

Series: Peace of Mind
The Most Dangerous Myths of Mental Health
1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24

Big Idea – God cares about every part of your life and being.

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

What do the names Andrew Stoecklein, Jarrid Wilson and Darrin Patrick have in common? All three were pastors who committed suicide in the last 3 years. These are only the tip of the iceberg. In a study co-sponsored by Lifeway and Focus on the Family, pastors reported mental illness rates similar to the general population. According to the study, “about a quarter of pastors (23 percent), say they’ve experienced some kind of mental illness, while 12 percent say they received a diagnosis for a mental health condition.” I’ve read the testimonies of too many pastors and leaders who said, “I needed help and I was too embarrassed to admit it.”

some here today that can relate right now.

outwardly, you're still showing up , still smiling, still trying to do your job.

inwardly, you're battling real depression, or some kind of chronic anxiety.

Or just feel stressed. There's just too much. Like you just can't handle it all. Like you might just snap. You might just burn out.

If you ever find yourself struggling mentally, you're not alone, and that’s what we're going to talk about.

talk about mental health - new series called Peace of Mind.

Today build a foundation: “The Most Dangerous Myths of Mental Health.”

May God Himself, may our Heavenly Father, the one who loves you, who is called according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The God of peace. May the God of peace sanctify you, cleanse you, change you, through and through, through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and scripture promises that He will do it. May the God of peace bring healing.

Would you look at the person sitting next to you and just tell them right now, tell them “God is my peace,” tell them “God is my peace.”

Look on your other side. say, "He's your peace too." Go ahead and tell them that right now. "He's your peace too."

God is my peace. God is my peace. glad things are starting to improve in church world. people said that the church shouldn't talk about mental health. It was kind of something like it was somebody else's problem and it's not something we're going to talk about in the church.

Implication be that you shouldn't struggle mentally because if you're someone that comes to Jesus, then Jesus fixes everything.

Moment you come to Jesus, you know, "He's going to... save ya! You know? He's going to redeem your soul! He's going to fill you with Holy Ghost power and He's going to work... He's going to work in all things to bring about good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose."

That's all true. He saves you. He forgives you. He redeems you. He fills you with His power. He'll never leave you. And everything does work together for good.

All that's true, but it's incomplete.

And what I'm about to say is going to freak some people out but it's true. Just because Jesus saves you, doesn't mean He fixes every area of your life instantly.

Just because your sins are forgiven. I've never heard anyone say like, you know, I was reading the Bible and I called on Jesus and He saved me. And all of a sudden, I had abs. I've never, like... You know, praise the Lord. Here's my spiritual six-pack. I've never seen that happen before. You know, I came to the altar, I was crying, I gave my life to Jesus and my credit score improved. My hair got thicker. My thighs got thinner. #Blessed. I've never heard that.

In other words, just because you come to Jesus, it doesn't mean that now your boss is nice to you, or your bank account just instantly went up.

Or when you came to Jesus, it doesn't mean that you instantly became mentally healthy.

When we talk about mental health, you might say, what are we talking about? I'm not an expert, but I have read a lot of books and have even gone to a number of different Christian counselors.

So let's acknowledge what mental health actually is.

Mental health includes at least three things: your emotional, your psychological, and your social wellbeing.

Important to know because our mental health, is not static. Meaning you can be really healthy for a little while and then something happens or you have a change in your body, or you go

through trauma, and you may be really healthy one moment and then you may be in a very bad place afterwards.

mental health, actually impacts how you think, which impacts how you feel and then impacts how you act.

Your mental health determines how you handle stress around you or how you relate to people, or how you make choices or how you bounce back from a difficult situation or how you don't bounce back.

Your mental health might determine how you cope if you go to the wrong sources for comfort, or if you make the right choices. It might determine even how you choose your friends or the quality or the not so quality of your marriage. And there are so many misunderstandings when it comes to mental health.

I wanted to build a foundation today, and then we're going to build on top of it.

2 two mental health myths that I've noticed most in the church today.

a lot of Christians believe that

Myth #1: Christians shouldn't struggle with mental health.

if you're a Christian, because you're filled with the Holy Spirit, because you've been saved, you shouldn't battle with anxiety or you really shouldn't be depressed or you shouldn't be burned out.

And if you do struggle with one of these things, then it's probably your fault.

In other words, you don't have enough faith or you're not praying enough. Or if you are praying a lot, you're not praying right.

Or there's some kind of a sin in your life that you need to confess and get out of your life. And if you get that sin out of your life, then you're not going to be anxious or you're not going to be overwhelmed or you're not going to be burned out or you're not going to be struggling.

What I want to do is show you that you can love Jesus and still fight depression.

You can be in the word. You can have the longest Bible streak in the YouVersion Bible app of anybody and still battle with anxiety.

You can attend church faithfully and sit on the front row and lift your hands for worship and tithe and serve and still struggle to overcome trauma.

Matter of fact, some of the people that we preach about as heroes, the ones we look up to, the ones that are the heroes and the fathers and the mothers of the faith - with all their faith, they still had bouts with mental challenges.

Take Elijah for example. I mean, think about this guy. This guy, he's cocky, man. I mean, he stands down 800 false prophets of Baal and he calls down fire from heaven one day. And shortly after, he's all alone, depressed, and he wants to die.

David, a man after God's own heart who stands down the giant says, "Who are you to come against the armies of the living God?" And he battles with deep despair, wondering if God has abandoned him.

Jeremiah. I don't want to be Jeremiah 'cause he's called the weeping prophet. I want to be the bold prophet, the confident, strong prophet and the prophet of God who declared God's truth. Battled with loneliness, insecurity, and he cursed the day that he was born. And so, if you find yourself like so many people today, you're struggling in your mental health and you don't know what to do.

The message sometimes in the church is you just need more of God. You just need more of God. You just need more of God. You just need more of God.

And I came to tell you that you do need more of God and you also might need more sleep. Is that unspiritual? God designed us to sleep, to rest every day, and 1 day every week.

You might need better friends. You're not in a small group. And you wonder why you feel alone and disconnected and don't have people standing by you and praying for you. How in the world do you think you're going to stand strong against the forces of darkness when you don't have friends of life standing nearby? We want to take a holistic approach, and I don't necessarily mean like holistic medicine. I'm talking about our whole body's connected.

Like you might need a better diet. You might need to go to a doctor and you might be having some hormonal changes. You might need to do some deep therapy or whatever the case would be. If you're struggling, and so many people are, I don't know if I can make it. I feel anxious. I feel depressed and I don't know why. And I'm praying and I'm trying and I'm going to church and I'm seeking God and I'm trying to do better, and I still just can't seem to make it. If you're struggling, it doesn't mean you're not a good Christian. It means you're human. It means you're human. And there's a myth. And it's a lot of time, you'll see it around the church that as Christians, we should not struggle with mental health.

And there's another myth in your notes and that is a lot of people say, well,

Myth #2: God doesn't care about your mental health.

He doesn't really care about that.

He's too busy. He's got bigger problems. Have you seen what's going on in the world today? You think God has the time to deal with you trying to handle your freaky in-laws or whatever? He ain't got time for that. But when you look at scripture, especially the Psalms. Does anybody love the Psalms? Anybody love the Psalms? When you look at the Psalms, you're going to see just how much God cares about every area of your life. I love the Psalm. I'll share just a few of them with you. Just to quote them.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. He saves those who are crushed in spirit. God is our refuge and our strength. He's our ever present help in a time of trouble. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me, your rod and your staff. They comfort me. You will prepare for me a table in the presence of my enemies, and your mercy and goodness will follow me all the days.”

The Lord cares about you. He cares about you. Go to the Psalms to see how much He cares about you and go to the Psalms to see some people breaking down mentally. There's a lot of Psalms that you might want to put on your coffee mug, and I'm going to show you one you don't. It's Psalm 88 which was written by a guy named Heman.

In the Bible, Heman is the guy that you wanted in your life. He was well respected. He was the one that everybody looked up to. And I want to show you just some of the qualities we know about Heman from scripture.

Writer of Psalm 88, Heman, known for ...

- Great wisdom (1 Kings 4:31)
- Musical ability (1 Chronicles 6:33, 16:41-42)
- Committed parenting (1 Chronicles 25:5-6)
- Service to king (1 Chronicles 25:6)

He had great wisdom. Very, very wise wisdom from the Lord. He was a talented musician. He was one of the worshipers and had incredible musical ability. He had a lot of kids and the implication is that he was a committed parent, very committed in his parenting. And he was very, very faithful in his service to the king. This was a man of God. This would've been the deacon at the church. This would've been the guy at work that you go to for advice. This is the guy you want for your father-in-law or your dad. This is a man of God. And I want to show you what he said in Psalm 88, and I'll give you a little spoiler alert. This is one of only two Psalms in all the Psalms that don't have a positive ending.

A lot of times, people whine and cry and complain. And then they say, “but the Lord is faithful.” And this man of God says this. And I wonder how many of you might be able to relate. He says, "I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I'm counted among those who've gone down to the pit. I'm like one without any strength left. I'm

set apart with the dead like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more. God, You've forgotten me. I feel like I'm cut off from Your care."

And then we're going to see something that he gets right. And what I want to tell you is what he gets right, is the very same thing that you get right. Because in the middle of his darkness, in the middle of his despair, he continues to turn from God just like you might be doing today. The very thought that you may be hurting and feel desperate and you've shown up for church, or you've watched online, tells you that somewhere buried in there in the middle of the darkness, you're still turning toward the light.

And he did the very same thing right that you're doing at this moment. He says, "But I cry to you for help, Lord. In the morning, my prayer comes before you." You're the first place I turn. And even though he's crying out to God, he's not finding the peace that he wants. And he says, "Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?" And the last verse of Psalm 88 is haunting. He says, "You've taken from me my friend and neighbor, darkness is my closest friend." Darkness is my closest friend.

This guy loved God. He's a man of God. And this is in the Bible. This is in the Psalms. And I love that it's there with no positive ending because it shows that God is not afraid of our honesty, that he cares that you may love him and you may question him, and you may worship him and you may hurt. And when you hurt, he cares. Darkness is my closest friend.

"I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death.⁴ I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength.⁵ I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care. ...¹³ But I cry to you for help, LORD; in the morning my prayer comes before you.¹⁴ Why, LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me? ...¹⁸ You have taken from me friend and neighbor—darkness is my closest friend."

Psalm 88:3-5, 13-14, 18

Getting help isn't a sign of weakness. It's a sign of wisdom.

I want to say it again. I want you to hear it. Getting help, it's not like you're weak, you're dumb, you're bad. It's wise.

What is the greatest command? What is it? Well, Jesus said this. He said, "Love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your," what? With all your- - Mind. - With all your mind.

"Are you loving God with all your heart?" I said, "Yes." Are you loving God with all your soul? Yes. He goes, "Are you loving God with all your mind?" Interesting. How do you love God with your mind?

Let's think about it. Your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts. Let's talk about the brain for a moment. The brain is actually built over time and it starts at birth and then it starts to evolve. And what happens is the brain makes all of these connections, connections, connections, connections. Simple connections that are called neural pathways. And for the first few years of your life, how many neural pathways is your brain making? About one million or so connections every second. Every second, your brain's making a connection, a connection, a connection. And then after a while, the brain starts to learn and the connections are simplified through a process called pruning. What happens? Your brain gets more efficient and it starts to think in patterns. In other words, once you think a thought, it's easier to think that thought again. It's like a mental rut or a pathway that's easier to continue to think those thoughts. And that's good news if your thoughts are healthy.

That's bad news when your thoughts aren't. So if your body's not healthy, what do you do? You go to a doctor. You might change your diet. You might exercise. You might get treatment for where your body is unhealthy. So if your mind is unhealthy, what do you do? You might go to a doctor like I did. You might go to the great physician who helps to renew your mind.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37

One verse I want to share you that can start to help you disconnect your mind from the wrong thing and connect it to the right thing. If you want peace of mind, here's the foundation. We'll start here today.

Isaiah 26:3. Scripture says this, watch this. You'll be kept in perfect peace all who trust in you, all who's what? Watch this. All whose thoughts God are fixed on you.

I love this. You'll be kept in perfect peace. Perfect peace. Perfect peace. Not just occasional peace when everything's going the way you want it. Not just momentary peace when you feel good in the moment. Not just circumstantial peace. But you'll be kept in perfect peace. What is perfect peace? I love it in the Hebrew language, perfect peace is actually a translation from Shalom.

Two times, Shalom is peace. the author doesn't say Shalom, but he says Shalom, Shalom. Any time you see a word repeated in the Hebrew, it's for incredible emphasis. It's like Shalom exponential.

like what you do if your kids are acting up, you repeat it. Like you're driving along. Don't make me come back. Don't make me come back there. And then once you get wisdom, you don't even speak, you just swat. How many know what I'm talking about? So you repeat something for emphasis. And the author says you will experience Shalom, Shalom. Who will experience it?

Those whose thoughts are fixed on CNN News! Oh, wrong party. On Fox News! wrong again. And those who are just sitting there scrolling through social media all day long. Are those whose minds are fixed on church for the word? No, no, no, no. You'll keep in perfect peace all whose thoughts are fixed on you.

Hebrew word translated fixed is the word "samak"

word, it actually means to prop. It means to rest your full weight on an object. It is to rest your full weight.

If you're like so many people right now, and you're just not doing great, there's tension, there's heaviness. You're worried about all kind of stuff. You don't know where to turn. You don't like your job. You're not really liking people around you. You're just not okay.

One of the things we need to do is disconnect our minds from what is unhelpful.

And we don't just fix our thoughts on what's helpful, we fix our thoughts on God, on God, on God, on God.

And we start to create new neural pathways, that's science. Romans 12:2 says we renew our mind, do not be conformed to what everybody else is doing. The craziness, the toxicity, the hatefulness, the bitterness, the negativity. Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed, how, by the renewing of your mind.

So I disconnect my mind and I started to connect it to one spiritual truth like this great verse, 2 Peter 1:3. This verse talks about God's power. It's His divine power. It's God's power. It's not my power. It's His power. It's not my power. It's His power has given us everything, not just part of it, but everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him. It's His power. And again and again, I fix my mind on His word. And again and again. And so, instead of saying like, I can't, and this is too much, and this is going to kill me, and I'm never going to get it all done, and nobody understands, and nobody cares. Instead what we say is that God is my source and my strength. I have everything I need to do everything He called me to do. God is my source. God is my strength. It's Him. It's His power. It's not mine. It's God, it's God, it's God's. According to scripture, He's given me everything, everything I need, the people I need, the resources I need, the friends I need, the counselor I need, the strength I need. His word, the energy, the power, the mental health. He's given me everything I need over and over and over and over and over again. And you'll be kept in perfect peace those who thoughts are fixed on you.

So start changing thought patterns and you're healed instantly? You wish. No, it's not instant.

Our spiritual enemy is attacking everywhere. Christians are pointing the fingers at each other, like the wrong, not believing the best motives, criticizing on, on, on, on, on. And people just aren't doing well right now. And you can be kept in perfect peace if your thoughts are fixed on Him.

Next week, we're going to talk about anxiety. The week after that, we're going to talk about depression. The week after that, we're going to talk about worry. The week after that, if I haven't got you yet, I'm coming for you. We're talking about chronic negativity. Seeing the world through a negative lens. We're going to talk about trauma and deep pain and deep healing. And then we're going to talk about burnout, and where do we go?

And we're going to live out the promises of Jesus. When He said this, He said, "Peace, I leave with you." And watch this, He said, "My peace. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives." I love this. He said, "**My peace.**" Not a peace, but my peace. And when did Jesus say He gives His peace? It's interesting. In John 14, He said He gives His peace the night before His suffering, the night before He faced the worst physical agony possible to show us perhaps that real peace, perfect peace, isn't found in the absence of problems. But real peace is found in the presence of God. It's Shalom, Shalom.

It's peace even when you hear bad news. It's peace even when you lose your job. It's peace when your marriage is struggling. It's peace when your kids are making decisions that are wrecking you in your heart. It's peace when you're hurt by those that you love the most. It's peace when money is tight. It's Shalom, Shalom. It is a peace from God.

The world can't give it and the world can't take it away. And God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. May the God of peace sanctify your soul through and through. He cares. He is here. He's faithful. He will do it.

So, Father, we pray by the power of Your spirit, that You would do a healing work. As you're reflecting wherever you're watching today, those of you who would say, I want to learn to love God with my mind. I need some help in my mind. Would you lift your hands right now? Lift em up, lift em up. Let's just go there. Let's just go there. God, thank You for honesty today. Thank You for Your presence. Help us, God, to fix our thoughts on You. Train our brains to be renewed with Your truth. God bring healing to those who are hurting, either instantly in the moment or in a journey as You guide us. You are the source of all that we need, and we look to You. As you keep praying today, some of you, spiritually, you don't know where you stand right now. Step away from your sin. Call on Jesus when you do. He forgives all of your sins. He makes you brand new. The weight is gone. There is a peace from heaven. It is not a peace of this world. It's a peace this world cannot take away. Wherever you're watching from those today to say, I need that. I need His grace. I need His forgiveness. We're stepping away from the old life. We're stepping towards Jesus. We're giving Him all. He hears our prayers.

Start the *Wisdom for Mental Health* Bible Plan on YouVersion Bible app or www.go2.lc/mentalhealthplan

