

God is Near (So Pray)

Pastor Jeff Graham

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Sermon in a Sentence: When we go through stressful seasons we can take our worries to God because He is near.

Summary: Stress, worry, and anxiety are rampant in our culture, especially in the younger generations. God doesn't promise a worry free life, but He does promise to be near us in our struggles and to give us peace when we bring our requests to Him.

Ice Breaker Questions (Choose one or do them all, everyone answers):

- **When does the Christmas season officially start?**
- **If you could instantly become an expert in something, what would you choose?**

Diving In:

- **Think about your peers, what are some of the big challenges they are facing right now?** (Please email the top comments to Pastor Jeff)
- **Thinking forward to the holidays, would you say that you have more going on than normal, the same, or less?**

Read Philippians 4: 4-7

- **How can we rejoice in the Lord always? Is that even possible?**
- **What are some situations where it's hard to be gentle?**

Pastor Jeff said, "If it's big enough to worry about, it's big enough to pray about!" **What does that statement mean to you?**

Read 1 Kings 19: 9-18 (If you have time or want to go deeper, Chapter 18 records Elijah's conflict with the prophets of Baal and Chapter 19 shows him on the run from Jezebel.

- **Summarize what happens in verses 9-12.**
- Elijah looks at the wind, earthquake, and fire, but God isn't in them.
Why do we always focus on trying to find God in the miraculous?
- **Why does God choose to whisper to Elijah?** If you're close, you don't need to whisper. Recall Philippians 4:5- The Lord is near

When we learn to trust that God is with us, then we see that we can always take our needs to Him.

Going Deeper:

Here's how Peter said to handle the things that are stressing you out:

Read 1 Peter 5: 6-7

- **What does it mean to cast all your anxiety on Him?**

Read Philippians 4: 6-7

- **What is the promise when we cast our cares on Him?** We will find peace.

How can we pray for you?