

Church Happenings Update + A Brief Discussion of "Showing Your Suffering"

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Preacher: Chris & Dov

[0 : 00] Greetings and salutations, my beloved.

This is Chris Oswald, senior pastor at Providence Community Church. This is the Providence Podcast. I'm here with Dov Cohen. Hey, Bro. We are gathered to have, amongst other things, a little bit of a church chat, a little bit of a State of the Union kind of a conversation, and we'll dive into that in a moment.

But first, I wanted to bring a hymn. This was one of my favorite hymns from my childhood. That's how old I have. I have favorite. That's how old I am. I have favorite.

Yes, yes. I have favorite cartoons. Yeah. Well, you probably have, like, favorite dreidels or something from your childhood. Yes, I still have a favorite dreidels from my childhood.

The retreat center that we stayed at in the Philippines, the guy was, he's owned this space for, like, 38 years, and he's an American guy, and it's just amazing.

[1 : 08] Like, he just ruled and subdued this patch of jungle in the middle of the Philippines. Really cool. Anyway, he's super into tops. And he has, like, a whole gospel, like, tie-in for tops.

And I didn't hear it, but, yeah. So there are tops everywhere all over this. And he requires, if you stay there, he requires you to go to his top show.

He does a gospel top. Oh, like a presentation? Yes, yeah. That's interesting. I didn't have to go to it because, you know, he gave us credit because he knew we were there to do gospel stuff.

Yeah, but he opens this space to the community, and they can, like, schools and things, they can use it, but they have to go to the gospel top show. Okay. It's Philippine dreidel. Yeah, it's, yeah, exactly.

All right, so favorite hymn. And the reason, one of the reasons why this was a favorite hymn early on was that all of our hymns were really slow in church, and this one had a little bit of a marchy kind of a theme.

[2 : 08] Yeah. And then as I got older, I realized that this was really just true of my, this was something I needed to say to myself a lot. So it's called I Am Resolved.

It's by Palmer Hartsboro. Grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan. So there's already that theme, the marchy kind of theme. All right, so it's I Am Resolved, No Longer to Linger, Charmed by the World's Delights, Things that are Higher, Things that are Nobler, These Have Allured My Sight.

I will hasten to Him, hasten so glad and free. Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to Thee. I am resolved to go to the Savior, leaving my sin and strife.

He is the true one. He is the just one. He has the words of life. I am resolved, and who will go with me? Come, friends, without delay. Taught by the Bible, led by the Spirit, will walk the heavenly way.

That's good. And the theme, the song is like, I am resolved, no longer to linger, charmed by the world's delights. And then that man will go, by the world's delights, you know.

[3 : 14] Yeah. Things that are high. Yeah. Anyway, so that's our hymn. All right. Now on to the church chat. Do we have a theme song for the church chat?

We're wanting to make this a kind of regular thing, like once a month, just sit down and walk through kind of what's going on at the church. And one of the things that we've encouraged people to do in the past as they talk to each other is to go through the rhythms, repairs, and reaches outline, which is just like, how are your daily rhythms, your practical exercises of grace, and then repairs, what's going wrong?

What can I help you with? What do we need to pray about? What needs repairing? And then reaches is just like, what are the ambitions, the dreams that you're following and so forth. And so

we would love it, folks that are listening to this, if you would use that more often, you don't necessarily even have to say, what are your rhythms?

But just as you're talking to people, those three questions, how are your habits of grace? What's broken that I can help with? And what are you dreaming about?

What are you excited about? Those are just three ways to talk to people that can lead you into more edifying conversations. Yeah, which is kind of why we asked you to do that.

[4 : 38] Okay, so let's do that with the church. Yeah. Okay. In terms of rhythms, you've done a great job kind of keeping us on track with some regular faithfulness in our church.

And we've got some particular rhythms going on. And first of all, there's the big one, which is kind of how we do our month. So you want to talk about that? So we do have new people. And this is always a bit confusing to folks.

Sure. So we have obviously Sunday morning celebration of Christ and worship together. So that would be a big one. And then on the first and third Wednesday of each month, we've got community group.

Community groups meet. And the second Wednesday of each month, we've got the ladies Bible study. And the fourth, we've got men's ministry. So those would be the big, big rhythms.

And then in addition to that, the men, a lot of men are meeting at huddles right now. So that's really self-driven, self-initiated.

[5 : 40] That's a great rhythm to get yourself into. And if you're not in a huddle right now, to find a couple guys and just get together and read the Bible together, pray for each other, hold each other accountable to repairs and reaches and talk about rhythms, repairs, reaches together.

So huddles is one thing. We've got Sunday morning Sunday school before service on Sunday. And I've heard great things about that. And then if you're not familiar with the rhythms and you just want more information, get yourself on Basecamp.

Come see me. Obviously, come see you, Chris, or any community group leader. We can get you on Basecamp. We just need your email address and we'll get you on there. I think we used to tell people, find someone without gray in their hair and ask them how to get on Basecamp.

That doesn't work anymore for me, at least. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's true. Yeah. But you wouldn't have to do it, at least. That's true. But no, like most people can get you on Basecamp. It doesn't just have to be us. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Anybody, especially anybody that's just been in Providence for a while.

Yeah. So going through those, can you do the monthly rhythm again? Okay, so the first week is? So first week is community group.

[6 : 51] Second week is ladies Bible study. Third week is community group. Fourth week is men's ministry. So that's coming up this Wednesday. Yes. Okay. And then huddles, those are kind of just up to everybody in terms of how often they meet.

Self-driven, self-initiated, just get a couple guys together or ladies are welcome to have huddles too. Right now they don't though, right? As far as we know. Yeah, as far as I know, it's, we're just going to shoot it with guys.

Yeah. And yeah, that'd be something to look into. I know the ladies do get together and do stuff.

Yeah. But I think the huddles are exclusively the guy thing right now. And then like, are you still kind of matchmaking for those?

If people want help finding the huddle, they can reach out to me. Okay. I just, I just encourage people to find a couple guys and get together and meet up every three or four weeks. Yeah. And these have actually been pretty, this is all you.

You started this and I hear a lot of good things from people about the huddles. It's, I mean, it's, it's a grassroots, like the guys are just engaged and want to meet up.

[7 : 52] And, uh, I appreciate the people who initiate and lead the groups, but just, just the guys enjoy them and get a lot out of them. So I got an email today from someone in the community that's looking for a church and, uh, it's a young, it's a guy in his thirties.

And he was asking like very age based questions. Like, do you have a group that is for 30 somethings that aren't married and this and that? And I, I thought, you know, I haven't responded yet, but I just thought like, dude, that's, that's, um, that's the shallow end of the pool.

Like all the good stuff is in the mixture of all of the different ages and seasons of life and so forth.

Yeah. So there's just that old way of thinking where somehow finding a bunch of people that were in

your season of life was the key or the goal to growing.

Right. That's not really how it works. Yeah. It's so nice. It's just nice to Providence. We've got such a great diverse range of generations. Yeah. And our men in particular tend to really value that.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And so, and then, uh, Sunday school, John's been doing a great job with that.

Yep. Um, you know where they're at in the Bible? I was thinking about this the other day. I think, I mean, they're past judges.

[9:07] Yeah. I think. Anyway. I thought they were into the prophet. I thought like Isaiah. Yeah.

Okay. But they're working through the whole Bible and, uh, people really seem to enjoy and appreciate that. And then like Dove said, if, um, if you want to get on base camp, that would be really good.

Yeah. You'll have access to all sorts of things then, including conversations about people moving and, and, uh, bonfires happening. Bonfires. People's houses. And I didn't know, but there's a clothing.

There's, it's like, I don't remember what it's called. Oh, it's from ashes to assets. What is, what is from ashes to assets? There's base camps happening. I don't know about.

What is that? Uh, I just found out about that one yesterday. I think my daughter Sarah started it, but it's like a clothing swap. Okay. And so they, I think what they do, I, I don't even, I can't even find it, which is fine by me.

You know, but I think what they do is they do videos of their clothes that they're wanting to get rid of. Okay. And then like post the video or something like that. Okay. Anyway, there's a lot of things like that going on.

[10:12] Yeah. I mean, it's, it's kind of cool. Just the initial entrepreneurial spirit, like, uh, and living in community together. We, we really wanted from day one at Providence to not lean on programs to produce disciples.

Right. We wanted, we wanted people to learn how to walk in relationship organically together and so forth. And I remember a minister. Yeah. I remember a minister. Everyone having some kind of responsibility.

Yeah. So those are some of the rhythms. Um, uh, there's some stuff coming up on the church calendar. I guess we could talk about that. Yeah, sure. So, uh, we've got make Baker by tomorrow.

Yep. And then the women's retreat is 20th and 29th. Good memory. I didn't have that on the notes.

March 28th, 29th. Um, we've got parent youth meeting coming up before that, March 15th.

You and I are going to Sioux Falls for the annual, uh, regional assembly of elders meeting for sovereign grace. And, you know, uh, that somebody asked me recently, you know, how I was feeling about our denomination and so on and so forth.

[11:22] And honestly, like, I don't, I don't really think about it that often, but what I do think about is this brotherhood of guys that I've walked with for, you know, more than 15 years now. Yeah. And just how meaningful that is.

And I was telling this, this was not a person in our church. This was a, another pastor. I was like, honestly, I don't know anyone that has it as good as we have it in the sense of we've got these relationships and they've been there for a long time.

Yeah. We've got a great region. I just, uh, got an email this week that Rick Gamache is celebrating his 25th year as a pastor at that church. That's amazing. In Burnsville. Yeah.

So anyway, a lot of these relationships have flown, have flowed out of Rick. Uh, a lot of us were all kind of connected to Rick in one way or another. And, and, you know, he's really been the vehicle for a lot of planting that's happened in our region and a lot of people in the positions that they're in and so on.

And, and you know, Rick's just chugging along, you know, he's just, he's just doing his thing. Yeah. Anyway. Uh, so that, so we're going to be there, um, in Sioux Falls.

[12:30] Yeah. And then we've got the Easter egg hunt coming on April 19th. Yep. Do you need help with that? Um, so we are going to be posting, um, so Nate is leading that, uh, and he's going to be posting a post on base camp, uh, about four weeks before the Easter egg hunt to reach out and ask for help.

And I noticed you sent me artwork for like banners. Yeah. For, yeah. Um, so Nate's, Nate's overseeing all of it. So Facebook posts and banners and yeah.

So every year for the last eight years, Susan Gimity emails me about a month out of Easter and asks me, are we going to get a banner made? So this is the first year when I will be able to tell her, Susan, chill out.

I've already, I've already got on the ball. It's not me, but anyway. But again, it's, it's members. Yep. Yep. Taking initiative and getting stuff done. Yep. Yep.

So that's kind of what's coming up. We've got make Baker by the women's retreat, um, the monthly parent youth meeting, um, regional assembly of elders and the Easter egg hunt.

[13:32] And then one of the things some of you might've noticed that are on base camp is we've got this thing called a side quest coming. Noamaha posted about this recently. So, uh, that's going to be a, is it six weeks?

Yeah. It's three months to two weeks. So the, the community group in lieu of community group for three months, it'll be two weeks each, each month, first and third. Uh, so six sessions of parenting side quest.

Got it. And, and that'll be, uh, for six, six couples, six couples total. Yep. And we have, do we have one slot left? Uh, we have two slots left.

Okay. So four couples are signed up. Okay. Two slots left. Okay. And there's no charge for that, but we need them to register because we're going to try to offer childcare. Okay. Yes. Yeah. Okay. And so the, the idea with these side quests is that we're going to offer these smaller sized groups a few times a year, at least.

And they're going to have this kind of limited registration thing again. And I suppose we'll probably have to come up with a rule. Like if you did one, you can't, we won't let you in the next one.

[14:37] You can't only side quest. Right. By definition. They're doubling up. Exactly. But anyway, we'll do one. Uh, Ange and I are, we're going to do one on parenting, uh, some point or not parenting marriage at some point.

And then, uh, another one that I would like to do is I'm finishing up a book on biblical theology that I think is going to be really helpful for people to just give you the, the main, the main storyline of the Bible.

That's cool. Yeah. So that'll be something that I'll offer probably. Yeah. Yeah. Something like that. Or maybe, maybe winter. Yeah. I don't know. Anyway. Okay.

So that's kind of rhythms, um, repairs. What's, what's going wrong. What's broken. What do we need to help each other with? Well, we just got a fire inspection today and it looks like almost every single exit sign in our church, which we have probably 30 exit signs in our church and just about every one of them isn't working.

So they all run on batteries. Uh, so there's a, I've had, I have a long and storied history of repairing and fixing and replacing, uh, exit signs anyway.

[15:47] So we'll, we'll post that up on men's ministry and have a bunch of guys have a, have a exit sign night. Are there any other things that we need to communicate that we need to like take care of?

It doesn't have to be building stuff. Hmm. I can't think of a whole lot. Yeah, I can't either.

Um, people have just been really faithful and careful with stuff and yeah. So people are keeping up on things. Oh, one thing, one thing, uh, I've had a few mothers come to me, uh, wondering if we could maybe not have everybody sick all the time.

If we did something different with the nursery related to like cleaning toys or something like that. Sure. So like one person suggested we put some UV lights in those nurseries and there were, there've been some other suggestions.

Sure. Anyway, we're working on that. Uh, I don't know what to do about it yet, but we're working on it. I thought about like, uh, getting a trash can full of Lysol and then just dipping all of the kids in before and after when they enter, you dip them and yeah.

[16:58] Yeah. Yeah. Um, I mean, I just, I think that in general, community groups are doing a good job cleaning the church and staying on a rhythm there. Yes. That's been good and helpful.

Yes. Yep. Yep. So not a lot of repairs and then reaches, um, a few things. One, we are doing our best to try to develop a plan.

One, my sense is, is that this will kind of go live in the fall, uh, for at least a few folks to get formally trained in biblical counseling so that we can, uh, two years down the road, start a biblical counseling.

Yeah. So we're working on that. Um, I've got a bunch of irons in the fire there about trying to find people and so forth. But anyway, that's, that's in practice.

Um, I, I did want to talk about the Philippines a little bit here. Um, just happened to think of that. The, the incredible opportunity that is out there in the world in terms of teaching pastors how to preach and teach and read the Bible, uh, and, and the amount of, the amount of strategic ROI you get in doing that is just insane.

[18:23] Like we, we've seen this with the Pakistan guys. So we'll fly them to Jordan or something, which isn't ideal. Uh, but as going to Pakistan's usually not ideal, uh, you know, not doable.

Right. So anyway, we fly these guys to Jordan and we, or to Dubai or something. And we just spend a week teaching them. It's all genre based.

So it's like, okay, we're, we're going to teach you this, this week on how to teach law or poetry or narrative or something like that. Yeah. And then they go back and they start doing classes on that stuff, like in their local churches.

And it's just like an immediate, you know, from 12 to from 12 to 200 kind of a thing. Yeah. Yeah, totally. And so, uh, it was the same with the Philippines.

We, we invested a week. Well, I was there 11 days with those guys. And yeah, I mean, it's just, you just saw it immediately. And, uh, it's hard for me because I just see all the things that you could do.

[19:26] And I, I get like, you want to get some initiatives going. Oh yeah. Like I, you know, so let me just tell you this. I'm not telling anyone this because this is what we should do. I'm just telling you like, this is how my mind works.

And I don't think it's a big deal. So Cebu is an Island, uh, one of the islands in the Philippines. It's really beautiful white sand beaches and so forth. Now there's a, there's a city part.

That's not so beautiful, but, but there's plenty of beautiful out there and it's very cheap. And, uh, I thought, man, Providence could buy a house in Cebu.

Yeah. And like a big house, like somewhere, you know, on the beach. Yeah. And that would cost us about 40 grand, you know, something like that. Yeah. Maybe more than that, but we'd buy a house and then we could just open up like a little Bible, life and doctrine center in Cebu.

And then we could have our church members do short term mission trips to the white sand beaches. Absolutely. Yeah. And, and we can also, and then we can have pastors, you know, from the Philippines come and stay with us.

[20:31] That would be amazing. And we can do like, you know, equipping and marriage care and, and theological training and so forth. So wouldn't that be fun? I think it'd be great. All right.

So we're doing it. The elders have spoken. Does this Philippine, do they have like realtor.com or something? Yeah. Yeah. I actually was looking on my way home. I was like, you know, this would be pretty crazy.

But my point in saying that is, uh, you never know which one of your dreams will actually become a thing. You know, Ecclesiastes catch your bread upon the waters where you never know which will, you know, which will yield.

But the other thing is, is that it's just that it's literally that open in terms of opportunities. Um, I was sitting with guys and they're like, we have, we have 30 guys in Cebu who want to learn about reform theology.

Can you come back, you know, and teach that? Amazing. And I'm like, don't tip me, you know?

Anyway. But yeah, that was, that was an amazing, uh, experience. It's, I love, I love doing that.

[21:33] Um, hate the flying though. It's taken me over two weeks to just get back to the, um, deal with the jet lag. And then also my back's just janked up and everything.

So those are some reaches. Um, what else? Oh, the building remodel. Um, Dove has decided to do all of the construction work himself.

Yeah. Me and the boys. Just a minute. Nice. We'll get done. Nice. So when will that be done? I'll need about six, seven years. Okay. Six, seven years.

All right. I'll watch a lot of YouTube videos and, uh, I'll call you guys for help. Nice. Nice. Now, uh, we, we do want to give you an update on that. Uh, I feel like there's a tension between over communicating and under communicating.

And I would guess we're probably on the underside a little bit and we need to maybe communicate a little bit more. Sure. So, uh, here's kind of where we are. We, we have seen, uh, some encouraging giving.

[22 : 33] Uh, based upon our initial request, but also recognize that it's likely that some people need to be asked more than once.

And also that some people are like, well, are we doing it or are we not? Right. Right. So we can cover that piece at least, um, on this podcast. The question of, are we doing it or are we not? As we've met, as we've met with the leadership team, as we've talked to contractors and so forth, we're pretty confident that this is something that's going to happen and that it'll, it'll happen, um, sometime in May start, it'll start happening sometime in May.

And that first, the first thing that will happen for, for the church's perspective, we'll file permits and things before this, but, um, is we'll do a teardown of the existing ceiling and that'll be us.

That'll be the church. And then after that, the rest of it will be the contractor for the most part. Um, and so, yeah, I can tell you at least in the sense of, are we doing it or are we not doing it? Like, it really looks like we're doing it.

[23 : 37] Yeah. We've seen some encouraging giving come in, but also know that others have kind of said, you know, let's, let's wait until we know whether this is happening or not.

Right. So it's going to be a stretch for us financially. Um, but I don't think, I think that as we've all talked, we had this sense of like, we're encouraged, we feel that we have faith for this.

And so do you have any thoughts? I just, I mean, it seems like it's something that the Lord is doing. Um, and it's, it's just super encouraging to think about more people hearing the gospel on a Sunday morning, um, worshiping the Lord in song and getting to enjoy, we get to enjoy every week.

Uh, and, um, and just fellowshiping with, with our, with our church. So I'm, I'm just super encouraged to think about that possibility of that happening. Yeah. Yeah. And I think that, um, that's what I hear from some folks.

I've, I've, I've had a couple of people kind of feel like a sense of urgency and like, let me, I need to get you a check right now. Uh, and I, and, but in listening to them there, it's just, they're excited. Yeah.

[24 : 42] Like, okay, this is, this is good. Yeah. So yeah, we'll probably, you know, turn up the communication knob a little bit, uh, in the next few months and talk about it a little bit more on Sunday mornings and so forth.

We really haven't talked about it much at all, but anyway, so that's kind of the update there. And, you know, you've seen the plans there, there are a couple of different places in the church. What, what it's going to look like.

It's pretty simple, simple job really in that respect. Yeah. We're waiting until then because, you know, we have Knox here and we have Southland. Uh, some of you might not know, we, we use our building at a level that is just not typical for local churches.

And, uh, some of that is actually income producing for us. We have, we have random things like, uh, a bunch of Indian guys that play badminton in our gym a couple of times a week.

We, we ran out to blue Valley soccer, uh, things like that. So we're actually produce a little revenue that we add into our ministry budget. But the other thing is we, we, we're hosting Knox classical school on Mondays and Wednesdays, and we're hosting Southland, uh, which is a homeschool cooperative.

[25 : 57] And, and that's a very, there are different kinds of co-ops. This one's definitely more on the school side. They can call themselves a school, pretty formal, lots of classes.

And that, and if you come by here on a Tuesday or Thursday, uh, our parking lot will be completely full. Yeah. And then when you walk through the building, it's just kids everywhere. So we're, we're excited that God has allowed us, especially on the education side, on the Christian education side, God's allowed us to, you know, use our building to the extent that, yeah, because man, I've, I've been a pastor a long time and usually these buildings just sit throughout the week.

Right. So, you know, it's, it's good that we get to use the building for that. Okay. And then, um, we have a leadership team update that we, it's taken us a little bit longer to be, to be frank.

Like it was, we got a couple of really good pieces of advice from people about tightening up a little bit, our, um, almost like a policy document of sorts.

And we took that advice seriously. And so we, we went and worked on that. We're still working on that, but it's, it's close to done. And we also just took the, are, are, are these guys qualified, uh, piece pretty seriously and so forth.

[27 : 16] So anyway, all that to say we're, we're proceeding. Uh, did we set a date? Uh, no, we have not. Okay. Okay. We're proceeding. It will not be much longer.

We're thinking three to four more weeks or something like that. Yep. Okay. Oh, and that reminds me, well, in that related to that, we will have an actual kind of document for you.

And we're also going to ask, ask my Belleville, my Belleville roots almost, almost an ax. We're also going to ax all the guys. We're, we're anyway, we're, we were talking last night at family dinner about how our kids were a little bit fashion confused because of where we lived.

What do you mean by that? Well, we kind of lived in the hood. And so, so they were like, they were like, not, yeah, they were kind of veering toward, yeah, the brighter colors, if you will.

That's funny. Anyway. And sometimes I say ax anyway. Um, uh, we're, we're asking those guys to share their testimonies with the church as well. And, um, I think we'll probably have a family meeting on some of this.

[28 : 27] Yeah. Right before, but that's, we're working on that now. Yeah. I'm excited to hear their stories of just how to save them and God's grace at work in their lives. And yeah.

Yeah. That'll be good. Of the three, which is the most likely to have been in a cult before getting saved? Are you right? Are you axing me that? I'm axing you.

I'm trying to think myself. I feel like it depends on the cult. Yeah. Yeah. They all three could be in a cult. Could have been in a cult. I don't know. Anyway. Uh, yeah, we love those guys.

And we, uh, talking about the building stuff and all that, like we've all been working together on that. Right. Talk to that. Yeah. That's, that's been a team effort this whole time. Yeah. Oh, I was going to mention communion.

Okay. Yeah. So we're going to start doing corporate partaking. Mm-hmm. Um, March 9th. March 9th.

[29 : 23] And what that'll mean is you'll just do what you're doing now. We're, we're working on when we get, when we do the remodel, we'll have a better flow. I know the lines get long right now.

When we do the remodel, the flow will be better. Yeah. We'll have two tables and so forth. But anyway, for now, you're going to go do it, do it like you normally do it. You're going to go get your, get your, your cup and your bread and then just go back to your seat.

And then we're just going to do like a corporate, you know, one of the pastors will lead, uh, that partaking in a more, a bit more formal and together sense. So. It'll be a good family moment.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We just feel like that that's an opportunity we've neglected to kind of connect as a family, as a, you know, as a community.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So we're, you know, it's not a huge change, but that's coming March 9th. Yep. Okay. And then we are going to just talk briefly about suffering.

[30 : 20] Uh, that was a very important sermon for me to preach. Yeah. Um, like I said at the beginning, you just won't find another institution that prepares people in advance to suffer.

It's just the craziest thing ever. Yeah. It's just crazy. It's just clearly God's idea because no one else does it this way. Right. But, um, I was driving home today from my back was really hurting.

Yeah. And I was thinking about like this idea that I am not, I, I, I have to constantly keep telling myself I am a display. I'm not, my life is not built for my pleasure.

I do not exist to have pleasure. I do not exist to have pain. Like I don't exist to have incredible life. I don't exist to have miserable life. I exist to display things about God.

Right. Right. And I have to keep using that truth to orient, um, to orient, like what I'm feeling about my life.

[31 : 23] What's going through. Yeah. Whether it's good or bad. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I have to keep like processing. Okay. This, my son's texting me a lot right now. He never texts me. Uh, anyway, I have to keep processing like, what is my purpose?

Yeah. So that I understand what I'm going through. And we have people in our church that are going through things. And I mean, to just like one of the things that was obvious in that sermon was just having children that have special needs.

Right. And, you know, your son turned seven today, right? Uh, yesterday. Yesterday. Yeah. Yeah. And I was thinking about how old was he when we met at Jack stacks?

He was, was he two? He was, he wasn't even two. We, we drove out to Kansas city on his second, on his second birthday, February 23rd, the second birthday when we drove out and now he's seven.

So it's been five years. But yeah, you met him when he was about a year and nine months. Yeah. Yeah. So anyway, uh, yeah, just, and so back then, you know, that was somewhat fresh to you. [32 : 30] Yeah. Yeah. I remember that. Processing through that understanding that like you're talking about, my design is to glorify God. Uh, something that really helped me, which you talked about in the sermon, um, I believe, which was the gospel.

I deserve God's wrath. I don't deserve necessarily ease or, um, whatever. And, and, and my son's a tremendous blessing. It's the sweetest kid. Um, but it is, it'd be challenging with having special needs and, uh, but my role is not, God is not there to make things necessarily easy for me. He's there to glorify himself through me and. And through your son. And through, and through my son and to display that to the world. Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, I mean, Bennett's great. I don't, I don't necessarily personally think of him in a special needs category.

Exactly. I think that's the thing about kids. As you, as you live with them, you just start thinking they're just, this, this is just this kid. Right. This is just Sammy or whatever. Sure. But, um, I think that parents, you know, are, are wired in America in particular to think through like the success paradigm of what can this kid achieve?

Right. What difference can this kid make? Right. Can this kid have a successful life and so on and so forth. And we're just wired. We think worldly in that sense. Right. And the truth is, is like what you should look at when you have a kid, any kid is that kid exists to display truths about God.

[33 : 55] Right. I have to figure out what those truths are. Yeah. And bend the child in the direction of, you know, lead a child in the way you should go. I have to figure out what, what is God's message.

He's going to proclaim through this kid, this kid. Yeah. And then I have to figure out what that is and I have to lean into that and I have to be happy with that. Right. And, and, and in that setting, I'm no longer fighting God.

I'm no longer mad at God. Right. I'm working with God. Embracing his plan. Yes. Yes. For your life and for your children. Yeah. For whatever. So that was, I thought about you guys and thought about other families in our church with kids that are not, you know, in the typical cookie cutter.

Adummental. Yeah. Yeah. And I just thought about like, first of all, you know, that is a taxing assignment. The Lord is given. It's a harder assignment. Sure. Um, it also includes certain rewards because you're going to see whatever God's displaying through your kid in his uniqueness.

You're going to see first. Right. You know? Right. And so you're going to, there's some rewards there and also sanctification and so forth. Um, and, and yet I, I just felt a burden.

[35 : 09] I didn't want to single anyone out or anything like that, but I wanted, I just felt a burden that the Lord would remind people in that category. Yeah. In other categories.

We have other people at the church that are relatively young that have real chronic health problems. You know, and like, they're kind of, sometimes I think they probably feel like the tortoise and the hare kind of a situation where, you know, everybody else is zooming by and they're just, you know, they're just not able to do that.

And, you know, a trip is a calculation. It's like, you know, everybody else can just go to seven weddings in a year. That's all these young people are all about that kind of stuff. Right. Uh, which is dumb by the way.

I've never done. But anyway, uh, uh, but then there's others that are like, well, I, I don't know what I'm I mean, that's like, that's so much energy and so forth. So I just, that sermon was important to me pastorally that people, and I didn't want to like, I didn't want to tell people to listen to that sermon again, but I, I do feel like it's not because the sermon was great.

It's a great passage. Yeah. And that, that text, you know, he did, it's not because he sent her, his parents send, but so that the works of God might be displayed.

[36 : 23] Like that is one of the most powerful texts. So anyway, um, there's people in our church who have all sorts of different struggles and processing that through the lens of this is, I don't, I'm not on this earth to consume.

I'm not on this earth to feel pleasure. I'm not, I'm on this earth to display the glory of God. Yeah. Um, and starting to cooperate with God as he's telling his story through your story.

Yeah. And, uh, I wanted to, we talked about not hiding just because it's like, Hey, it's embarrassing to be the thing. It's embarrassing to be the weird one.

You know, we had a kid yesterday or last Sunday come in and I just thought it was hilarious. And maybe the parent will hear this and remember it was their kid, but they came in late to the church and the kid just said real loudly, like, here's a seat.

Here's a seat. He was so excited to find a seat. He was sitting next to him or close to him. Yeah. Yeah. Anyway, I turned around cause I just thought that was super cute. Yeah. And I worried that the dad thought I was giving him the stink eye. You know, I just thought it was hilarious.

[37 : 32] Like great. You know? Yeah. And everyone's just so happy that they're there. Yeah. But like something like that, like. Yeah. Yeah. That can be a challenge. People just feel, people don't want to be the weird one. Right. Right.

And so what the tendency is, is to hide. Right. You know? And, and I get that. I get that. And also people are not always great to the weird one.

A lot of times, not so much in any kind of maliciousness or trying to be mean. Right. But just like what we saw with the disciples in John nine, you know, people just get dumb ideas in their head about people that are suffering.

Right. Like that was a dumb idea. Right. Which one of these, you know, who sinned? Right. Right. And, and there's a lot of, there's a lot of dumb ideas. That's just one of them. Right. So we know that so that when we're suffering, I think there is a tendency to hide just to make it less awkward on everybody else.

Sure. We don't want to be embarrassed. That the word sticks out. Yeah. Yeah. Anyway. I, I thought of second Corinthians 12, nine through 10.

[38 : 37] That's where Paul says that he had given this, he'd been given this surpassing vision. And because of the surpassing greatness of this vision caught up in the third heaven, the Lord sent a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh.

And three times he pleaded that the thorn would be removed. That was probably a physical disability. And, and the Lord said, you know, my grace is sufficient for you.

And one of the background pieces that may be edifying for people to know is, is that the Corinthian church was kind of, kind of all about strength and in the, in the classical Greek sense of that word. So rhetorical strength, physical strength, so forth. And they would see someone who was, you know, tall or rhetorically excellent or whatever.

They would see that person is especially blessed by God and having obvious favor. And then someone who was short or blind or whatever is having less favor. Right.

[39 : 44] So this church already struggled to respect Paul in general, but also some super apostles, which were fake wolf apostles came in and probably had a lot of those characteristics.

They were probably more dynamic. Right. They were physically probably more impressive and so forth. And you can read between the lines. I'm saying all this sounds like I'm making it up. I'm not. You just read through, read between the lines of first and second Corinthians.

And you pick up on Paul kind of responding to a lot of this stuff. Like, like, for instance, he is forceful in his speech when he writes, but in present, you know, in his, in his presence, he's nothing.

You know, so there's all this kind of stuff that's going on. Anyway. So Paul really had reason to hide his suffering, not only because it's just hard in general to be the suffering one, but also because this church was kind of mean to him.

Anyway. I thought about if you would read second Corinthians 12, nine through 10, I thought about this and just wanted to pass this on to folks. Sure. And it says, but he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you.

[40 : 52] My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I'll boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses. So the power of Christ may rest upon me for the sake of Christ.

Then I'm content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. When I'm weak, then I'm strong. Yeah. And I just, um, I wanted to encourage all of you out there who are walking in some kind of weakness to not hide.

Yeah. But to be like Paul, this is, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness. Yeah. And, you know, that was, um, people have been commenting about, you know, that I've lost some weight and I still have more weight to lose.

But man, that was such an embarrassing period of my life to be overweight. And it was, but there was also the embarrassing aspect of like having to not eat what everybody else was eating and, you know, so on.

And really one of the things that finally clicked for me was like, I'm just going to own this story that God has given me. Um, this is a lot. Yeah. And this is just this, yeah, this is just the lines of fallen and this is what I am.

[42 : 00] And this is, I don't, I don't eat, I don't do carbs very well or whatever the story is exactly. Or I have a predilection to gluttony or whatever the thing would be. And I was like, I'm just going to own this and like work on it in frailty and openly and transparently.

And, um, yeah. So, you know, I found that being a huge blessing for me to finally get over the need to be impressive in, in an area.

I had no shot at being impressive and, and just being like, no, that this is where I'm at. And, uh, I'm going to celebrate the next level of God's care for me, both in my wins and my losses.

Yeah. And what is winning, but being content and knowing Christ and displaying him, displaying him and his power. And we don't want to give all you, all you young men who are, you know, still kind of struggling with the, you know, the great American sin of lust.

We don't want to give you an excuse, but we do want you not to hide because this is another weakness and it's like, dude, yeah, just let Christ shine through you.

[43 : 03] Let his strength shine through you. Let his surpassing grace shine through you. Yeah. Don't revel in your sin, the sense of like, oh, I'm just a big sinner. I'll never get any better or so forth.

No strive for holiness for that, which no one will see the Lord. But that path to holiness is going to involve saying like, yeah, my thorn isn't so much, uh, physical, it's spiritual.

My thorn is I'm struggling with this thing right now. And I'm, I'm, I'm confident because it's a sin. The Lord will give me victory over it, but I'm also not going to hide. Right. And Christ will show his power to us all through, through his spirit, but then also through a community.

We're going to gather to help people pursue holiness. Yeah. And to me, I, sorry to be so self-referential to my, my own sermon that I preached, but again, pastorally, it was important to me.

And I would say that the, the image that I feel like I would point people to is when you're water skiing and you crash on the lake and, and you, you arise again, the, the, the life jacket gets the glory.

[44 : 08] And that's my life. My whole life is crash and burn. I, I rise. God gets the glory. That's everybody's life. Yeah. And it's the rising, um, it's the sustaining power of God to pull you up out of the latest, maybe a self-enforced, a self-inflicted error, but sometimes not, you know, uh, you know, uh, it's, it's God's ability to keep, keep you and to pick you up again and again and again and again.

Right. So that's one of the ways he's getting glory and he'll, he'll get us to heaven the way he's going to get us home. I was just reading Richard Sibb's, uh, glorious piece of the gospel.

And he talks about, um, he will, he will give us good or he'll give us adversity and, and his rod, but he'll get us home one way or the other. Hmm. Yeah.

Perfect. Anything else from you? Um, Wes is just actively texting me. This is the most West texts I've gotten, by the way, he's out of town.

He's, he's at a fire school and we've just been like enjoying Emily without Wes. So we've taken her out to dinner and, you know, yeah. That's a good time. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[45 : 25] I told her she's my favorite daughter-in-law. So. Yeah. I guess you can. I mean, you know, you know, that's, that's not hard, but anyway. All right, friends.

Well, uh, thank you so much for listening to this. And, uh, we will try to do these church chats followed with just a little bit of a spiritual kind of, uh, you know, encouragement to you, you know, monthly or so.

Yep. Be praying for all these things that are going on. And yeah, I would tell you that it'd be encouraging to hear from you on the, um, on the church remodel giving side of things just to, just to see.

More, you know, evidence that we're, we're heading in the right direction. And so forth. So, all right. Anything else? God bless. God bless. Good night. Yeah.

Thank you.