

REDLINED • Week 3: Anxiety

Daily Briefing • Day 5 of 5 • You Get an Assignment

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

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.

Philippians 4:6–7

This is the last briefing of the week, and it deals with God correcting and commissioning Elijah after He fed him. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as I walk through a life that so easily produces stress, anxiety, and worry, I pray that I would find peace with You and trust Your reign. Show me what to do about the damage sin has done in this world, by helping the people it has hurt and by making disciples of those Jesus came to save. As I keep walking through all of it, work in and through me to bring Your peace into a world that has none. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Here is the idea for the last day of this week: You do not get to escape, but you do get an assignment. On Sunday we worked through eight tools for anxiety. For the last two days we have looked at what people reach for instead of those tools, and at what a worn-down body does to your thinking. Today is the end of Elijah's story, and it answers a question most people are too embarrassed to say out loud. If God is not going to pull me out of this, what am I supposed to do while I am here?

Here is what you need in order to follow the story. Elijah was a prophet in Israel about eight hundred and fifty years before Jesus, during a stretch when the nation had largely walked away from the God who rescued them. He successfully confronted the prophets of a false god named Baal, and after his victory, the evil Baal-loving queen Jezebel swore she would have him killed within a day. In fear, he ran into the wilderness, sat down under a tree, and asked God to end his life. Instead of answering that request, God fed him and let him sleep, twice, and then sent him on a forty-day walk to a mountain. At that mountain Elijah told God that he was the only faithful person left in the whole country. We pick up with God's response.

In this conversation God does not lead with comfort, and He does not lead with an explanation. He hands out an assignment, and then He corrects something Elijah believed about his own situation. That is the shape of God's answer, and you will see the specifics in the passage in a few minutes.

There is one difference between Elijah's assignment and ours that matters. His was part of God's judgment on a nation that had abandoned Him. Ours is part of God's redemption. Jesus states ours in His own words at the end of Matthew, and you will read it below. The content of the orders changed. The pattern did not. God still answers despair with deployment.

Here is where a lot of our anxiety actually starts. We expect this life to be Eden, or we expect it to be heaven, and it is neither one. We live on a mission field marked by sin and its consequences, and that will not be remedied before our resurrection and God's final judgment. The Bible describes this life as a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. If you are waiting for the world to stop hurting before you will be at peace, you are going to be waiting your entire life.

So here is the sentence worth carrying into tomorrow. For the Christian, this mission is as bad as it ever gets, and the passage below says what waits on the other side of it. For the person who rejects God's offer of peace, this life is as good as it ever gets. Which of those is true of you is the most important thing about you, and it changes how you process anxiety, worry, and stress from the troubles of this life. It also settles what you are supposed to do with the time you have. Mission gives you purpose, and God gives you peace.

1 Kings 19:15–18

And the Lord said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

Matthew 28:18–20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

These three were written centuries apart, and together they clarify our mission and manage our expectations.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

In 1 Kings 19:15 through 18, God gives Elijah two things. First, He gives him a job to do, and second, He gives him a piece of information he did not have. What would each one change about the fear and despair Elijah had attached to his situation?

The job is to go back the way he came and put three men in place, including the one who would eventually replace him. You do not need to know who those men are to see the point, which is that God sent him back into the same country he had run from, and gave him work to do in the middle of the situation that was causing him fear and anxiety. The information God gave was that Elijah was not alone and, in fact, seven thousand people in Israel had never bowed to the false god.

Now look at the orders Jesus gives His disciples.

What does Matthew 28:18 through 20 say about Jesus, and what does He tell His people to do?

All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. He tells His disciples to go and make more disciples, to baptize them, and to teach them to obey everything He commanded. He also promises that He is with them until the end of the age.

Fill in the blanks from Revelation 21:4:

He will wipe away every _____ from their eyes, and _____ shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

This next question is uncomfortable, and most people avoid answering it accurately on the first pass.

Are you anxious because you think God has not acted, or because He has not acted the way you wanted on the timeline you wanted?

A good deal of disappointment gets built out of unbiblical expectation.

What are you expecting this life to give you that it is never going to give you before eternal life in the new heavens and new earth?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

I WILL

Mission has a way of bringing meaning to the stressors driving our worry, fear, and anxiety. There is a beauty to finding peace with God and purpose on His mission.

Write one sentence that begins with the words I will. Make it something you can actually do in the next seven days, name the day you will do it, and point it at somebody other than yourself.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Thank God for the mission He has given you, ask Him for the peace He promised in Philippians 4, and ask Him to show you the one person you are supposed to help this week.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Philippians 4:6–7 from memory:
