

Loving God with Your Mind

Psalm 13

Pastor Kyle Parks

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*We are living in anxiety-inducing times...

-scrolling headline for 2 minutes brought tears to my eyes

Indian plane crash, war in the middle east, school shootings, LA riots, political unrest, political violence, (loss in our own community, church family)

Age of information:

before it could be weeks or months before a cross-cultural headline hit us (or never hear of it) now in real time

we were never meant to be omniscient

-the last thing we want is to become so apathetic or so cynical that we are no longer moved by anything

increasing restlessness - Why? How? life is easier, more advanced tech, medicine, psychology, AI, etc.

shouldn't life be getting better for people?

dissatisfied

anxious

depressed (blown up in the last 15 years)

combine all this with the godlessness of our secular age

Hopelessness

*illustration - texts from a former student

"I've been having a really tough time the past few years with how much things have changed. Like I feel like I don't know who I am, or what I want in life, and don't even know how I ended up where I'm living now. But it gives me anxiety for some reason...I guess I've been trying to figure out if we were actually created by God by doing things my own way...I honestly long for the times we had at the church youth group where I felt like I had a big family that cared about me and I actually felt like I knew who I was and didn't have all these restless, anxious, directionless, drifting through life feelings...I really miss the times we spent together and the feeling of security I had in God. I've literally found nothing else like it."

-Huge deal today - surgeon general - mental health crisis in America

Mental health issues have sky-rocketed among Millennials and Gen Z and a third of adults will deal with some form of anxiety in their life

*Suicide rates have increased by 30 percent over the last 15 years
-these issues already increasing before the pandemic (which only made it worse)

social media (and smart phones) is believed to have fueled the mental health crisis - 2010, the same year the iPhone 4 came out

Secular Age and the age of information...age of distraction and the age of despair

we've never been so connected before yet we've never been so alone, isolated, and depressed

Perfect storm - increased godlessness, information overload, and digital media addiction

Q. What do we do with this restlessness, always searching for more, never satisfied

-we must show the world an alternative lifestyle

Quote:

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."
-Augustine

Jesus in Matt. 22:37

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

-God shaped hole - let's start here

Main Point:

No matter how you are feeling or what you are going through, God is your ever-present hope

*A Psalm of Lament - 13

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David

Opening Prayer

Psalm 13

1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I take counsel in my soul

and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

4 lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

5 *But I have trusted in your steadfast love;*

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

*6 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

Breakdown: vv.1-2, 3-4, 5-6

The three pairs of verses climb up from the depths of despair to a fine vantage-point of confidence and hope...

Kidner, D. (1973). *Psalms 1–72: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 15, p. 94). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Psalm 13 breakdown:

1. **Desolation** - vv. 1-2

Questioning God...

Throughout the Psalms...

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Psalm 22)

“How long?” 4x

Q. Do you find yourself here today?

- God is withholding help for some reason or purpose
- David’s restlessness, feelings of isolation
- His enemies ascendancy

2. **Supplication** - vv. 3-4 (plea for help)

3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

“Awareness of God and the enemy is virtually the hallmark of every psalm of David.” (juxtaposition)
-commentary

-David feeling not only anxiety but depression

Personal - breakup in high school, affected me physically (depression, shingles, migraines)

*Liesl’s cancer diagnosis and journey

3. **Certainty** - vv. 5-6

5 *But I have trusted in your steadfast love; (or covenantal love)
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.*

*6 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me. A choice* (circumstances haven't changed)

"However great the pressure, the choice is still his to make, not the enemy's; and God's covenant remains." -commentary

"We are saved not by the strength of our faith but by the object of it."

What else the Bible says: truths of Scripture (God is ever present)

Psalm 34:18 – The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Last week's sermon:

"When you hit rock bottom, you'll find that the Rock at the bottom is God Himself."

Zephaniah 3:17 – The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with singing.

Hebrews 13:5 – ...I will never leave you nor forsake you.

*Quote

Psalm 23

Anxiety, depression, mental health struggle – God may not take it from you, but he does promise to be with you through it.

*mental health v. mental illness

-Mostly our circumstances can give these feelings - may need **counseling** or *treatment* (sometimes the brain itself is the cause, and we may need **medication**)

-we are not promised a pain-free or trouble-free life - **Paul's thorn (Job and Joseph, too)**

Q. Why do we have to go through hard things? (Why me?)

1. **We live in a fallen and broken world** (where the possibility of evil, pain, and suffering is realized)

-sometimes we may have no control over it

*See Genesis 2-3, Romans 8

2. **Sometimes our own choices lead to this** (free will, sin nature)

-Is there sin in your life? if there is, we must kill it

*My junior high spider crisis

Kill the Spider by Carlos Whittaker

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” -John Owen

Galatians 5:24 - And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

-must deal with the root problem, not just treat the symptoms

3. **God uses the struggles in our own lives to help others who are struggling** (and some who may not even know Him)

II Corinthians 1:3-4 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

James 1:2-3 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. **(a fruit of the Spirit)**

-many deal with our emotional side

*You don't know your impact - your story can impact the lives of countless others

-whether it was something that happened to you or a result of your own choices

-God redeems our story and can use it in the lives of others

No matter how you are feeling or what you are going through, God is your ever-present hope

connection point

David was dealing with actual enemies...

-enemies in our culture today?

Q. What do we do with the information overload of today? (if it is making restless, anxious and fearful)

“The tie between information and action has been severed. Information is now a commodity that can be bought and sold, or used as a form of entertainment, or worn like a garment to enhance one's status. It comes indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, disconnected from usefulness; we are glutted with information, drowning in information, have no control over it, don't know what to do with it...Our defenses against information glut have broken down; our information immune system is inoperable. We don't know how to filter it out; we don't know how to reduce it; we don't know how to use it.” -Neil Postman (1990)

In the book *Scrolling Ourselves to Death* by Brett McCracken, he warns us that the information crisis we face is threefold: 1. *too much information* that moves 2. *too fast* and is algorithmically tailored to be 3. *too focused on me*. (*show pic) *books available at the cafe

-we are being over-informed yet under activated
meaning most of the information we consume is not something we can actually do anything about!

Because of this:

1. We become anxious
2. We become angry
3. We become addicted
4. We become numb
5. We become lonely
6. We become delusional
7. We become detached from reality

“We should avoid fixing our minds on problems we can’t solve”

The Bible has a lot to say about our minds: what we let in, think about and dwell on
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Romans 8:5-6 - For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 12:1-2 – I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect

I Corinthians 2:16 - “we have the mind of Christ”

II Corinthians 10:5 - take every thought captive to obey Christ

Ephesians 4:23 - ...and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

Colossians 3:2 - Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

I Peter 1:13 - Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

*In the midst of information overload...

-we need a strong healthy diet of God’s Word. Information has its place, technology has its place, but the Word of God should trump all those other things...

No matter how you are feeling or what you are going through, God is your ever-present hope

point of confrontation

Q. What do we do in the age of distraction we find ourselves in? - rewiring our brains

***Statistics:**

Social media (or tech)– many of Gen Z up to 8 hours a day, touch our phones over 2000 times a day

check our phones (average 144 times a day) - every 5 minutes which releases dopamine in our brains (which is causing us to become addicted)

short attention spans - were being programmed to be constantly entertained

videos - TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube (you know within the first 3-5 seconds if you will keep watching (mindless scrolling)

pervasive boredom

we no longer have to remember anything because of our phones – causing memory problems

***What about our physical health – sleeping disorders, suicide due to online bullying or blackmail**

Nearly 5 Billion People Are Social Media Users Worldwide

210 Million People Are Estimated To Suffer From Internet & Social Media Addictions

Young, Single Females Are Addicted To Social Media More Than Any Other Group (over 60% feel persistent sadness today)

Teens/Young Adults Who Spend 5 Hours A Day On Their Phones Are 2X More Likely To Show Depressive Symptoms

40% of young adults are self-diagnosed as addicted. (Another study said 57%)

At least 33 million of all Americans are addicted to social media

Social media (addiction) - more anxious, angry, insecure, vain, shallow, performative, dishonest

The Anxious Generation - Jonathan Haidt (social psychologist)

“We are overprotecting them (kids) in the real world and under-protecting them in the virtual world”

***Ages 9-15 are some of the most formative years where things will imprint or stick more than at any other age**

-studies today are showing highly negative effects in general when it comes to your kids and phones, especially pre-teens

Collective action problem...

1. No smartphones before high school
2. No social media before 16
3. Phone-free schools
4. More independence, free play and responsibility in the real world

-parents should prayerfully consider this

Bible: what does it say here?

Psalm 101:3 - I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless

Psalm 119:37 - Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things

Psalm 16:8 - I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

I Corinthians 6:12

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.

-a tool that I use, not my life

*64% of youth and young adults say they feel incomplete without their phones

*Digital Fast: Mainspring last year - more time for other things, more time in the Word of God

Reminder: Psalm 13, remember how it started

How it finished:

5 *But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.*

6 *I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

No matter how you are feeling or what you are going through, God is your ever-present hope

Action Steps:

1. We need the Word of God

Philippians 4:6-7

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:25, 27, 33

25 "Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? **33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

This kind of anxiety (worry) achieves next to nothing - 90% of the things we worry about don't actually happen.

2. We need wise counsel - a pastor, a counselor/therapist (no longer a stigma about these things) may be preventative

3. We need much better habits

We have strayed so far from God's original design:
-limit the amount of information you are consuming
-set limits on your phone usage
-resting, eating right, exercising, walking/hiking out in God's creation
-not meant to live a sedentary life

our health - mental, physical, spiritual

4. **We need the church**

we were never meant to do life alone - we need godly community

5. **We need to pursue Christ**

Matthew 11:28-30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Come, because of these heavy burdens you carry (maybe sins)
Come, because you are overwhelmed with the demands of life
Come, because you are not being satisfied with what the world offers
Come, because you are restless...and I will give you rest

John 10 - I have come that they may have life and have it to the full

A Liturgy For Those Flooded By Too Much Information

(from *Every Moment Holy* by Douglas Kaine McKelvey) *copies available at the welcome desk

In a world so wired and interconnected,
our anxious hearts are pummeled by an endless barrage of troubling news.
We are daily aware of more grief, O Lord,
than we can rightly consider,
of more suffering and scandal than we can respond to,
or more hostility, hatred, horror and injustice
than we can engage with compassion.

But you, O Jesus, are not disquieted
by such news of cruelty and terror and war.
You are neither anxious nor overwhelmed.
You carried the full weight of the suffering
of a broken world when you hung upon
the cross, and you carry it still.

When the cacophony of universal distress
unsettles us, remind us that we are but small and finite creatures,

never designed to carry the vast abstractions of great burdens,
for our arms are too short and our strength is too small.
Justice and mercy, healing and redemption, are your great labors.

And yes, it is your good pleasure to accomplish such work through your people,
but you have never asked any one of us to undertake more than your grace will enable us to fulfill.

Guard us then from shutting down our empathy
or walling off our hearts because of the glut of unactionable misery
that floods our awareness.

You have many children in many places around the globe.
Move each of our hearts to compassionately respond
to those needs that intersect our actual lives,
that in all places your body might be actively addressing
the pain and brokenness of this world,
each of liberated and empowered by your Spirit to fulfill
the small part of your redemptive work assigned to us.

Give us discernment
in the face of troubling news reports.
Give us discernment
to know when to pray,
when to speak out,
when to act,
and when to simply
shut off our screens
and our devices,
and to sit quietly in your presence,

casting the burdens of this world
upon the strong shoulders
of the One who
alone
is able to bear them up.
Amen