

## Week 2: Anxiety → Peace (Michael Higgs)

### Intro:

Anxiety is something we all face whether we know it or not. Some of us deal with crippling anxiety that causes us to hyperventilate, cry, “freak out” or it could be us just not wanting to face what’s in front of us. The question is how do we deal with anxiety, because it’s not a matter of *if* you face it but *when* you face it. For a long time my way of dealing with anxiety was to smoke some weed and hope my problems went away. Breaking news! It didn’t. In reality it just made me an ostrich, putting my head in the sand and hoping that my anxiety and fear would go away.

When I started to grow as a Christian I knew there had to be a better way to deal with this issue cause what I was doing wasn’t working. Chapter 4 of the book Hebrews tells us that we can confidently go to Christ with what we are going through because Christ has gone through everything that we do. Let’s take a look at how Christ dealt with and defeated crippling anxiety when he faced it.

### Lesson: Matthew 26:36-46

**Point 1:** You can’t always rely on your friends in these situations. (Verses 36-38, 40, 43, 45)

The scripture tells us that Jesus brought Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John) into the garden with him during this time of anxiety. He tells them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (verse 38). Christ is going through it through it and he wants his friends to just be with him and pray. Simple enough. As we see in verses 40, 43, 45 they’re sleeping! Taking a little siesta. Christ is asking can’t you stay awake? What’s so hard about staying awake?

Commentary: Not fully being able to understand what someone’s going through in a situation physically and/ or emotionally doesn’t make you a bad person and especially doesn’t make you a bad Christian. These are the same 3 disciples that Christ took into the room to raise the little girl back to life in Mark 5 and took to the top of a mountain to see Moses and Elijah. They saw Christ’s face glow like the sun and clothes turn white as light and God saying this is my Son. They’re not weak of faith or anything like that.

For this time in Christ’s life they couldn’t help him the way he wanted them to. They couldn’t understand his burden at this time, but they were there with him! If you find yourself in Christ’s shoes in this situation, your friends didn’t abandon you and if you’re in the disciples shoes you’re not a bad friend.

[Illustrate point one for students with questions and an example. My Illustration: My friend didn’t necessarily take on my situation but encouraged me to face mine.](#)

**The story:** **What is a healthy way to help a friend going through a difficult time?** Mikey Gonzalez is someone I can’t even call a friend—he’s more a brother from another mother. We’ve gone through a lot of ups and down in time together and really leaned on each other a lot during

those seasons. In January I fractured my ankle, added on to the dry season I was in for half a year at that point. I fell into anxiety and stress. I started abusing my medicine and getting high because I didn't want to go to God in that situation. I even began to ignore Mikey during that time. He came by and picked me up from my house and we talked. I told him about what I was going through during that time, but I didn't tell him about me abusing my medication or getting high. With a heavy heart Mikey, oblivious to what I was doing, told me "Hey, whatever you're taking, just stop." With those words I knew it was the Lord saying, "Come to me."

**Transition to point two:** Even though Mikey and I didn't go on the same journey, he did exactly what the Lord needed him to do which was point me to him.

**Point 2:** You need to take what's stressing you to God! (Verse 39)

Christ, again, going through it in this moment, falls face down on the ground and starts telling God how he really feels. Thinking about what's going to happen he straight up says, "I don't want to do this. Take this away, I just can't."

The Gospel of Luke in verse 44 tells us that Christ's sweat was like drops of blood which is known medically as hematohidrosis. Hematohidrosis is a rare medical condition that happens in extreme moments of physical and emotional stress! While he didn't want to go forward he still went to God.

Commentary: Even tho we don't want to go and face what's causing our anxiety, we need to go to God with those fears in our hearts and minds. Not a regular pray-before-you-eat prayer or a close-out-youth-group prayer, but a down on your knees, down on your face prayer. You're just pouring your heart out to God.

Illustrate point two with a question and example for your students. What do you do when you finally call out to God? Tell him how you really feel. Mine is going to be a continuation of the story from point one. After I got home from seeing Mikey I threw my drugs away, stopped taking my pain medicine, and went to God and it wasn't pretty. I was bawling my eyes out for a few hours, telling him about how I felt abandoned by him, how I felt that I was living right and being a faithful Christian and yet it felt like the Lord turned his eyes away from me. But most importantly I told him how I didn't want to go any further without him. Breaking news: the Lord hears your prayers. He wants you to call out to him so he can comfort you and put you right where you need to be.

**Transition from point 2 to 3.** Once I reached out to God in my most desperate hour, he refueled me and gave me the correct mindset and path to go forward.

**Point 3:** Align yourself with what God has for you. (Verses 42-46)

Verse 42 is often summarized into “not my will be done but yours.” This verse is used often when we’re reluctant to do something, or it’s a verse to sprinkle in a statement when we really want to do something but have to speak Christianese. In reality there’s power in that statement when you use it right.

The gospel shows that Christ doesn’t just pray once, pop and say I’m good. He repeatedly says the prayer. Christ knows he has to be the sacrifice and everything that comes with that in order to fulfill what he came to do, which was defeat sin. He still needs get himself in the right mindset in order to do that. He needed to get empowered. In verses 45-46 we get to see that power. He doesn’t say “Oh man, here comes my captors.” He tells his disciples to get up—It’s time for me to be given over; as a matter of fact they’re they go right there. He was ready to meet what was causing his anxiety head on.

Commentary: Emphasizes that even tho Christ’s situation didn’t change, his handling of it did. That what makes the difference for us as Christians is that we have a God with a purpose for our life and sometimes that purpose is going to lead us into uncomfortable situations. When we align ourself with that purpose all the power anxiety had over us goes away and we can go forward confidently into those situations.

### **Conclusion: Fight or Flight**

Jesus was called to go to the cross and die for our sins. You might be thinking, “Hey I don’t want to die, I’m just a kid.” Christ knew what he had to do from the beginning and went from a spirit of anxiety to one of purpose, and that changed everything. You’re not going to be called to die for everyone’s sins. Christ already did that. But you will be called forward to some tough battles in your life. You can either be afraid or be like Jesus and tell the world hit me with your best shot because I already know how this story ends. News flash: God wins.