



## Daily Devotion

Wilsonville Baptist Church  
Steve Thomas, Pastor



## Day 28—Tina Wiles

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (Psalm 91:1-4, NASB)*

Just to be in the shadow of our Father is a place of complete rest! He is a fortress to those who trust in Him and NOTHING can penetrate the walls of a fortress that is not just built by God but is GOD! When I put my trust in Him, He will deliver me from the snare of unwanted, fearful thoughts, and panic attacks (in HIS timing). He will cover me with His wings of protection and under them I will find safety. My shield is His character, outlined in His Word – His never-ending faithfulness to a child who is willing to trust Him with it all. Take some time to meditate on the entire Psalm substituting your name or situation in applicable verses.

During the struggle with the panic attacks, I sought the help of a doctor and then counseling, and I began to see some improvement. I was diagnosed and treated for Mitral Valve Prolapse and anxiety attacks. The medication I take definitely plays a big part in helping to keep my brain from completely taking over and my body from losing control. Going through counseling, reading books, and talking to others who have the same disorder has helped give me insight into this mental disease. It's not a cure, but it makes it more bearable.

Do I still struggle? The answer is yes. I may never be healed this side of heaven. Some days are better than others and just when I think I can't go another day, He gives me respite. I always say that anxiety is like the ocean. Sometimes the waves come crashing to shore with a thunderous boom - a force to be reckoned with. And sometimes they roll into shore gently, barely making any wake.

And the fear dragon I mentioned earlier...he is nothing in comparison to my Heavenly Father who created all things. The fear dragon is not mine to slay. My Father took care of Him at the cross, I just have to trust Him.

## *Wilsonville Baptist Church 2018 Church Renewal*

## **Day 22—28**

## Day 22—Steve Thomas

## Come to Jesus

### Matthew 11:28-30

Today is such a busy time. We go and go and go, trying to accomplish so much, but sometimes it is hard. It seems like we are all alone in a world full of people and no one seems to care. We are expected to carry on and not allow others to see that we have worn down in all that is happening around us and to us. We become discouraged and distressed. We have grown weary as we try to be the best Christian we can be, and now we are wondering how to get through the day.

Jesus tells us to find rest in Him. Even with our jobs, families, friends, commitments, and church responsibilities, we need rest. Jesus has let us know over and over that we are not in this alone. We have others around us to help and to listen. But the One we forget about the most is Jesus.

It is often said that God will not give you more than you can bear. This is not Biblical at all. God often allows us to have more than we can carry, because we are supposed to depend on Him to carry it. A yoke would join two oxen together so they could share the load. They would work together.

Sometimes we feel it is easier to do the job ourselves, but it is not as rewarding as we want it to be. We are too prideful to ask for help and work together as the family of God. We want to show Jesus how strong we are. We want to do it by ourselves.

Your pastor cannot do the work of the church alone. First and foremost, I must find rest and renewal in Jesus and learn to lean on Him for strength and understanding. Your staff is the same way. This also applies to the deacons and every individual. We must rest in Jesus and take His yoke. He is always strong and never weary.

*Dear Jesus, Sometimes life gets hard and I lose focus. I try to do things my way and in my strength. Please forgive me and renew my spirit today. Help me to find rest in You. Thank you for providing a church family to walk with me, but most of all, thank You for always being present. Help me to be the person you have created me to be and to fulfill my purpose at WBC. In Jesus name. Amen.*

## Day 28—Tina Wiles

When you have anxiety, you are constantly asking the same question – “what if?” What if I go crazy and end up in a mental institution? What if I left the stove on and the house burns down (even though I checked it multiple times). A “what if” in the mind of an anxious mind might as well be certainty, because that’s how we process it. Impending gloom and doom is always on the horizon. The thoughts and fears do not have to have any real evidence or proof behind them – your mind takes care of creating an alternate world where it convinces you harm or catastrophe are eminent.

People with an anxiety disorder like to control things. Let me rephrase, we NEED to control EVERYTHING. Fear of losing control is the root of this disease, I believe. In reality, we know that we do not have control over ANYTHING – not life, not death, or anything in between! Never the less, our mind is constantly seeking that certainty and it wreaks havoc in our life and the life of our loved ones. You begin to DEMAND certainty from your spouse or close family members and it is very frustrating for them.

I have come to understand that in addition to the physical and mental aspects of this disorder, it is definitely a spiritual battle. While I know that this is not how God intended life for His children, because of sin, we are going to struggle in one way or another until we reach our heavenly home. While I ask for miraculous healing at times, I know that he is aware of my fears, my disorder, and He will not allow me to be overcome by it. I am His precious child, and He is my protective shepherd. His plans for me are perfect and I am never alone in my struggle.

I have included a portion of one of my favorite Psalms. God introduced me to this Psalm in my thirties when I met a Godly lady who would become my mentor and who also battled with anxiety. She has since gone home to be with Jesus and I know she is finally in complete peace, no longer afraid, and no longer struggling. She encouraged me by letting me see into her life and by letting me know I wasn’t alone in the battle with my mind or on my spiritual journey.

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## Day 28—Tina Wiles

When I was a little girl, no more than four, I thought I saw a monster come out of my closet. As far as I was concerned – I SAW IT. It seemed so real! I can still remember it today and I am 52 years old. When I was a teenager, even at 17, I would check under my bed every night to make sure no one was hiding there. I was afraid that someone would come out in the middle of the night to hurt me. No one had EVER come out from under my bed before and I don't know who I thought would be hiding there, but unless I checked, my mind would not rest. In hindsight, these seem like pretty normal childhood fears. Whether they were or not, I was completely unaware of the fear dragon I would struggle to slay in the future.

As my fears intensified in my teen years, there were times I thought it would be better to just go ahead and die. My thinking was so unrealistic. My thoughts and fears were absolutely paralyzing. I wondered how I would ever live to have any kind of joy or happiness in life because I was so overwhelmed. These weren't "normal" fears, mind you. It wasn't worrying over who would take me to the prom (I was too AFRAID to go), or about getting a car (I was too AFRAID to drive). The fears were unrealistic. They were the things I feared most in life. And they would change themes according to what I feared most on a particular day, month, or year.

I met my husband when I was 17. We married a couple of years later. Even though my mind was still plagued with unrealistic fears, his presence in my life gave my mind something else to "feast" on, I had a hope in our future together. And at times, the thoughts scaled back enough to give me a little space, some breathing room.

In my twenties I began to experience panic attacks. I was convinced I was dying and the fear of an attack only made me experience another one. I couldn't eat – I lost down to a sickly weight. I was unable to get out of the bed most of the time, or at least off the sofa. With two young children and a new house, this made for a very difficult time in our family. My mind whirled constantly, and along with my racing heart, left me nauseous and exhausted. The physical duress my body was experiencing from the constant panic attacks was unbearable. I was a prisoner to my fear, sentenced to life, and my mind was the unrelenting warden.

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## Day 23 – Chuck Webb

I was reading in the winter issue of *Sports Spectrum* that every year, on the third Monday in April, tens of thousands of people gather in Boston to run a race of just over twenty-six miles. Before the signal of start is given, you see those runners bending, stretching, flexing, and running in place, all so that they will be warmed-up and ready to run.

When the signal to start is finally given, you see an unusual sight. A massive cloud of sweat shirts, jogging pants, warm-up jackets, and gloves, are taken off by the runners and dropped to the ground. What just happened was that those runners, while paying top dollar to buy only the best athletic clothing, understood that those outfits were completely useless to them in achieving their goal of winning or even finishing the Boston Marathon.

We, as Christians, are in a marathon. There is no race we could run that is bigger or more important than trying to live a life in Christ Jesus and doing His will. Anything, or anyone for that matter, that is hindering us in running that race that is set before us must be set aside in favor of running a race as efficiently and sin-free as possible. Christians, whatever is weighing you down, lay it aside for the glory of God.

By the way, the runners do not come back and pick up their clothes. I guess the race is worth it.

*"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."* (Hebrews 12:1b, ESV)

## Day 24—Jeff Vick

*“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”* (Proverbs 15:1, NASB)

Miscommunication leads to unfulfilled expectations, which may lead to frustration, which often leads to anger. The whole process can take place in mere seconds, yet Christians are commanded by God to try and break this natural chain of events and become peacemakers by interjecting gentleness and kindness through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, rather than reacting defensively with harsh words. Even if we do not have time to think, we always have time to feel, to listen for the heart under the words, to empathize with the hurt beneath the provocation, and repay evil with kindness. It's a very beautiful thing to see this take place because God does all of the work. We know that we have just witnessed a spiritual battle take place, and God won! God won! In mere seconds, what Satan intended to divide, God has transformed into the physical manifestation of Christ's perfect peace. The anger, now turned away, is replaced with grace, charity, understanding, and love.

So let me just ask you – how often do you discover that you were the source of the frustration to begin with? Was it intentional? Let us remember that hurt people hurt people. It's normal, and it's natural, but it is not final. We can pause, pray, and, say “I'm sorry.” God, in His time will do the rest.

When Vonda and I went to Publix to buy groceries, she expected us to work as a team. I push the buggy, she puts the stuff in. It works better that way. We wind up with a healthy, balanced diet. If we reverse roles, we wind up with a whole lot of stuff that we already have in the pantry, and absolutely nothing green. So when she zigged (headed toward the produce), and I zagged (headed toward the frozen section), frustration took place. She was shopping. I was hunting. Her three attempts to get me to work with her instead of against her fell on deaf ears because I was focused. Not until the loaf of bread sailed past my head did it occur to me that I needed to stop being self-centered, recognize Vonda's hurt, and restore peace.

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## Day 27—Chuck Webb

## Procrastination or Now!

Dr. Clarence McCartney told a story about a meeting in hell. Satan called his four leading demons together and commanded them to think up a new lie that would trap more souls. “I have it!” one demon said. “I'll go to earth and tell people there is no God.” “It will never work,” said Satan. “People can look around them and see that there is a God.” I'll tell them there is no heaven!” suggested a second demon, but Satan rejected that idea. “Everybody knows there is life after death and they want to go to heaven.” Let's tell them there is no hell!” said the third demon. “no, conscience tells them their sins will be judged,” said the devil, “We need a better lie than that.” Quickly, the fourth demon spoke. “I think I've solved your problem,” he said. “I'll go to earth and tell everyone *there is no hurry.*”

In the Book of Acts, Paul preached and taught God's Word and salvation continually. Some accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. But, many where foolish and denied Christ as Lord and Savior. Some just said maybe later. I am too busy. At the end of Acts 24, Felix the Governor, while questioning Paul while he was in prison got to listen to Paul. The Governor had a great opportunity to accept Christ. Felix decided to procrastinate and never accepted Christ. He said to Paul in verse 25, *“Go away for the present and when I have time I will summon for you.*

An English proverb says, “One of these days is none of these days.”

The best time to accept Christ Jesus is **now!** The best time to pray is **now!** The best time to read and study God's word is **now!** The best time to serve the Lord is **now!** The best time to share Christ to others is **now!**

*“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* (2 Corinthians 6:2, ESV)

## Day 26—Tina Wiles

Are you soul weary today? Jesus is the answer. Are you troubled, burdened, and overwhelmed by the things of the world? Jesus is the answer. Are you running the race in vain, carrying a heavy load of religious rules and regulations? Jesus is the answer. He invites you today to come to Him – just as you are. It's a call of compassion and love from a Savior who longs to be in perfect fellowship with each of us. It is a call to turn our lives completely over to Him and to follow Him as committed disciples.

*Father, thank you for providing us with a soul satisfying rest. When we are overwhelmed in our earthy lives or have lost our way, please lead us back to you and give us a refreshed heart and renewed focus. Grant us to finish the race with joy, our eyes fixed on you, the perfecter and sustainer of our faith. In Jesus name, Amen.*

## Day 24—Jeff Vick

Sometimes, when we realize that we are the catalyst behind another person's rage, rather than responding with a soft answer, we meet evil for evil and Satan wins. I confess, that used to be my normal, instinctive response. But God is in the process of transforming me, and I am grateful. How did I react? I thought my wife throwing a loaf of bread at me in the middle of the Publix frozen food aisle was the funniest thing I had ever seen. God works in mysterious ways. He allowed me to see what I needed to do . . . before it was too late.

*"This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;..."* (James 1:19, NASB)

Quick to hear – that, I was not. I should have been, but I was too focused on myself. Thank God Vonda is right-handed. I still can't remember what she had in her other hand.

## Day 25—Matt Jones

*“The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.” (Psalm 27:1-5, NIV)*

This Psalm reminds me that fear only comes in forgetting the power of the One who is my Savior. My own lack of faith, my own focus on worldly circumstances, and a reliance on my own abilities and character may cause me to stumble, but it's only because my focus is placed on the wrong things. God is ever faithful, all powerful, and has promised to never leave me nor forsake me. He doesn't only “provide” me light and salvation, He “is” my light and salvation. He is the stronghold of my life.

God, help me to trust You with all things.

## Day 26—Tina Wiles

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30, NASB)*

My husband used to be a marathon runner. I can remember waiting for him at the finish line of his first full marathon in Nashville, TN. During the 26.2 mile run other runners had to leave the race because they were exhausted or injured and needed medical attention. I watched anxiously for Johnny to make those final steps because I needed to know he was ok! Once he crossed that finish line, we would celebrate his victory with cheers, and then head back to the hotel where his calorie depleted and tired body, would be allowed some much-needed rest.

Living in this world is much like running a marathon. But instead of pacing ourselves we run full speed ahead, worn out and overwhelmed, our vision blurred so that we no longer see the finish line. The kind of rest that Jesus is speaking of in Matthew 11:28-30 is the best kind of rest for what ails us. It's a call to the tired and weary who are limping their way through life trying to make it on their own. It's a call to turn from self-reliance to the One who is trustworthy. When we come to Christ, we find rest from all of our burdens and cares and the guilt of our sin. The answer to our lack of rest is not in us but in Him. As we allow Him to remove our heavy yoke and replace it with His own, we gain a glorious spiritual rest.

What causes you “unrest?” For me it's usually conflict, illness, finances, worry over my children or grandchildren— I could go on and on. Sometimes, just like the Pharisees, I create it myself by trying to earn favor with God by my good works or getting caught up in the rules and regulations of religion or legalism. Sometimes it's my lack of prayer or fellowship with Christ. When I take my eyes off of the Father and focus on my fears, burdens, and worries, or the guilt of my sin, I am overwhelmed. When I take my eyes off of the grace/faith relationship that Jesus has provided, I take on burdens that were never meant to be mine. Jesus never once told us that if we look to ourselves we will find rest. He said “come to me.” He said our rest will be in Him.

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