here it is making a global difference. I just want to thank you as a church as well.

It is really good to be back with you and we are in week two of this message series called *Summer in the Psalms*. If you missed it last week, go online and catch that message. Ryan did a great job communicating and getting us started in this series.

Today we are going to be in Psalms 139. So, if you have a Bible or a Bible App, go ahead and get there if you would. As you are finding that, one of the things I was reminded of as I was overseas is this experience I've had before. I'd imagine a number of you have had this experience as well.

How many of you have ever been overseas or been in a culture or environment in which you didn't speak the same language as the majority of the people in the room? Has anyone had that experience? A fair number of hands are going up. I hope you've had that experience. If you haven't yet, I hope you do one day soon because there are a whole bunch of things God wants to teach us through that.

While I was in Kenya and Germany I had that experience all over again. Not only was I in the room with people who primarily didn't speak my language, but I was asked to get up and address them and communicate with them. That can be a bit intimidating.

What I did in both settings is I would pull the interpreter aside before I would get in front of the people and say, "Hey, teach me a word or phrase in their language. I want the first words they hear me say to be in their language." I don't want to just stand up and speak English to them, I want to communicate in their language. That is the first thing I want them to hear.

They would teach me a word or a phrase, nothing overly complicated. Just something simple. I would memorize it, kind of get it down, make sure I had it right. So, I would stand up in front of this group of people—and this happened both in Kenya and in Germany. I would say a simple word or phrase like "hello" or "how are you" or whatever. It was amazing because that intangible but very real barrier that had existed before, all of the sudden it went away.

Like as soon as I said something they could understand in their language, a big smile came across their faces, people clapped and made eye contact with me. What was a barrier that existed between us before went away due to our common words through communication.

Now I would imagine that most of us, in all of our campuses, all of our rooms right now, know what it feels like to feel that very intangible, but real, barrier that exists between us and God. That barrier may range in intensity. Maybe some of us here today feel that barrier so thick that we don't even believe there is a God. Maybe others of us, some days we do believe but other days we don't. Those of us who do believe, maybe there're days when we feel distant and we feel like God is unresponsive to us.

The language, the communication that God invites us into that can remove that barrier between us him has a name. That language or communication is called prayer. I don't know about you, but I struggle with it. I know that might come as a surprise for many of you because you are like, "Man, you are a pastor. You should have a doctorate in prayer." I don't.

I've been following after Jesus for the better part of 26 years and I still feel like such a lightweight when it comes to prayer. I don't know if any of you can relate to my experience. I had a mentor tell me a long time ago, back when I was in college, he said, "Aaron, when you pray to God, don't just jump into this stuff you want. Start off with gratitude. Just thank him for who he is and what he has done."

I still remember that. I'll start off in prayer and I'll be like, "Thank you." And then very quickly I transition to, "Help me." And then after that my prayers just kind of trail off. I

fall into daydreaming, I get distracted and start to drift. Then I just feel defeated and then I'm just like, "I'm no good at this prayer thing.

Yet all of us feel drawn to prayer. One of the most fascinating studies I've ever read says that more people say they pray than believe in God. It's because there is this thing in all of us that when we're in a bind or when we're backed into a corner, our hearts are drawn toward God. We've been made in his image. We've been made to communicate with him.

There is a barrier that exists. If you're like me and pretty much everyone else you are sitting with today, you struggle with prayer. That's where the Book of Psalms can really be helpful.

Eugene Peterson says this in his introduction to the Book of Psalms, "Faced with the prospect of conversation with a holy God who speaks worlds into being, it's not surprising that we have trouble with prayer."

And what the Book of Psalms does is it helps us communicate with God. Psalms is really just a collection of prayers. Many of them are in the form of a song or poem. There are 150 of them. And for centuries the Book of Psalms has helped Christ followers learn how to pray.

The thing about Psalms is that when we read them in English, it seems very poetic and polished. And it is. I don't want to take anything away from it. But in its original language the Book of Psalms is very earthy and very raw. I like that because it basically is communicating what it means or what it feels like to be a human being.

Ryan pointed this out last week. Psalms is unique in the sense that most books in the Bible are God's words written to us. But Psalms is a human being's words written to God about what is going on inside of a human being. If you struggle with prayer and you're not sure what to say beyond thank you and help me, just begin to pray the Psalms. There are 150 of them, take your pick. And just begin to read one out loud and turn it into a prayer.

Let me give you one more quote from Peterson: "Prayer is the means by which our language becomes honest, true, and personal in response to God."

With that introduction, let me read the first seven verses of our Psalm today – Psalm 139. Listen as the psalmist writes these very real words.

"O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me." Now depending upon what's going on in here, that's either a good thing or a bad thing. "You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of

blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," in other words, "I'm having a hard time even grasping this. It's *"too great for me to understand. I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!"*

The psalmist is saying God: you know every single thing there is to know about me. Now in most instances that is sort of an intimidating thing. Imagine if someone came up to you later today and they walked right up to you and looked at you and leaned forward and said this. "I know everything about you. I know what you do when you don't think anyone else is watching. I've seen you in your hotel room on that business trip."

Aside from being super creepy, the very next thing I'm thinking is this... Here is the thing. If somebody comes up and says that to me, I'm not expecting to be encouraged. Are you? I'm not expecting them to go, "I know everything about you and I just want you to know you're a swell individual." I don't think that's going to be the next thing that comes out of their mouth.

I'm expecting to be embarrassed. I'm expecting to be humiliated. If somebody comes up to me and says, "I know everything about you," immediately that is enough to strike fear in my heart. "What do you know?"

This is what the psalmist says: God, you know everything about me. The Message paraphrases one of these verses this way, *"God, investigate my life. I'm an open book to you."*

Here are what verses 1-7 are. Verses 1-7 are an invitation into authenticity. If I could define authenticity I might say it this way.

Authenticity is coming clean *before* being found out. And it's always better to come clean than to be found out. There still might be consequences, but it's still better than condemnation. And with what the psalmist just said, there is no way I am expecting for him to say what he writes in verses 17 and following.

"How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!"

Let that land on your heart for just a second. He knows every single thought you've had. He knows every single thing you've done. Who else in your life knows everything? And instead of being annoyed with you, irritated with you, or angry with you, it says God thoughts are precious toward you. Somebody needs to hear that today because you've never heard that. And if you have, you don't believe it.

But you need to let it land on your heart. "God, your thoughts are precious to me. They can't even be numbered. I can't even count the number of grains of sands. When I wake

up, you are still with me. You've not abandoned me. You've not walked out on me. Other people may have, but you haven't."

I don't know about you but this is totally unnatural for so many of us. Because when we are hurt, offended, wounded by other people, our natural reaction is to get even with them. And even if we never do it externally, we do it internally. How many of you have ever been hurt or wounded by someone else, offended by them? And your thoughts could be described as precious towards them? Not me.

When someone has really hurt me, wounded me, or offended me in some way and I don't know, maybe it could be a conversation, a phone call, an email, or something on social media. I read it and I want to lash out but I can't really say back to them on social media what I really want to say, because I'm the lead pastor.

I just am sort of like wrestling with all that. I'll tell you what I do is oftentimes I'll tell them what I think, I'll tell them off. I just tell them in my car, by myself, on the way home. Have any of you ever done that? I'll just turn on some really aggressive music—it's Christian Rock so it's okay. And I just turn it on and I'm like, "RAH," all venting and frustrated. And it very rarely gives me the kind of satisfaction I want.

I'll tell you this. Hardly ever are my thoughts, "I just think such precious thoughts for them." I just don't do that. And it says here we offended God due to our sin. There is this barrier that exists between us and him. And when he thinks of you, even in your worst moment, his thoughts are compassion. His thoughts are precious toward you and me. And when we are fully able to accept and embrace this truth. Then we can go on and pray in verses 23-24. Look at them with me.

"Search me, O God," and that's a dangerous prayer. When was the last time you said, "God, search me. Is there anything in me I don't see that you need to make me aware of?" *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."*

Now what's amazing about this is this psalm was written hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of years ago, yet it is so relevant to where we live today. The author of the psalms addresses anxiety. And he says anxiety begins and wreaks havoc in our thoughts. And I don't think I have to spend very much time convincing you that anxiety is a thing. It's a very real thing today, more so than I can remember.

Did you know anxiety is the number one health issues for women today? It's the number two issue for men, right behind drugs and alcohol. That we spend something like \$48 billion a year in this country treating anxiety related issues? One in five adults say anxiety is not just a passing thing but it is keeping them from living the life they want to live—one in five adults. So that means if you don't struggle with it chances are you know several people who do.

One of the most startling statistics for me is the cases of anxiety have increased by 1,200 percent since 1990. One of the things we've got to ask ourselves is, "What is going on? Why is it we are becoming more and more anxious?"

We live in a world today that, we could argue, has never been safer. We live in a world where technology has never been more advanced. We're actually eating healthier than we've ever eaten before. We're living longer than we've ever lived before. And yet we have never been more anxious.

Surveys have shown that people who move to the United States from developing nations where they don't have as much as we do, financially or materially, when they move to the United States their anxiety level increases.

When they do global surveys, guess which nation comes back as the number one anxious nation in the world? Any guesses? Say it out loud if you think you know it—Switzerland. No, it's not! I don't know if I've ever met an anxious Swiss person. No, it's us! It's us! That's a big surprise. We are winning with worry. How American.

So, what's going on? There are a whole lot of things we can say about this. I don't want to oversimplify it. But I do want to make this one point. At least one stream of anxiety, a cause of it according to Psalm 139 is that anxiety comes from and is fed by two things—a fear of the unknown, and a fear of not being fully known.

It's like a fear of, "I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, and that's paralyzing me because I see all this bad stuff going on." And then at the same time, "Does anybody really know me? I feel all alone. I feel like I am the only one wrestling with this." If you take those two things and you link them together it is a recipe for crippling anxiety.

We've all got these devices in our pockets or our purses that are constantly beeping or chirping, telling us what is going on around the world that is frightening. It used to be you had to wait for the nightly news or the morning paper to read about that stuff. Now it is instant and constant.

Those same devices are linked up to social media and watching what other people are doing. The strange effect of social media is we've never felt more isolated. And you take those two things of crippling fear and the unknown, and that sort of lonely fear of not being known, and it breeds anxiety in our minds.

You see, I believe anxiety is the result of Psalm 139:1-7 without receiving the truth of verses 17 and following. You see, fear sees a threat and reacts. There are lots of things we are afraid of. Actually, fear is a good thing. Fear protects us. We can either fight it or flight it. Here is the way anxiety becomes destructive. Anxiety imagines a threat, and then I really can't move on.

One person described anxiety as a tidal wave of what-ifs. It's like fear where the on-off switch is broken, and it's constant all the time. We've got to figure out what to do about our fear before it becomes anxiety.

Several years ago, I took my daughter, and she was 11 at the time, to Cape Town, South Africa with me on a mission trip. It was just the two of us there. We were in one of the villages working all day long, and they said, "We are going to bring you a meal. We've hired somebody from the community to prepare a meal and bring it to you." At the end of the day we're waiting inside the building for the food to be served. One hour turned into an hour and a half, an hour and a half turned into two hours. We're just waiting, waiting, waiting.

I could tell there was something wrong but they didn't necessarily want to tell me, which is never a good thing. Eventually they came up to me and said, "Well, we hired a lady in the community to prepare a meal for you, but we found out she is a witch." I was like, "That's not a very nice thing to say."

"No, she's a literal witch, like potions and all that."

I was like, "They exist?" Apparently, they do. And they said, "She is a witch and she found out she was preparing a meal for a pastor from the states, and she was trying to poison your food." Yeah.

I'm just curious. How many of you have almost been poisoned by a witch? Anybody? I think I've got that one locked down. It's frightening, and I feel so alone. That's a legitimate fear. I think that qualifies as a category of something to be afraid of.

Then I very quickly have to do something with that fear. It was easy for me to sit in that fear. Then my thoughts started to run wild. I've got my daughter with me and if I would have been poisoned she would have been poisoned. What other threats are out there? Is there going to be a group of men who run up in a van and steal her away?

It was like all of a sudden it was robbing me of joy. It was robbing me of being fully present with the people we were there to minister to. I had to do something with that fear in the moment, or it was going to become crippling anxiety. And this happens to us on a daily basis.

Did you know that fear is not a bad thing, but Jesus tells us we need to do something with our fear? He said, "In this world you will have trouble." Translation – lots of things to be fearful of. But then he said, "Put your trust in me." That's what faith is. Listen to me. Faith is not pie-in-the-sky, rainbows-and-unicorns, everything will be okay believing in the invisible God in the sky. Faith is taking your fear and placing it upon the person of Jesus Christ. Like, "Instead of being crippled in fear, I'm going to place my trust in you."

I like how Skip Heitzig puts it, “If you don’t live with an anchor of faith, you will drift in a sea of anxiety.”

Never once did Jesus say: Come and put your certainty in me, and then come and follow me. He says: Come and put your faith... meaning there will still be doubts, there will still be questions, there will still be concerns but put your trust in me.

What Psalm 139 does for us, what Psalm 39 invites us to do is something I think is long overdue for many of us. Psalm 139 invites us to come as we are, to not pretend to be something we are not. To not say what we think God wants us to say, or what other people want to hear. It’s to come to God just as we are and to know we are fully known by him, and at the same time fully loved.

And there is nothing better than that. To be fully known where I don’t have to hide, conceal, pretend, and at the same time to be fully loved. And when I come to realize that significant truth, here is what Psalm 139 does. It says: Come and rest. Just come and rest.

We are such an anxious nation because we don’t know how to rest. I’m not just talking about the quality of sleep you get at night, I’m talking about the condition of your soul. I’m talking about what is going on inside your mind. Once we get to that place where we don’t have to pretend anymore, we can come to God fully as we are, knowing we will be fully loved.

Then we can pray with confidence verse 24, “Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”

When was the last time you prayed that? I’ve got to be honest. For me, it’s been a while. You see, we can come to this peace of mind knowing where we stand with God, knowing his thoughts are precious for us, that we can actually have the confidence to say, “God, because I know you are the God who wants the best for me, please point out anything that offends you because I want to grow. I don’t want to be the same tomorrow as I am today.”

Then he says, “Lead me along the path of everlasting life.” You see, the goal of all of this is growth. This is the recipe for spiritual growth. To come to know and understand who God is, to come to know and understand how he receives us when we come to him is to recognize that Jesus has already nailed your shame, your condemnation, on a cross. You don’t need to keep crucifying yourself over and over again.

Listen, Jesus didn’t just go to a cross to get you into heaven. Jesus went to a cross to get more of his character into you. That’s what this path he is talking about is. He is talking about the path of spiritual growth. What we want as a church for you is, we want to introduce you to who Jesus is.

I don't want you to become a religious person. Religion is all of our manmade efforts to get to God. The gospel is all God's efforts to get to us. And I want to introduce you to the person of Jesus who receives you as you are, loves you as you are, and wants to make you brand new.

And then, and then, he puts you on the path the psalmist talks about. This path is spiritual growth. Maybe a little bit fancier word for that is spiritual formation. And all that it is is that every single day I'm going to exchange my fears for faith. Every single day I'm going to get up and know where I stand with God because of Jesus.

I'm going to pray, "God, search my heart. Is there anything in me that is holding me back?" Spiritual growth is never up and to the right. Spiritual growth is like this. Spiritual growth is back and forth, and many of us we get so low during the lows of spiritual growth or we get so set back when we feel like we've taken several steps backwards, we assume this isn't working. My faith has plateaued. I don't even know if God exists anymore.

And really what it is that he has got you in a valley where he wants you to cry out so he can do some of his best heart-shaping work. And when you pray, "God search me. Is there anything within me?" The next thing you've got to do is listen, because he will tell you. I'm speaking from experience.

How many of you have ever had someone in your life, maybe it's a co-worker or a family member, they've asked you for some honest feedback? And then you give it to them, and they don't like it? And then they become defensive or cut you off. And then what's likely to happen? If they ever ask you for feedback again are you going to give it to them? Probably not.

We've got to ask for feedback from God, "God, search me," and then by his spirit when he whispers it to you, receive it. Don't make excuses. Don't bat it away. All this battle begins in our minds.

I want to wrap up by reading a passage in the New Testament that I think really compliments what the psalmist is saying in Psalm 139.

Some of us should commit Philippians 4:6-9 to memory. Paul writes these words to a church in Philippi. "*Don't WORRY about anything;*" anything. How many of you have had someone say that to you? Isn't it so annoying? Don't worry about that. It's easy for you to say, you don't have my problems.

But here he actually tells us what to do instead of worry. He says, "*Instead, PRAY about everything. TELL God what you need, and THANK him for all he has done. Then you will EXPERIENCE God's peace,*" not just know about it, but experience it, "*which exceeds anything we can understand.*"

“His peace will GUARD your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your THOUGHTS on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. THINK about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into PRACTICE”, that’s practical application, “all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of PEACE will be WITH you.”

He is the God of peace.

Here is the question I have for me and for all of you. If he is the God of peace, why is anxiety increasing? And I just wonder if it’s because we fear everything else except for him, that we’ve pushed him out of the equation? And God wants to come back in, beginning with our thoughts.

I want to give you a simple little acronym here to help guide you in your conversation with God, that thing we call prayer. Just the acronym CALM. You might write this down. It might be helpful for some of you, not all of you but some of you.

Cry out
Ask
List
Meditate

Some of you simply need to cry out to God and tell him what it is you are wrestling with. Some of you are like, “I’ve done that.” Well, move on to the next one. The next one is: ask. Just ask him for what you need, go big. Say, “God, I really need you to come through in this way.”

And then L stands for list. This is what we often forget. Look back to your past and list all the ways God has come through for you in the past, and thank him for it. And then M stands for meditate. That’s more than how our culture uses the term meditate.

Oftentimes, in our society, when we talk about meditation we talk about an emptying of ourselves. You need to get out in nature, empty yourself. Meditate is not just emptying yourself. You need to fill yourself with what Paul writes is, “Good, right, and true.”

I’m a visual learner. Maybe some of you are visual learners like me, and this might be helpful for some of you today. Let’s just imagine this glass container represents your mind. All day long there are threats that creep in, lots of what-ifs. It’s like, “What if the doctor calls and I get bad news? What if that relationship falls apart? What if we find ourselves in real financial trouble? What if I can’t get past this crippling anxiety?”

It fills our mind to the brim. These are anxious, negative thoughts. Most of our society now a days says, “You need to meditate. You need to empty yourself. Get alone, get up

on a mountain somewhere, go to a beach and get all that negative thought out of there and empty your mind.”

I would say if you just empty your mind, you are left with that. What’s so inspiring about that? You see, Paul says in Philippians: Don’t just empty yourself. Fill your mind with what is good, right, true, and trustworthy. Spend time with God crying out to him. Spend time in his word. Fill your mind as much as you can, even if you don’t feel like it, with who God says you are. Fill your mind with what is good, right and true.

You can’t control the negativity that’s going to come in. There are going to be anxious thoughts and negativity that come in. But when they do, there is no where for them to go. They will continue to pour in, but you’re like, “I’ve already filled myself up with what is good, right, and true.”

The only way to get rid of that stuff that isn’t good, right, and true is to fill your mind with what is so there isn’t room left for what isn’t.

I’m not trying to oversimplify it. You can’t control every thought that FLIES into your mind, but you can control which ones you allow to LAND upon your heart. And that’s what the psalmist is saying. Remember who you are, and remember who God is. And right now, God looks upon you with compassion.

For the longest time, I thought God loved me but he was annoyed with me because I can’t seem to get things right. But God looks upon you with compassion. His thoughts are precious towards you.

That should give you the confidence to say, “God, I’m going to come to you just as I am. I’m going to reveal everything that’s within me. Would you walk with me through this into this journey of authenticity in Christ’s likeness?”

Let’s pray together.

Father, we come to you today and I pray that in these next few moments your Spirit would speak to our hearts and minds. I know, if the statistics are anywhere near being true, that a significant number of people listening to this right now have anxiety that is keeping them from living the life they want to live.

So, I pray today that you would help us to exchange our fears for faith. That we would understand what that is, and what it means, and what it doesn’t mean. That we would simply begin to put our trust in you and who you say we are.

Help us to fix our thoughts on what is good, right, and true. So that way, when the anxious thoughts come in, there is no room for them to go because we’ve already filled our minds up with what is true.

Father, meet us in this place, meet us in this space and do a work within each one of us.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.