I. Introduction: Think Before You Ink

Max Lucado writes about some professional athletes who should have thought twice before getting the tattoos they selected. (Max calls them “oops tattoos.”) One was an NBA star who had the letter P tattooed on his cheek in honor of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team, but the P was backward. Another athlete had the ruby red lips of his girlfriend tattooed to his neck. Oops. What if he breaks up with her? What will the next girl think? It’s important to think before you ink. What do we do when we face problems of our own making? Where do we turn when life’s problems are more than we can handle? Who will help us when we face debilitating illness or terminal disease? We are learning to pray: “Father, you are good. I need help. They need help. Thank you. In Jesus’ name, amen.” Let’s consider the second part of that prayer: “Father, I need help.”

II. God Can Handle Our Problems

A. In John 2:1–10, Mary, the mother of Jesus, took a big problem to Jesus.
   1. At the wedding in Cana, the wine ran out. So Mary took the problem to Jesus and left it there.
   2. Mary wasn’t bossy, blaming, or critical. She simply trusted Jesus to act on the problem.

B. When Max Lucado was a missionary to Brazil, he had a medical bill of $1,500 that he could not pay. A church in Florida called him to speak at a retreat, and Max received a gift of $1,500. Max was attempting to live without worry according to Philippians 4:6: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” God answered his prayer.

C. What problems are beyond your abilities? What challenges are beyond your resources? First Peter 5:7 says: “Cast your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

III. God Can Heal Our Diseases

A. In Matthew 20:29–34, two blind men in Jericho cried out to Jesus to heal their blindness.
   1. Jesus heard their cry and stopped. He healed them on the spot.
   2. God may heal us instantly or gradually, but he will heal us ultimately.
   3. Whatever dilemma you are in, take it to Jesus.

B. Jesus longs to heal us in body, soul, and spirit (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). He is conquering all the devastation caused by Adam’s sin (see Romans 5:12).
IV. God Can Erase Our Regrets

A. Guilt and regrets are like tattoos on the heart written with the ink of our own wrong decisions. What can take away those scars of the soul that remind us of our failures and sins?

B. In the Old Testament, God provided a scapegoat to carry away the sins of the people (see Leviticus 16:21–22). Jesus became our Sin-bearer and has carried away our sins completely and forever (see Hebrews 9:26–28).

C. Our tattooed hearts—marked by our wrong choices and hurtful words—can be made like new (see Isaiah 1:18).

V. Application

Sometimes we feel as if we’re living Psalm 23. God is present as the good, providing, and protecting Shepherd. Sometimes we feel as if we’re living Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Wherever we find ourselves, we must take our problems to Jesus, leave them there, and trust in him to provide the answer.