

ATTACKING  
**ANXIETY**

Time to ***FIGHT BACK***

SERMON NOTES FROM:

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our teaching series 'Attacking Anxiety'. Over the course of the next few weeks, we are talking about the mentality that we don't have to just deal with depression and be attacked by anxiety, but through the power of the Holy Spirit we can attack back.

***Romans 15:13 (NIV) says: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."***

If this verse right here actually described our lives, it would change everything, wouldn't it? That the Holy Spirit's power would do something so significant in our hearts that the God of Hope would fill us with:

- Joy that replaces depression
- Peace that replaces anxiety
- Hope that replaces hopelessness

It would change everything.

That is what this series is all about: The God of hope, through his Holy Spirit, bringing us closer and closer to the peace and the joy and the freedom that we so badly desire.

I want to set your expectation, build your hope that you don't have to stay this way, that your loved one doesn't have to stay this way. Yes, anxiety and depression are both real, but they are not the end of our story. I want to speak to your hearts and get you to start to build up some expectation that this isn't the end of my story, this isn't the end of my loved one's story.

If you are battling with anxiety or depression:

- You are not crazy
- You are not alone
- This is not how your story ends

## ***IT'S TIME TO FIGHT***

Today I want to tap into that inner fighter that is within all of us. We are going to look at some verses that describe the fact that we are called, created, and intended to fight. We have a fighter within us. We are going to tap into that inner fighter's spirit today.

Personal story (You can insert your own experience/story here): Going back a little in my story I was having these crazy panic attacks, and eventually I had a breakdown, and the first thing we did was go see my Pastor in Alabama. I sat there telling him all my issues, my woes. I actually started having a panic attack right there in his office.

What I thought was going to happen: He was going to come around the table and give me a big ol' pastoral hug, and say something like "It's okay, you're going to be okay kid."

What actually happened: He looked me dead in the eyes and he said, "It's time you stopped being mad at yourself and time you started fighting back! You're a fighter, I can see it in your eyes...It's time you start fighting the enemy."

My Pastor was teaching me three things that I want to teach you today:

- 1.** It's time to start fighting back.
- 2.** It's going to be a spiritual fight (you're not fighting anxiety, you're fighting the enemy).
- 3.** You have to learn how to start (prayer, worship).

That's what I want to do for you today: I want to encourage you to start fighting back, I want to remind you that it's a spiritual fight, and I want to show you how to get started.

# **IT'S TIME TO FIGHT BACK**

Look at Galatians 5:1 (NIV):

***'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.  
Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves  
be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.***

There are two levels of freedom there:

- Eternal. He set us free from our sin
- Present. He set us free from our sin for all eternity so that we could learn how to be free in the here and now.

We have to take a stand. He is calling us to stand firm. Those are fighting words. We have to refuse to allow some things to continue doing what they are doing to our lives. Those are fighting words.

Joshua 1:2-5 (NIV):

***<sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.***

***<sup>3</sup>I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.***

***<sup>4</sup>Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.***

***<sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.***

God is telling Joshua: I'm giving you a promise, this thing I already have to give to you, it's already yours, you just don't know it yet. I am going to give you every place you set your foot.

What Joshua didn't know: He was going to have to fight 31 battles to take possession of the thing God had promised him. Same thing goes for us today. God has promised us access to peace. John 14:27(NIV):

***<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.***

Jesus promised us He was leaving us peace, but there is going to be a battle. God is telling us to go and fight and take hold of the thing I have already made available for you. Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV):

***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.***

Paul is talking to his protégé Timothy. He is saying that he has been faithful, that he has shared the Gospel with a lot of people and walked in his calling. However, he is saying, 'make no mistake, it has been a fight.' You have to fight for your freedom, you have to fight to walk in your calling. That is what those three verses are showing us – it is going to be a fight.

It's time to fight. Let's not let Satan win anymore, let's start engaging in the fight. He was right, but I was exhausted. You ever been struggling with anxiety and depression and realized you have no energy to fight?

- I don't have the energy to pick up the phone
- I don't have the energy to text back
- I don't have the energy to tell you how I'm doing
- I don't have the energy to be a spiritual giant today
- I don't have the energy to fast and pray today
- I don't have the energy to read three chapters in the bible and memorize a verse

My publisher didn't want me to call this book "Attacking Anxiety"

- Too aggressive
- Overwhelming

When you are struggling with anxiety and depression, fighting back sounds overwhelming. Fighting back is exactly what we need to do. That doesn't mean we have to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps & summon some energy that I've never had before, or just get better or stronger on my own.

This isn't about our strength. This is about an inner decision we make that I am going to fight back, that I am not going to just sit here and take it and let Satan win. I am going to choose to fight back: but it is not by my strength. Notice what God said to Joshua in that last line:

***<sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand against you  
all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you;  
I will never leave you nor forsake you.***

He's telling Joshua He's going with him; his dad is going with him. When your dad is going with you it's not about your strength, it's about dad's strength. God is saying, "All I need from you is the decision to step on the battlefield with me, but when we get there it's about my strength, you're my kid, I've got you."

*\*Shawn's dad handling his bully story (Insert personal story  
of your dad handling your problem by his strength)*

God is trying to tell you today: "I know you are embarrassed, I know you feel shame, like you should be able to handle it on your own, but it's not about your strength. All you have to do is say you are willing to step onto the battlefield with me and I've got you. Son, daughter, it's time we go fight."

That might not have meant too much to Joshua until they were in their first battle at Jericho and they were facing a battle that was impossible to win. God tells them to walk around for a week, blow their trumpets and by God's power the walls crumble.

After that battle Joshua would have been able to look at any of us and say:

- I know what you're facing seems impossible
- I know the anxiety feels impossible
- I know the depression feels impossible
- I know the hopelessness feels overwhelming

All you have to do is sign up for the fight.

I'm going to the battle with my father and his presence, his power changes everything. All you've got to do is step into the fight, and then remember it's about his strength, not yours. Deuteronomy 20:4 (NIV):

***For the LORD your God is he who goes with you  
to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.***

# REMEMBER IT'S A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

You are not fighting anxiety, you are not fighting depression, you are fighting the enemy. John 10:10 (NIV):

***<sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.***

This is the case with our anxiety. Two types of anxiety:

- Facilitating anxiety: healthy, God given fear

The kind of anxiety that keeps you from driving 100mph up Pikes Peak, because you might fall off the side and die.

The kind of anxiety that makes you a little more alert, and little more cautious like if you go on a walk somewhere where there are rattlesnakes.

The kind of anxiety that helps you perform at your best (i.e.. baseball player at bat, job interview, asking her to marry you etc.)

- Debilitating anxiety: When Satan is able to take our God-given healthy facilitating anxiety and twist it into something that debilitates us, that keeps us from living a normal life.

Being afraid in situations where I don't need to be afraid.

My body going into high alert when I don't need to be on high alert.

What was given from God to help keep me safe is now crushing me.

Satan wants to take this God given gift and twist it into something that takes us out.

Satan is trying to take every good thing God has given us and twist it into something that hurts us. We're not fighting anxiety; we're fighting the Enemy.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV):

***<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.***

***<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you  
can take your stand against the devil's schemes.***

***<sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against  
the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world  
and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.***

We are not fighting anxiety; we are fighting the enemy. Those are fighting words, and Church, it's time to fight!

# ***A GOOD PLACE TO START***

What you might be feeling right now is: I don't know where to start!?! Here is a good place to start:

- We're going to pray
- We're going to worship
- We're going to war

My Pastor handed me a speaker and told me to go into a prayer room. The rules: put on worship music however loud you want and you and your wife have to pray out loud, together, for thirty minutes.

He was basically telling me to go read Philippians 4 and go do it.

Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV) :

***<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!***

***<sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.***

***<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.***

***<sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

That was where my Pastor got his advice from. What Paul is saying there:

- We're going to pray
- We're going to worship
- We're going to war

What is the result? Peace that passes all understanding. Peace that begins to take the place of your anxiety. Peace that will transcend, supersede, overcome any situation you are dealing with right now. You can have peace in the middle of it, the key is to go step into the presence of God.

We went into that room and prayed and worshiped every day for thirty minutes. Always started with the same two songs: 'Breakthrough', by Red Rocks Worship and 'See a Victory', by Elevation Worship.

- First day: I could only whisper, "Help me."
- Second day: I started to pray the words to some of the worship songs
- Fourteenth day: I was up walking around the room praying out loud.

After fourteen days of praying and worshipping for thirty minutes a day I was already beginning to feel more peace and joy. I was still broken, but I wasn't having panic attacks nearly as often. I was beginning to feel hope rise up in my spirit. I began to think maybe I could get better. I started researching the presence of God and here is what I found. These are seven by-products of standing in the presence of God:

- 1.** Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
- 2.** Joy (Psalm 16:11)
- 3.** Rest (Exodus 33:14)
- 4.** Confidence (Jeremiah 17:7)
- 5.** Guidance (Exodus 15:13)
- 6.** Protection (Psalm 5:11; Isaiah 41:10)
- 7.** Power (Joshua 1:9; Ephesians 3:20)

We could even stop after just the first three and it would be life changing. Those are the opposite of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness.

We're not fighting anxiety, we're fighting the Enemy, and the battle begins in the presence of God.

Today we are just scratching the surface of how to begin attacking anxiety, how to approach it. In my book *Attacking Anxiety*, I give you five ways to begin attacking anxiety. If you are going through the series with us make sure you go through all five of those things. Every single one of them is so important.

Get together with someone (group, family member, etc.) and go through those discussion questions that can be found on the website, [attackinganxietybook.com](http://attackinganxietybook.com). We are on our way. We are starting to fight back.

Remember:

You are not crazy.

You are not alone.

This will end.

You do have to fight.

It's a spiritual battle.

The battle starts in the presence of God.

And God says, "I'm with you."