



## COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY · WEEK 3

# From Anxiety to Peace

A guided conversation from the April 26, 2026 sermon by Rev. David McCloud · Philippians 4:6-7

### SUMMARY

When anxiety finds you – and it will – Scripture doesn't ask you to fake calm. It tells you where to take what's real.

In this week's message, our guest preacher Rev. David McCloud opened **Philippians 4:6-7** and walked us through what the Apostle Paul wrote from a Roman prison cell about a worried heart. David is a pastor and licensed counselor at Granada Presbyterian Church in Coral Gables, with more than two decades of pastoral and clinical experience. He named his own struggle with anxiety from the start and pointed us to a Savior who actually understands.

He shared two illustrations that anchored the message: a 2004 flight he and his wife were pulled off of, only to learn the next day that the same plane had crashed on its return route, and a 2018 flight with his daughter Madison where the landing gear wouldn't come down and he found himself *"trying to fly the plane from the backseat."* He showed us the painting of the Garden of Gethsemane that hangs in his counseling office, where Jesus Himself sweat drops like blood under the weight of what was coming.

And he gave us a five-step pattern for what to do when the worry won't quiet down: **acknowledge it, dig to the root, face it honestly, deliver it to God in prayer, and preach the gospel to yourself.**

### PRAYER **OPENING PRAYER**

*Father, You see what we carry. We don't have to dress it up before we come to You. As we open Your Word together this week, give us the courage to be honest about our anxieties – with You, with each other, and with ourselves. Teach us what Paul knew from a prison cell, and what Jesus knew in the garden. Anchor us in the peace that surpasses understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

### START **ICE BREAKER**

When you feel stressed, what's the small comfort you reach for first – a song, a walk, a snack, a phone call? Why that one?

**PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 • ESV**

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

**MATTHEW 11:28-30 • ESV**

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

**LUKE 22:39-46 • ESV**

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating drops like blood as He prayed.

**01 HOSTAGES TO FEAR**

David said, *"We almost become hostages to our fear of what the future may bring and our desire to control it."* Where in your life right now does that hostage description land? What's the worry that's been running you?

**02 ANXIETY AS WEAK FAITH?**

Many believers quietly assume that feeling anxious means their faith is broken. David pushed back: *"Sometimes as believers, we get into this mindset that if we feel something negative, somehow we're doing something bad. But facing it helps us not to sweep it under a rug."* Where have you felt that pressure to "have it together" spiritually? How does Jesus' moment in Gethsemane reframe that?

**03 THE TWO ROOTS**

David named two main sources of anxiety — past trauma that still echoes, and the desire to control outcomes we were never meant to manage. As you look at the worry weighing on you this week, which root does it grow from?

**04 PAUL FROM A PRISON CELL**

Paul wrote *"do not be anxious"* while chained in a Roman prison, with his future uncertain. What does it tell you that the most-quoted Bible passage on peace was written by someone who had every reason not to feel peaceful?

**05 THE FIVE STEPS**

David walked us through five steps drawn from Philippians 4 and Jesus in Gethsemane: acknowledge it, dig to the root, face it honestly, deliver it to God in prayer, and preach the gospel to yourself. Which one do you usually skip — and why?

**06 FLYING FROM THE BACKSEAT**

David said, *"We try to fly our plane. We try to fly this experience of life from the backseat. We act like we've got the gears and we've got the handle, and it's all up to us."* Where are you white-knuckling something you were never meant to control?

**07 CAST YOUR BURDENS**

What does it actually look like — practically, in real life — to bring your anxiety to God in prayer this week? Be specific. What's the time, the place, the words?

## 08 CARRYING IT TOGETHER

We're a faith family on mission. How can this group be a place where the anxious heart is welcome — not fixed, not lectured, not rushed to the answer? What would that look like for the person sitting next to you?

### APPLY LIFE APPLICATION

This week, when you feel anxiety rising, walk David's five-step pattern slowly:

- 1 Acknowledge it.** Don't fake calm.
- 2 Dig to the root.** Where is this coming from?
- 3 Face it honestly.** Bring it into the light.
- 4 Deliver it to God in prayer.** Specific. Honest. With thanksgiving.
- 5 Preach the gospel to yourself.** Go back to the cross. Go back to the garden.

Pick one anxiety this week and run it through the path. Bring back what you noticed when the group meets next.

### REMEMBER KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Jesus felt overwhelming anxiety in Gethsemane. He understands.
- ▶ Paul wrote about peace from a prison cell. Circumstances don't determine peace; the presence of God does.
- ▶ Anxiety usually grows from one of two roots — past trauma or the urge to control.
- ▶ The path from worry to peace has five steps. None of them are *try harder*.
- ▶ The cross is the proof that God already handled your greatest need. He can be trusted with the smaller ones.

*If the resurrection is true, anxiety does not control you.*

### PRAYER CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, You have not asked us to be untouched by fear — You have asked us to bring it to You. Thank You that the peace You give doesn't depend on our circumstances changing. It depends on You. As we leave this group, walk with each of us into the worry we carry. Help us to support each other this week, to point each other back to You, and to find our security not in control but in the cross. In Your name, Amen.*

#### CHRISTCHURCH MIAMI

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