



GOSPEL *for* LIFE

Discipleship and Gospel-Driven Ministry

with Jared C. Wilson

Season 1, Episode 6 Transcript

[00:00:00] Announcer: Welcome to the Gospel for Life podcast. We help churches make disciples. And now, here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:21] Darryl: Hey, welcome. I am glad to welcome Jared Wilson to the podcast today, Jared is a prolific author, and he's also one of my must read authors. If he writes it, I read it.

Today, I want to talk to Jared about his latest book, *Gospel-Driven Ministry*. In this book, Jared examines the qualifications for the pastorate, and he provides a comprehensive, practical guide to pasturing. If you don't know Jared, Jared serves as assistant professor of pastoral ministry at Spurgeon College, and he's also — I love this title — author-in-residence at Midwestern Seminary, general editor of For the Church, and director of the Pastoral Training Center at Liberty Baptist Church in Kansas City. And he lives outside Kansas City with his wife, Becky, and he has two daughters. Welcome, Jared.

[00:01:09] Jared: Thanks so much for having me, brother. It's always a pleasure to talk to you, man.

[00:01:13] Darryl: I love that title: author-in-residence. I picture you in your study smoking a pipe and basically just musing and writing. Is that your life?

[00:01:24] Jared: Yeah, pretty much. It looks exactly like that.

Darryl: I'm even more jealous now.

Jared: No, it's pretty close actually. Yeah, well, it was really neat. The seminary gives me teaching responsibilities, but they've carved out this space to say we want to affirm the ministry that you're called to in terms of writing for the church. And so we're going

to draw a circle around that, and we want you to keep doing it. And it's been great. So I just keep doing what I'm doing. And I know that I have the seminary as a patron of that, so to speak, and a supporter of that. So it feels good.

[00:02:04] Darryl: Well, I'm not just saying this because you're a guest. I'm not trying to butter your bread, but I am a big fan of your writing. So every time I see one of your books, I'm just encouraged. And I think you're a good model of that writing ministry.

So I wanted to ask you about your latest book, *Gospel-Driven Ministry*. What motivated you to write about pastoring?

[00:02:24] Jared: Yeah, well, it's really like this book is a culmination of the last 15 years or so of trying to do ministry in the gospel-centered way I had about 10 years before that of doing it in what we now call the attractional paradigm. And yeah, there's just a watershed moment for me, the intervention of grace in my life orchestrated by the Lord to take me apart and put me back together again.

And there's a long story behind that, but basically, I realized in my last several years of speaking at churches, consulting with churches, I do some coaching for pastors and now teaching at the seminary, it might be good to put out a resource that, from A to Z, covers the work of pastoring from the gospel centered paradigm.

So there's lots of books out there that are about the practicalities, gospel-centered or otherwise, but about the practicalities of ministry, how to preach, how to do this, that the other thing. And then there's quite a few books out there that are on the more reflective side, the pastoral heart. You don't think of the Eugene Petersens or the David Hansens and that sort of thing, but it's rare to find a book that does both. It's not impossible to find it.

It's rare to find a book that does both. And, so I wanted to write a book that was really the culmination of my work with pastors and training pastors. I also lead a residency at my church for guys aspiring to ministry and provided almost like a textbook, so to speak, but one that has a heart in it, that has a reflective anecdote, or you tell quite a few stories in the thing as well and would be just a one stop shop for what gospel-driven ministry looks like.

Actually, I hadn't thought about it this way. I had a friend this morning. I was another on another guy's podcast this morning, and a friend of mine was putting this together with two of my previous books, *Prodigal Church* and *Gospel-Driven Church* and now *Gospel-Driven Ministry*. And he said the *Prodigal Church* is basically what not to do, *Gospel-Driven Church* tells you what to do, and *Gospel-Driven Ministry* tells you how to do it.

And I thought I needed to do all my marketing team because he's really right. *Gospel-Driven Ministry* is the how-to in terms of gospel centered ministry.

[00:04:43] Darryl: I was reading this book and I thought, man, you were getting at the heart of a pastor and just getting it all the right places that need to be challenged and tweaked and encouraged. And then you do a good job of talking about the task as a ministry. So, yeah, you nailed both. I really appreciate that.

So you write in the book, "Ministers today are expected to be gifted public speakers and catalytic leaders, yet very little else. The CEO model of ministry dominates, even in normal-sized churches." So why do you think that we've adopted not everyone, but a lot of our churches have adopted the CEO model of ministry?

[00:05:23] Jared: Well, it's a combination of a few things, I think, culturally speaking.

So you have a holdover from the parish model where churches would have there would be a clergyman assigned to a particular parish, and he's the chaplain for the town and, of course, the preacher for any given church in the area.

It wasn't impossible to find churches that had plurality of elders or that sort of thing. But it's this Western phenomenon of the solo pastor as the solo shepherd of his flock. And then you take that and you take the modern Western phenomenon of the professionalization of that role. And you end up with the church is now a dispenser of goods and services, religious resource center, not so much a flock as a consumer environment, a place to go get your inspiration. You're an audience on Sunday morning, all that sort of thing.

And therefore, that transforms the solo pastor into the solo presenter of the information, the solo entertainer, the vision caster, all those sorts of things. And I think there're elements of those things that can be fine. You know, certainly I think pastors ought to set vision for their church. And I think there's a level of excellence that every church to pursue in its presentation of the sermon and the music and everything else. But that's really overshadowed and the medium has become the message in some regards.

And so we just have this weird conflation of an older tradition of the solo shepherd parish model and then merging with the post-industrial and then ever-increasing Western professionalization of that role.

Darryl: And what are the results of that? What sort of damage is that doing within the church? You point out some good things, right? It brings a certain I don't want to say professionalism, but it brings a seriousness to do the task well. But what are some downsides of that?

[00:07:37] Jared: Well, the model itself, I think, is against the grain of the biblical pattern for how a church is led, which I think speaks to a plurality of eldership, I think it's fine for churches to have a what we might call a lead pastor or a senior pastor who is the primary teaching voice, perhaps serves as a chairman or leader of the pastors or leader of the elders. But when you don't have that that sense of plurality, which we see the

instructions from Paul to establish elders in every church, even the beginning, the separation of the diaconate from the apostolic eldership, you have the vision of plurality that's there.

And, so I think we lose that where everything is bound up in this one voice or this one leader and some very unhealthy things can happen over time. The trajectory of that, when a church becomes identified by a single creative voice or creative vision, the tendency to idolatry and in any church is pronounced because churches are full of sinners. But that particular arrangement can lead to a very unhealthy or imbalanced version of idolatry.

But also just think for the pastor himself, the leader himself is really robbing himself of the comfort, the wisdom, the accountability, the help of other leaders alongside by avoiding that model, too. But, yeah, I think just putting it in the context of the Western phenomenon. What happens is a church becomes identified with a particular person in a particular voice that isn't Jesus, that is that that leader. And gosh, do we need to recount the over the last several years the dramatic catastrophic falls that we have seen of not just pastors, but sometimes the churches being led by these pastors when they're oriented around that guy, the visionary guy, when he collapses, the whole thing collapses because it's so bound up in him.

[00:09:47] Darryl: So it doesn't work for the church. It definitely doesn't work for the pastor. And it's yeah, it's not that biblical model either. That's right.

I want to zero in on discipleship, and I really encourage people to read the whole book *Gospel-Driven Ministry*, but I really want to zero in just on one topic within the book, which is discipleship. And I want to ask you a few questions about that.

You write, "The first leadership strategy of the gospel-driven pastor is not to manage systems or to build brand recognition, but personally to help other people follow Jesus. Discipleship is, in fact, the proper mission of the church." I love that because I feel the pull as a local church pastor to be all about building systems and marketing and that thing. I and I get there is value in that. But I really love your emphasis on discipleship being really the proper mission of the church, the first priority.

Why do you think we missed the priority of discipleship so often in our role as pastors?

[00:10:47] Jared: Oh, gosh, probably for a lot of reasons, but one of the ones I think we don't think about enough is. Because real discipleship is inefficient and feels inefficient or for lack of a better word, unproductive, maybe even because discipleship is messy and discipleship takes time, it requires great patience. It requires a faithful plodding.

And we don't live in culture, in a culture that rewards that we have a tyranny of the urgent always before us. And what's what's happening next and the next big thing and seeing progress seen very visible benchmarks of progress, everything from the church growth mentality or the church growth movement where the numeric growth is seen as

a justifiable justification itself that you're doing something right. It's a lot easier to push some buttons and look at some results, and then if you don't get them, realize, oh, I got to tweak some of these or push the button harder or do something, whereas with real discipleship, you're dealing with people who have their own will and their own personality and their own sense. And you're relying on the timing of the Holy Spirit to be producing fruit in their life.

And it can feel like you're going nowhere for a long period of time. And, gosh, that can be really frustrating. It leads to great impatience. It doesn't have the immediacy, the efficiency of those other things, which is why I think that I think that's a big reason that we don't talk about enough. I think there're other reasons as well. But there's a reason the Scriptures give us a few metaphors for ministry.

That have almost nothing to do with the things that we normally use in the business world or creative world, we have military metaphors, and we have agricultural metaphors like the planting and the watering and those are things, anyone who is a farmer will say, like, there're things I can do, things that I can control.

But the large part of it is a completely outside my control. I can't make it rain. I can't make it sunny. I can't make the crops come up. I can just put stuff in the ground and water it and tend to it. And then I'm trusting that the Lord is going to produce fruit and that's what ministry is like. There are things you can control, but the large portion of it, the harvest is completely beyond your control, which is why I think we focus on these other areas, because those are things that we can manage a little better.

[00:13:27] Darryl: One thing I appreciated in the book is you point out sometimes we treat pastoring as a vehicle for self-expression. So if we're stewards, we see it. Man, I can study. And if we like public speaking old man, I can use my speaking gifts. And at some point there might be some of that involved, too. Right. We tend to drift towards the stuff we like to do and at some point discipling people is something that is very messy and maybe not as enjoyable as some things we prefer doing.

[00:13:56] Jared: Yeah, well, and it just requires a depth too. So for the introverted pastor, we might say the temptation or the danger is that we are prone to ourselves, and we don't get out as much or engage with people as much because we're very comfortable being alone. It doesn't feel lonely to be alone. I guess it can, but very often it just doesn't. We're comfortable being alone. For the extroverted pastor, however, the danger is that they mistake superficial engagement with people or enjoying being with people for actually enjoying people. Essentially what they like is that transaction of what you do for me, I like being with people and talking because it makes me feel good and I feel maybe even useful. I get something out of it.

Right. If that's that's the real difference between introversion and extroversion. The introvert may enjoy being with people, but it cost him something. It can be taxing. He's got to recover. The extrovert gets pumped up and is fed by interaction with people. The extrovert could tend towards just staying on that surface and mistake being with

people for actually engaging, going deep in relationship. And so in both cases, you can have as you say, getting into your own the mode that's comfortable for you and never actually be doing the heart-level work that discipleship requires with other people.

[00:15:22] Darryl: It's really good when you give three pointers to pastors on their personal disciple making. So I want to begin there. And I think that's a good place to begin, because if we're to build a culture of discipleship within our churches, pastors have to set the pace for that and model that.

And so you do you give these three pointers. I'll give them to you. I wonder if you could just comment on each one. I'll repeat them. But you talk about discipling in proximity, discipling with priority, and discipling personally.

So what does that mean? What do you mean by discipling in proximity?

[00:15:56] Jared: So essentially that you're that you get close, you get up close and personal to the people that you're disciplined, that you don't see discipleship as totally about information dispensing in a classroom setting or even the preaching of the sermon during the Lord's day gathering. Those are aspects of discipleship. And in fact, I think really the whole life of the church is discipleship. Everything is discipleship. And in a sense, because it's all ideally meant to lead us into closeness with Christ and to confront the glory of Christ in a way that we might be changed.

And yet for I would say for any Christian, but just as a reminder to the pastor, that personally discipling others means being near to them, their problems, their concerns, being able to apply the gospel in ways that are specific to them. And that requires actually getting close to people.

Peter in 1 Peter 5, he exhorts elders to shepherd the flock of God that is among them, which seems like a really weird thing to say. Like what other flock would there be except the one that is among you? But I think it's a reminder that we're to be among the flock where to have proximity to them not to have this lorded over them or distant relationship. But we have to get close to those that we are deciding now. Now, obviously, a pastor can't be as close with everyone as he can be with a few even in a small church. That's really impossible. But I think it just means for those who are discipling that you come near to them and you draw near them just as Christ would.

[00:17:35] Darryl: That's a little intimidating because you're letting people into the mess of your own life. And it's probably a big reason why we don't often do it as well.

I think it's easy to present a polished or at least even our self-disclosure can be calculated. Right? We're letting people into the mess of our life in a calculated way. But it's scary to let people walk in and see the reality of what's going on in our life, our struggles and our weaknesses. Now, that's good. So you talk about discipling with intentionality, then with priority making it a priority. What do you mean by that? Expand on that.

[00:18:09] Jared: Now, that may be one of the more controversial of the three. And I'm drawing somewhat from *Trellis and the Vine* by Marshall and Payne's book, which came out, oh, I don't know, probably a little over 10 years ago or so ago.

And the first time I read their emphasis on prioritization in terms of leadership development and discipleship, I was really turned off it because it struck me as assigning value to people or usefulness to people. But then as I gain more experience in the context that I was in, especially, I began to see the wisdom of it. And it goes like this. You have to prioritize who you disciple so that no one falls through the cracks.

So you have some sort of discipleship process or vision for how it should work in your church, especially personal discipleship. And it makes sense it makes sense for the pastor to disciple those who are further along in their faith because ideally you're further along as well, and there's no one to disciple those folks. If you reach over them to then disciple, just new believers. Now, I think and I lay out in the book that I think it's good for pastors to part of the prioritization is to say, I do want to have a discipleship relationship with a new believer or to new believers or something like that.

But I also just want to make sure that those who are maturing as leaders, that there's somebody who's who's developing them. And the reality is in most churches, there are Christians who may not be as far along as the pastor, but they can disciple a new believer because they're further along. So you begin to think through what's most advantageous for you.

And I think I have another section of the book that talks about leadership development and pastors pouring into not just inspiring elders, but men and women who are aspiring to ministry of some kind or just growing in their faith. But in particular, that's the middle that gets left out.

If a pastor or ministry leader is only discipling new believers, you have this great big middle section of people who are just falling through the cracks because there's no one to pour into them. We just expect, oh, they're good on their own now because they're mature, they're growing.

And one of my biggest regrets for my last pastorate in particular was how little time I spent with low maintenance church members. There are a great number of people who weren't going to raise their hand and say, I'd love to spend time with you and angels because the squeaky wheel gets the grease, they say. And any time I did spend time with those further along, it was life giving to me and I think helpful to them in ways that neither one of us could expect, probably. So that's what I mean by priority is just prioritize who you're disciplined and why. And don't forget that middle portion that can actually get neglected.

[00:21:09] Darryl: Very helpful. And then you talk about discipling personally, that it's not just about information, but character, about transformation. So could you expand on that part?

[00:21:17] Yeah, I mean, just as you said, to remember that discipleship is about becoming more like Christ, helping others to follow Jesus into greater likeness of Jesus. And that is about more than simply getting more Bible information. Now, that's key. That's in a sense you could even say central to how people grow. The transformation comes by renewing of the mind, and that comes by learning more about God and learning more about his ways. But in and a lot of the churches I grew up in, that was what discipleship meant, was just learning more information and graduating from class to class, theology or evangelism or whatever it is.

And it wasn't about my heart being changed or about growing in the fruit of the spirit or any spiritual maturity. It was just about knowing more Bible knowledge. And so we have to be in our discipling relationships and in the other environments as well.

But especially and I think most meaningfully in our disciple relationships, asking more personal questions going into areas of the heart and behavior that are beyond simply what did you think about chapter six of *Knowing God*? And do you agree with this author's view of this, and just making it about the theology, but actually asking questions: How is your prayer life going? How is your marriage? What's it like these days living at home? How is your relationship with your Father like? All these questions.

And there's some good, good resources out there for us. I remember Ray Ortlund bringing out in a little group that he and I started for pastors way back in the day John Wesley's accountability questions, and man, a super intimidating that's I mean, it goes that stuff goes really deep. Or you could use David Powlison's x-ray questions, which I think are designed mainly to ask of ourselves. But we could use those as part of these relationships as well to root out idolatry and in our heart.

And so, yeah, to make it to make it personal is basically to remember that discipleship is not just about knowing more information, it's about transformation. And that requires asking deeper questions and going to maybe even darker or more hidden places sometimes then we tend to go.

[00:23:31] Darryl: I heard Mark Dever talk about making milk runs. He just call somebody up and say, "Hey, look, I'm going to pick up some milk." And he was very intentional about it. And he would have those conversations with people. Yeah. How's your marriage going? It's just going to the grocery store. I never thought of that. I thought of discipling as being something you do on, "Oh, it's Tuesday night. We've got this scheduled meeting." But yeah, I love that. That that fits all three. Really. Right. Very deliberate, very approximate and very personal.

[00:23:59] Jared: Getting into each other's lives is something I do with my residents as well as I get more personal over time. So when we start out, there may be some I know a little better than others, but some guys I don't know at all except just through the assessment phase. But we haven't had any preexisting relationship or anything.

And so I just communicate up front. I just say, look, as we go and it's 18 months. So we give quite a bit of time to this as we go and begin to meet in our one on ones or you travel with me or something. And the beginning is going to be a lot of hanging out and just feeling each other out in that thing. But I just want to know as we go and I know more about you and you about me as well, I'm going to begin asking increasingly personal questions.

And, so I don't want anyone to feel surprised by that or like the relationship is changing and it'll be hopefully gradual enough. But I just want to be really intentional about this isn't just about the information you get in our group meeting or the book that you're reading. This is about discipleship. And that means we have to do life on life exposure here, which means if I want you to be as well situated as you can be in the qualifications for the pastor and in gospel sensuality, I'm going to have to ask about your frequency of looking at porn. I'm going to have to ask about your marriage increasingly.

So I get more personal with them, asking them probing questions. I don't do it right off the bat. But we get more and more personal because I don't want it to simply be some mini-seminary. I think seminary is great or I wouldn't teach at one, but it's designed for a particular thing and it doesn't do what the local church can do and what good pastor and discipling can do in the local church.

[00:25:41] Darryl: I love what J.T. English writes. We tend to outsource all of our discipling to the seminary when it gets to a certain level. And again, he's very pro seminary, but we've got to take some of that back and be doing that in the local church. Which seems like that's what you're doing with your internship there, your program.

[00:26:14] Jared: It is because a lot of these guys, it's not a requirement to be a seminary student, to be in the residency, but a lot of them are because we live in this in the bubble of Midwestern Seminary. We're not trying to replicate that, and we're not trying to replace it. But we're acknowledging that the local church is what God has designed for the production of not just disciples, but also those who would identify you, who would aspire to eldership, to the noble calling of eldership, that you don't go through three or four years of seminary, get your degree and suddenly you're qualified to be a pastor. That a mistake, you may be smarter and you may be qualified, but simply having that theology, your theological degree doesn't itself qualify you.

So we're just trying to press in to say the church is the environment for this training. And so we hope that the seminary education will supplement, that they can do things

that we can't do. But the key thing that you need is what only we can do. And that's why we press into different on different pressure points in our program.

[00:27:05] Darryl: So, okay, that's the pastor, his own personal disciple-making. I want to begin thinking about how does this translate to a culture of discipleship within the church? How can that pastor not just be involved in discipling but what steps can he take to create that discipleship culture within the church?

[00:27:24] Jared: Yeah, well, I think it begins actually with the with personal discipleship in particular. If all the elders if every pastor is involved in this, because what the pastors are, the church will become, if you're setting an example to the flock, it's not going to be instantaneous thing because cultures change typically rather slowly and over time. But you're setting the example and therefore the expectation of this is what normal Christianity looks like, pouring into the lives of others, helping others follow Jesus.

And so in a way, that's a passive influence. But I think it's an important influence that you're setting the example of it. So others now see, oh, you're not just telling us to do it, you're actually doing it. And it's becoming a normal expectation.

I remember talking to Robbie Gallaty about this, and he's well known for having discipleship pipeline and this huge process. And I just said, okay, how did you start? And he didn't have a church when he started that cared one whit really about personal discipleship. And so he just said, I'm grabbing a guy in two guys, and we're going to meet. And it was over time him engaging in that process that began to seed the influence of it elsewhere.

So I think that's a big aspect of it. But I think just creating environments, whatever structure that any church has for especially for relationality, so small groups or if you've got training classes or whatever it is that you're intentional about, about what's meant to take place in those environments and that it is primarily about helping people see Jesus and become more like Jesus.

So some of these will emphasize more fellowship than perhaps Bible study and others, vice versa. I know English in his book talks about a variety of different environments. So he would advocate beyond the Sunday morning experience or the Lord's Day experience gathering. You would have environments that are geared towards relationality and fellowship and that sort of thing. And then you would have or community, I guess you would say, and then you have other environments that are geared towards theological training.

And I think different contexts may be able to converge combine those. But I think being able to make sure that you understand that, that all that and for all these environments, the point is that we orient around the gospel because the gospel is only power to change and therefore you're maximizing the number of environments people can be in that they can come to see Christ. But also just think there are people who need training in this regard.

I remember thinking about this just in terms of our small groups. At my last church, we didn't have any meaningful small group program or ministry or anything. And I didn't want to just say, okay, here's the program. We've designed eight groups. Everybody go to whatever one seems best to you or close to you or convenient for you. I just decided I'm going to start a group myself. And I took guys that I thought would be good small group leaders and who said that they would be interested in leading a group.

And I said before we launch any program, we're just going to have a group of our own. And, so I took these potential leaders and over the course of about six months or so, we met once a week and I just led a small group for them. And then that was like their training and how to lead the group in a gospel centered way. Then we began, okay, here are the six groups that we're going to start with, each of those guys leading a different group.

You may have to do discipleship that way as well, because it's meant to be replicated and to multiply, start small. As you're leading someone, you're actually training them how to disciple and then it just begins to spread. I think the major point to keep in mind, regardless of how you approach it, is that most churches don't become a culture of discipleship overnight. They have to be trained over time. And so whatever approach you use, do not think that you've got the discipleship program and you're going to set that down on top of your church and suddenly your church is going to be a culture of discipleship.

The programs are best suited for giving people the outlet for a desire they already have. And they're not great for creating a desire that people don't have. So you have to see that desire in a different way than with an exterior program being put down on it.

[00:31:30] Darryl: Again, that's where the agricultural metaphor comes in handy, right? You're not imposing an industrial like, okay, now we got a program that's much more growing culture over time.

I'm going to go back to an earlier book he wrote called *The Imperfect Disciple*. And one of the things I loved about that book is it talks about how messy discipleship is, at least how messy we are. We are not perfect disciples. You write in there about how a lot of times you hear about discipleship programs, and they're almost like a spiritual version of Cross-Fit for somebody who is pretty fit, right?

You talk about we need to think about what does the gospel look like, what does growth look like for people with doubts and anxieties in apprehensions? What does it look like for people who are overburdened and shamed by many of our discipleship books? So as pastors, how do we create that discipleship where we make space for ordinary strugglers, not just for people who already have their acts together?

[00:32:30] Jared: Well, a lot of it just has to do with your own experience of friendship with Jesus. So if you personally see Jesus as the taskmaster or the coach who is

setting the bar ever higher or the efficiency expert or the production expert, and that's what your relationship with him is like, you're certainly going to carry that into how you disciple others. You may become that yourself for them or just help them see Jesus that way, too.

So it all begins with your own communion with Christ. If you're not just enjoying the freedom that you have through the grace that is given to us. And therefore praying, yes, and dutiful ways, but also just very honest, transparent as a child with a father would and reading the Scriptures, meditating on the scriptures. Not to check off the checklist or even to just grow your brain, although I think that's that's important and good, too, but because you need to hear from God, because when you open that book, the voice of heaven is coming to you, that experience, a burning bush moment of being able to commune with Christ through the Word of God that begins to impact how you see Christ and then how you help others see Christ as well. And I think that may be the most important aspect of it.

And then just being able to apply the gospel to others. How do people change? At what pace do normal people change? Are we more impatient than the Holy Spirit is with people's lives? Sometimes we can be stricter than Jesus, who is the holiest person who ever lived. So it's not that his standards aren't good and don't matter, that we shouldn't follow them, but sometimes the way we apply them, we forget that the work is finished. It has been accomplished because of the cross and that and that means in the outworking of it, that we give people I'll refer back to religion again, that you give them not just the gospel, but safety and time.

So the safe place to be themselves, because Jesus only deals with us on the playing field of reality. So we give them the safety to be themselves, knowing that when you confess your sins, he is faithful and just forgive us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Therefore, we can bring anything to him, cast all our anxieties on him. Do you create that environment? And then do you give it time, time for the Holy Spirit to work in someone's life?

[00:35:08] Darryl: But it's not an easy thing, is it? And it's not it's not very pragmatic, but yeah, it's very helpful.

I do have a few more questions. I really recommend this book. I can't imagine that there's a pastor who wouldn't benefit from reading this book. So I've been pastoring for coming up to 30 years this year, and I found this book challenging both at the heart level and in dealing with, "Oh yeah. I think I'm neglecting that priority."

So I really encourage people to pick up the book and actually just pick up if add Jared to your list of authors that you watch and make sure you read what he writes.

But I want to ask you a few more personal questions as we wrap up. It's been a long year, and as I speak to pastors, there's a lot who are tired and maybe a bit beat up or

discouraged right now. Speak to them for a minute. What would you say to them? It doesn't have to be encouragement? It can just be anything.

[00:36:08] Jared: Yeah, well, I mean, I guess the first thing I would say is that that feeling is perfectly normal. You're not weird or abnormal. To feel weak in seasons that are extraordinary extraordinarily tiring or overwhelming. You're not abnormal or weird to feel ignorant in seasons that have never been navigated by living person. It's weird to say this is unprecedented because it's certainly not in the scope of church history, but for us it is. We've never been through anything like this.

And, so I just say, take the pressure off yourself to be totally informed, totally wise, as wise as you ought to be, all the things that we don't expect of ourselves or others in normal circumstances, certainly in extreme circumstances like this, none of us has it all has it all figured out. So it's not weird. You're not you're not wrong or abnormal to feel completely overwhelmed, to feel exhausted, because this is an exhausting and weird season as a means of encouragement.

I think what I would say is — and this lands on different ears in different ways — but the Lord obviously saw this coming in a way you could say he allowed it or ordained it, depending on your theology, I suppose. But he knew this was coming, and he decided that the pastors who are leading their churches right now should be the pastors who are leading their churches right now. In his wisdom and his sovereignty, he determined — I'm picturing a pastor who was listening to this — he determined that you were to be the one leading your church when COVID hit and all the other weird stuff going on right now, as well as the cultural volatility and all that sort of thing, political division, all of that, all of that mess. He determined that there would be a COVID class of pastors, and in his wisdom, he stewarded this situation to the pastors that we have right now.

Now, we may not have done that, and we may not be glad that he did that. He chose us as a part of that. But that was his decision. And I think we can have all the faith, all the confidence, all the humility that that affords us. Yeah, I think there's a lot being exposed right now, but for whatever reason, God has stewarded this challenge. To you, Darryl, and to all the guys who are currently pastoring churches, he wanted you to be at the in the crosshairs of this moment.

And I just think that should be really encouraging.

It could be it could be depressing, I suppose, but I think it could be really encouraging. Wow. God chose me to for this challenge. He chose me for this season. And yeah, there's a reason for that, so I think there's some great cheer we can take in that and just think of how it's sanctifying you. I mean, the hardest stuff, the most overwhelming stuff is the stuff that makes us most like Christ. Therefore, we should find ways to even rejoice in this trial.

[00:39:14] Darryl: That's a good word. Second last question. These are really personal. What are you learning right now?

[00:39:20] Jared: Wow. Yeah, I'm I'm learning another level of of faith or different faith. So we have two daughters. Our oldest went away to college two years ago and our younger daughter is about to finish up high school. And so we're about to enter this empty nest season. And we're excited about it. We're happy about that. I'm looking forward to it. But it's also. I have these two daughters who are if my younger daughter has her way, they're both to be on the other side of the country.

And I think any parent of children, they it's like your heart's walking around outside your body and it doesn't change. Even as they get older. I think things deepen and but that reality is still there. So Dad can't be there if their car breaks down or mom can't be there if they've had a rough day at school or at work, or they have relationship trouble. And thank , thankfully with modern technology, we can keep in touch.

But I'm learning to trust God with my kids in a different way. Now, I can't see them. There's less I can control. There's less I can speak into. And, so I just have to trust the Lord with them in a in a different way. That's what I'm learning, I think. Yeah.

[00:40:39] Darryl: That's a whole new phase of parenting right there.

And what's encouraging you right now?

[00:40:45] Jared: Oh, gosh. What's incredible, the thing that comes to mind the most, is where the church is going. Believe it or not, based on the younger generation and where they are in terms of how they think about the local church. What they're doing in terms of theological retrieval, I just think they're they are so far ahead of where my generation was when when I was their age. Yeah, I mean, a lot can happen between now and when they are officially like the leadership guard of the church the pastors of the church.

But I felt coming from Vermont where I was pastoring, and we grew younger there, but most of the people that was passing were older than me, especially when I first got there to then coming to Kansas City and being middle-aged and all of my pastors are younger than me. You know, not real young, but still some by almost 10 years, and it's very encouraging. And at first it just helped me empathize with some of the older guys at my last church. Like, "Oh, this is what it was like to be pastored by young people who have small children. What have you ever done in your life?" So it helped me empathize with some of my previous congregation.

But it also is just thinking, man, I love being pastor by these guys. They love Jesus. They love the church. They love me.

And so even just on the seminary level and the residency, I think the future of the church is so bright. I mean, we know that theologically, you and I know that theologically Christ is building his church. There will be no prevailing against it.

But right now, we're just in a season where we're thinking, man, what is happening? It just feels like they're split upon split and division. And every time they do the stats, the growing disbelief and so on and so forth. And that's all sobering. And I think it just gives us the reality of the mission before us. But, man, I just I'm excited about the future of the church. I think the Lord doing something really great. And the progress, the trajectory of the aspiring pastors and leaders that I see is super encouraging. I can't wait to be pastored by some of these folks.

[00:43:08] Darryl: One thing I appreciate about your social media is how highly you speak of your own local church. So a lot of guys who write books and who have platforms they're good guys. But I don't often hear them talking about the joy they have of hearing their pastor preach or being a member of their local church. And that comes out strongly in your social media. So I appreciate that very much. Speaking highly of your pastor. And you're a churchman.

[00:43:33] Jared: Yeah, well, I mean, it's one thing if you when you've been on the other side of it, you understand how precious it is to have encouragers, to have people who have your back and people you can be yourself with. And so we committed when we came here we haven't said to the Lord you can never call me in a pastoral ministry again or anything like that.

But we're very content where we are. And I just committed when we came in, I want to be the best church member that I can be, or the lowest maintenance church member that I can be for my pastor. I want him to feel like he can breathe when I approach that. He doesn't have to grit his teeth or hold his breath when I show up. And I want him to feel like I support him and the church as well. So we've just really enjoyed this season of ministry as laypeople.

[00:44:26] Darryl: I heard a story. One of my friends went through a church in England and met a guy handing out bulletins. And week after week, the guy was there and faithful and always encouraging. Well, turns out that guy was F.F. Bruce. And I just thought, oh, my word, just to see the guy I didn't know him from anyway. And then realizing like, okay, this guy is a churchman, right? Loves the Lord. His first commitment is to the local church. And I love that picture.

[00:44:49] Jared: So we got a nice card in the mail the other day from the lady who is sort of the coordinator for ministries at our church, and she does women's ministry and stuff as well.

But she sent us a nice card, and she mentioned in there because there was a day we had come in. My wife serves on the greeting team a lot of weeks. And so we all go together. And I noticed, like, there was just a lot of leaves. There's just a lot of junk on the sidewalk leading up. And, so I went and found a broom, and I was cleaning that thing off.

And then she mentioned that in the card, like I saw you sweep in the front steps. And I thought I'd love to say that's just like a sermon hearted thing, but it's really like just OCD. I just I need, like, things cleared off and even like the dishes I tend to wash the dishes and stuff around here and people it's like serving hard is like, no, I just it drives me crazy. I have to do it. It's more of an obnoxious, obsessive thing.

[00:45:50]

Darryl: That's great. I love it. Well, Jared, it's so good to talk to you. I wish I lived closer to you so we could hang out once in a while, see each other in person. But I really appreciate your ministry from a distance in your writing and all you're doing. Thank you for this latest book and for making the time to talk to a city.

[00:46:08]

Thank you, brother. It's always good talking with you, too.

BLOOPER

[00:46:24] Oh, I lost you, Darryl, I'm not sure what to do. How do I get you back? Either I'm here, I don't know what happened there, yeah, it said all of a sudden I said, you are the host now. It was like that Captain Phil or with the Tom Hanks, "I am the captain now."

Darryl: It's hilarious.