

“Tattered Blankets”

CHAPTER 5

THE THREAD OF ANXIETY

The Image: A Blanket Pulled Apart at Night

Anxiety feels like lying under a blanket full of holes. You try to rest, but every time you pull it closer, another tear appears. Worries slip through the gaps: What if I’m not enough? What if tomorrow falls apart? What if the people I love slip away from me?

A thread of anxiety cannot cover you. It unravels in your hands, leaving you restless, pacing in your thoughts long after the house has gone quiet.

The Story: Sleepless Hospice Nights

In hospice, anxiety often lingers at night. Families call me at all hours: *“Chaplain, Mom keeps waking up saying she’s afraid, she’s restless, she won’t sleep.”*

I sit beside their bed and hold their hand. Sometimes, all I can do is whisper prayers into the quiet: *“Be still and know that He is God.”*

I’ve watched people soften, their breathing slow, their eyes finally close, not because their problems were solved, but because peace found them in the midst of fear.

The Scripture: The Three-Part Prescription

Paul writes in Philippians 4:6–7: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

It’s almost like a prescription written out by the Great Physician:

1. Prayer – Simply talk to God. Tell Him what is weighing you down.
2. Supplication – Ask Him to supply what you cannot carry. Bring your need to Him honestly.
3. Thanksgiving – Don’t stop short. Give thanks, even before the answer comes. Gratitude ties the whole remedy together.

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And what follows is not just relief, but a peace that transcends understanding, not a logical fix, not a guarantee of smooth days, but a guarding peace, a shield over our heart and mind.

The Pastoral Word: Thanks-Living

I sometimes tell people: thanksgiving isn't just a holiday; it's a way of living: thanks-living. When I offer thanks in the middle of fear, it changes the way I see. Anxiety says, *“I don't have enough.”* Thanksgiving says, *“The Lord is my Shepherd; I lack nothing.”*

Gratitude doesn't erase anxiety overnight, but it weaves the torn blanket back together, one stitch at a time.

The Invitation: Practice the Prescription

Try this today:

- Step 1 – Prayer: Speak aloud one anxiety weighing on you.
- Step 2 – Supplication: Ask God, *“Supply what I cannot carry.”*
- Step 3 – Thanksgiving: Name one thing, however small, that you are thankful for in this moment.

Then sit in silence for a minute or two, allowing the peace of God to rest on you like a blanket, patching the torn places with threads of trust.

Journal Prompts

- What anxieties keep me awake at night or weigh me down during the day?
- How might I apply Paul's “prescription” of prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving in a specific situation?
- What is one thing I can thank God for today, even in the midst of anxiety?

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