

Please note: The following message will be shared by Reverend Caleb Kim this Sunday, August 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and our community on Zoom.

Title: How to Deal with How You Feel (Part 4-Emotional Health)

Today, we continue our sermon series, “Transformed: How God Changes Us.” So far we have explored how God transforms our spiritual health, our physical health, and our mental health. Today I want us to look at the fourth vital area of our life transformation: emotional health.

In Scripture, the heart is frequently used as the primary symbol of human emotion. When Jesus was asked which commandment mattered most, He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27). Did you notice the four distinct dimensions from this Scripture? Our soul relates to our inner spirit; our strength relates to our physical body; our mind relates to our intellect and thoughts; and our heart relates to our feelings and affections. In the Bible, the “mind” and the “heart” sometimes overlap—describing our deepest longings, desires, and passions. But here, Jesus clearly distinguishes between our mental health and our emotional health. Did you also notice what Jesus doesn’t say? He does not say, “Love God halfheartedly,” or “Love God with only part of your emotions.” He calls us to love God with all our hearts. God is not looking for mere head-knowledge; He wants a passionate, wholehearted relationship with us!

Let me share a truth about emotions that many people don’t realize: God Himself has feelings. Scripture reveals the deep emotional life of our Creator: When God created the heavens and the earth, He looked upon His creation with profound joy (Genesis 1:31). In the days of Noah, when God saw evil thoughts fill the human heart, His own heart was filled with grief and sorrow (Genesis 6:5-6). King David, known as a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), wrote psalms overflowing with the full spectrum of human emotion: delight, lament, anger, and praise. Jesus—God in the flesh—wept openly at the tomb of Lazarus when He saw Mary and the mourners grieving the pain of death (John 11:35). The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest leaders in the early church, cried out in deep frustration over his ongoing struggle with human weakness (Romans 7:24).

Why do you and I have emotions? Because we are made in the image of God! God created feelings as a divine gift within us. He gave us both a mind to reason and a heart to feel so that we would be dynamic human beings, not lifeless robots.

When it comes to handling our feelings, people usually fall into one of two extreme traps: First, emotionalism: In this view, emotions are everything. How I feel dictates my truth. What I think doesn’t matter; moral boundaries don’t matter—all that matters is my current feelings. “If it feels good, do it!” People trapped in emotionalism let their shifting moods dominate their lives. Second, Stoicism: In this view, emotions are worthless. The intellect and the will are all that matter. To the stoic, feelings are weak, dangerous, and unreliable. Both of these positions are unbiblical extremes. We often see these same two extremes reflected in how people approach worship: Some Christians insist that worship must be intensely emotional. If they don’t feel a huge emotional rush, they assume worship hasn’t happened. Others reject emotion entirely and focus solely on intellectual study. If their minds receive sacred information, they are satisfied—even if their hearts remain completely cold and unmoved. But remember how Jesus responded to the Samaritan woman when she asked about true worship: “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Friends, biblical worship requires both Spirit and Truth! We need the emotional humility that brings

us to repent of our sins and return to God. We also need the living message that grounds us deeply in the truth of God's Word. We need both emotional passion and biblical truth.

While emotions come from the Lord, they can get us into deep trouble if they are left unchecked. Our feelings are not always trustworthy. If they are unmanaged, they will lead us down destructive paths. How many times have we followed a strong feeling, only to regret where it led us? As Proverbs 14:12 warns us: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." If we do not learn to bring our emotions under the lordship of Christ, our emotions will control us. We will become slaves to our moods instead of servants of righteousness. This is critical to understand because the heart is Satan's favourite battleground. The enemy loves to plant toxic emotions in our souls: fear, bitterness, envy, worry, shame, and resentment. The Apostle Peter warns us: "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Think of how many people have ruined their relationships, destroyed their reputations, or damaged their ministries simply because they failed to exercise emotional self-control. When we leave our feelings unmanaged, we leave ourselves completely defenseless against the enemy's attacks. Peter also reminds us that as followers of Christ, we are called to live "... not for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2). Jesus does not just want to be Lord over what we think, what we say, or what we do—He wants to be Lord over how we feel.

So this morning, let us ask God to begin an emotional transformation in our hearts. If we want to mature in Christ and walk faithfully in our daily lives, we must learn that our lives are governed by God's sovereign will—not by our fleeting feelings. Let us open our hearts to God's Word today and discover how to master our moods, manage unhealthy emotions, and experience true emotional transformation on our faith journey.

Step One: Name It—Admit Our Feelings

The first step toward emotional health is to admit our broken emotions. Naming what we feel is where true healing begins. In fact, this is where all divine transformation starts! If we refuse to identify the problem we struggle with, we will never be able to solve it. When you feel an emotional storm brewing inside—when you feel something heavy that you cannot quite put your finger on—you need to pause and ask yourself two simple questions. First, "What am I really feeling?" So often, the emotion on the surface—like anger—is just a mask covering something much deeper, like disappointment, rejection, despair, or fear. Second, "What actually set this off?" Sometimes the trigger is not even the person standing right in front of you. It might be something that happened earlier this morning, or even a wound from years ago, and the person in front of you is simply catching the collateral damage of a past difficulty...

In the very first Beatitude, Jesus gives us this exact starting point: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Jesus is not talking about material poverty here—He is talking about spiritual poverty. He is calling us to recognize our absolute helplessness and bankruptcy before God. None of us naturally likes to admit that we are weak or needy. But the more we grow in our understanding of who God is—His majesty, His holiness, and His grace—the more we realize how much we truly need Christ. It is a good and right thing to bow our heads and pray: "Lord, I don't fully understand what I'm feeling right now. I don't know where this anger, discouragement, or sadness came from, but I need Your help." The Psalmist modelled this kind of raw honesty when he prayed: "Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind" (Psalm 26:2). Friends, God understands us far better than we understand ourselves! He knows what we are feeling even when we can't find the words.

One of the greatest obstacles to emotional healing—for all of us, including myself— is denial. We love to tell ourselves: “I’m fine. I’m in control. I can stop my temper anytime I want.” We convince ourselves that we can quit our toxic emotional habits whenever we choose. But so often, our pride makes us our own worst enemy. We get too stubborn to admit that we are drowning. There is an easy way to change, and there is a hard way to change. Some people change when they see the light, and others only change when they feel the heat... But God does not want us to wait until we hit rock bottom. He doesn’t want us to crash before we call on Him. He invites us to come to Him right now—just as we are—and ask for His grace before we reach a breaking point. So this morning, let us search our hearts: “What are the unhealthy, unmanaged, unchecked emotions in your life today?” Whether it is hidden bitterness, deep resentment, a desire for revenge, lingering anger, lost joy, or silent grief—bringing these painful emotions honestly into the Light of Jesus Christ is the absolute beginning of freedom. Please understand this: no matter how hard we try, we cannot fix these things with our own willpower. All we can do is set aside our pride, stop pretending we have it all together, and humbly cry out for God’s help. We cannot heal ourselves. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit and the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ can our broken emotions be made whole.

Step Two: Challenge It—Don’t Believe Everything You Feel

Second, we must learn to challenge our feelings instead of automatically believing them. We must never assume that just because an emotion is strong, it is true, correct, or reflective of reality. When a wave of intense emotion hits our hearts, we need to stop and interrogate it. We need to ask ourselves three critical questions: “What is the real reason I am feeling this way?” “Is what I’m feeling right now actually true?” “Is acting on this feeling going to help me, or hurt me?”

Some emotional reactions are simply destructive, and we need to change course immediately. Think about how we so often try to change our spouse, our children, or our friends. We point out everything they have done wrong, over and over again. But let us ask ourselves: “Does that ever actually work?” Nagging has a zero-percent success rate in human relationships! It doesn’t transform hearts; it usually just produces deep resentment and makes everyone miserable. The Apostle Paul points us to a far better principle in Philippians 2:5: “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” Our attitude should reflect the grace, patience, and humility of Jesus. Sometimes, simply choosing to adopt the mindset of Christ is the single fastest way to change how we feel.

There are many people today who build their entire lives around a single rule: their feelings. If it feels good, they do it. If it feels uncomfortable, they avoid it. They live entirely driven by their current mood. The fundamental problem with that lifestyle is simple: feelings lie. Emotions are terribly unreliable guides. If we only did what we felt like doing, most of us would probably never get out of bed in the morning! If we build our lives on the shifting sands of our feelings, Scripture has a word for that: immaturity. Spiritual maturity happens when we choose to live according to our biblical convictions and values—doing what is right before God—rather than following how we feel in the moment.

In the Book of Judges, describing a dark era thousands of years ago, the writer summarizes the culture in a single sentence: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 21:25). Doesn’t that sound remarkably like the world we live in today? A culture where everyone simply does whatever feels right in their own eyes? Looking back on my own life, I can see so clearly how many times I got into trouble simply because I allowed my feelings to dictate my choices. Our emotions are unreliable because they change like the weather. Even our conscience cannot be trusted as an ultimate authority unless it has been shaped by divine truth. In this sin-darkened world, the only unshakable, reliable authority is the Word of God. When we bring our

feelings to Jesus Christ—just as people of faith throughout Scripture did—our emotions are forced to take their proper place under His sovereign control.

Step Three: Channel It—Redirect Our Feelings for Good

Third, we need to redirect our emotions toward something good. Let me explain what I mean by that. Unmanaged anger breeds negativity. When we use our anger for selfish gain, it becomes destructive. But when anger is channelled against injustice, sin, and abuse—when it moves us to protect the vulnerable—it becomes righteous anger. As I stated earlier, God Himself grieves over sin. God expresses holy anger against evil. God is moved when people are mistreated. We can take our hurting, heavy emotions and put them to work serving others. In fact, our greatest ministry will often come out of our deepest pain. Not out of our strengths, not out of our talents, not out of our achievements—but out of the broken, painful experiences of our lives.

We find a powerful example of this in our Epistle reading today. The Apostle Paul described a season so burdensome and dark that it was one of the lowest points of his life. Think about that. Paul—probably the greatest missionary in Christian history, second only to Jesus—was so overwhelmed by constant hardship and persecution that he was tempted to give up entirely. And yet, once again, listen to what Paul wrote out of that challenging situation: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God... For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:3-5). Did you notice the divine pattern? God does not comfort us just to make us comfortable; He comforts us to make us comforters.

Early in our marriage, my wife and I worked in campus ministry—teaching the Bible to college students and building relationships with them. One day, during a soccer game right after returning from a summer Bible conference where we served, an opposing player tackled me hard, and I ended up with a broken nose... Without His intervention, I would have stayed bitter and self-righteous. But as I surrendered my ego before Him, He filled that hospital room with an overwhelming joy!

Friends, almost everyone—whether worshipping in our sanctuary or those joining us online today—carries hidden pain. As a pastor, I regularly hear people say, "My life feels completely out of control," or "Nothing I try seems to work." Do you know what the most powerful response to a wounded soul is? It is not reciting memorized verses or offering detached theological explanations. It is saying four simple words: "I have been there." That is how God wants to use you and me: as hope dispensers! He calls us to share with others what He has done in our darkest hours. Who can better comfort a family caring for a loved one with special needs than someone who has walked that same road? Who can better sit beside a person battling depression, grief, or physical illness than someone who has endured that same challenge? Who can offer deeper empathy to a broken heart than someone who has felt that exact pain? God does not want us to waste our pain.

Step Four: Tame It—Yield to the Spirit

Finally, we need to tame our emotions through the power of the Holy Spirit. Every day, we need to ask God to fill us with His Spirit. Before we step into our daily work, our prayer ought to be: "Holy Spirit, fill me with Your power today." The Apostle Paul writes: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). Did you realize where self-control comes from? Self-control is a fruit that grows out of God's control. It does not come from our human willpower or self-effort. When we yield our hearts fully to the Holy Spirit and walk under His guidance, what

overflows from our lives? Instead of worry, fear, doubt, envy, bitterness, and stress, we find love, joy, and patience flowing out of our hearts! This daily spiritual filling is the foundational step toward mastering our moods.

We don't only ask God to fill us with the Spirit; every day we must also ask Him to help us manage our mouths. Proverbs 13:3 reminds us: "Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin." In other words, self-control requires tongue-control! Our words carry immense power—they can build up a soul or tear it down. They can strengthen a relationship or destroy it. Before we speak in anger or frustration, we must pause and ask: "Is this what the other person needs to hear, or is it just what I feel like giving right now?" An unmanaged mouth can destroy in seconds what we have spent years building.

In the Epistle of James, our mouths are compared with a spring of water. The tragedy is that both sweet, life-giving water and bitter, poisonous water can flow out of the very same mouth. We have all experienced this: one moment we are uttering beautiful praises to God, and the next moment we are speaking harsh, ugly words to someone we love.

Where do our words come from? Jesus tells us plainly in Matthew 12:34: "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." Whatever is stored in our hearts will inevitably spill out through our lips. What is in the well comes up in the bucket. Our words simply reveal the true condition of our character. That is why we need God's help with both our hearts and our speech. The Psalmist prayed: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). If we want clean words, we need clean hearts. Fill your minds daily with Holy Scripture. Read the Word, memorize it, and meditate on it. When God's Word becomes the language of your heart, His transformation will show up in your speech!

Scripture also describes self-control as spiritual discipline. Paul tells Timothy: "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7). Now, the word "self-control" might sound as if it is something we generate on our own. Is it? The answer is both yes and no. Picture two circles, each containing a throne that represents our hearts... This gives us our working definition of biblical self-control: Self-control is submitting ourselves to God's control. Real self-control means letting everything we do—including our feelings and reactions—be governed by the King of kings, Jesus Christ.

Jesus also echoes this truth in our Gospel reading today: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). We are simply branches—completely dependent on the Vine for life. As sinners, we often hold onto unhealthy emotional habits even when we know they harm us. At some level, our pride resists letting them go. But when we realize that we are branches abiding in the sacred Vine of Jesus Christ, we receive the supernatural power to cut those toxic emotional ties. We may still stumble along the way due to our human weakness, but we don't stay down. We get back up, repent, keep running the race of faith, and walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

Without self-discipline, we damage our lives and fracture our emotional health. Living without emotional self-control is like driving a car down a mountain with no brakes. It is dangerous, chaotic, and destructive. So let us take to heart this simple yet profound prayer: "Lord, start with me." It is easy to blame the world around us—to blame our spouse, our circumstances, the media, or our background. But true emotional health begins when we admit our broken feelings before God, challenge those feelings with divine truth, channel our pain into ministry to comfort others, and tame our hearts through the daily filling of the Holy Spirit. This is not a one-time decision; it is an ongoing,

daily walk of discipleship. Every single day, we must abide in Jesus Christ, stay in step with the Spirit, and ask Him for a fresh heart—a heart free of bitterness, impatience, despair, and anger. When we yield our hearts to Him, the Triune God fills us with His peace, grants us the fruit of self-control, and leads us into true emotional victory. Amen.

** In this sermon, material has been adapted from Pastor Rick Warren's message "How To Deal With How You Feel," and grounded in Matthew 5:1-3, Philippians 2:3-5, 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, Galatians 5:22-26, and John 15:1-5.*