

The Book of Psalms
Praying Our Anxiety
Psalm 2

Ice Breaker

Option 1

Spend a few minutes—preferably with a partner or two—catching up on your growth as a disciple this past week. How did you do with your personal action steps from last week? Which step did you choose? Meet with someone from the group? What worked? What are you learning? What kept you from taking steps?

Option 2

Think about the last funeral that you attended. What was the overall theme and tone of the service? What was most important about that person's life?

Understanding the Psalm

1. What stands out to you about Psalm 2? What questions do you have? What particular lines or images stand out to you?
2. Read the last line of the Psalm. What does it mean to be “blessed” here? Where is true “refuge” found? What do we take refuge from?
3. Describe the battle that is described in the Psalm. Who are the opponents? What is their ultimate desire (see verse 3)?
4. Who wins? Why does it matter?
5. Read Hebrews 1:1-5 and Acts 13:32-33, both of which refer directly to Psalm 2. How does this Psalm directly point to the Messiah? What authority does He have?
6. How are we to live and pray in light of this authority?

Gospel Connection

Read Paul's teaching on prayer in Philippians 4:4-7, which provides more explicit Christ-centered teaching on prayer and anxiety.

- What does it mean to bring “everything” to God in prayer? How is praying through our anxiety a transfer of trust?
- What is the promise offered?
- What does it mean to have your hearts and minds “guarded” by the “peace of God”?

Processing and Applying God's Word

As you reflect on Psalm 2, consider the following sets of questions. Share your responses as you feel comfortable with at least one other person in the group.

1. Think for a minute about some of the things outside your control that cause you anxiety. What are some of those things? Why do you think they cause you to worry? What might it look like for you to “see” those things through the gospel lens of Psalm 2? Where do you need to see the reality of the spiritual battle at

work more clearly? How can the group help you to apply the truth of the gospel to your perspective?

2. As one theologian puts it, "Pain is the great *not yet* of eternity." In other words, while we may know and believe that Jesus has *already* defeated death on the cross and secured our eternity, we still live in the reality of suffering. And on a big picture and even personal level, it may look like the forces against God are winning. How has the way you see pain and suffering changed as you've grown closer to God? Share with the group: I once would have responded to _____ by _____, but now I _____ because of _____. How can the group help you see the progress you've already made and the progress you would still like to make?
3. Psalm 2 looks at the big picture conflict between the "nations that rage" and God's "Anointed," the Messiah. At another level, this same battle takes place in our individual hearts. To say to God and his Anointed, "Let us break their bonds apart from us" is to say, "God, I don't want to be under your "yoke" or control." How do you see God's authority and his call to follow Him? Do you see God's authority more as a "shackle" that constricts your freedom, or as your true "source" of security and protection? What do you really believe about living a life of full devotion to God? Is this something you're ready to make a commitment to or not? How does the way you understand God's authority affect the way you pray—especially through your worries and anxieties?

Action Steps (See bulletin insert)

Commit to take one or more of the following spiritual growth steps this week.

1. Read Psalm 2 then pray this prayer out loud once each day this week: "Lord, you are in control of all things in this world. I don't understand many of the things that happen around me, but I have faith today that your love for me will sustain and protect me. Amen."
2. Read Psalm 2 three times. Pray and ask God to show you areas of your life where you have taken control and made yourself "god" in order to stop the anxiety. For each thing that comes to mind as you pray, ask God to forgive you. Then ask him to show you a way forward with him on the throne instead of you.
3. On a piece of paper, list everything in your world that has caused you anxiety over the last 12 months. Next to each item on your list, write how you responded to those things. Did you respond with faith in the creator of the universe? Did you respond by trying to take control of the situation and get the upper hand? Did you respond by resigning yourself to despair and anxiety? On the other side of the paper write out Psalm 2 as an act of worship. Then hold the paper in your hands and pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the wonderful grace of God, that despite our shortcomings in the past He gives us new opportunities to trust him in the midst of turmoil and stress.