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Life, and Ministry, and Laughter with Jason Helopoulos

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

Listen as the two friends talk about the Land of Lincoln, about influential books and authors in their lives, and how the importance of friendship. You'll get to learn more about Jason's background, more about why he loves the PCA, and you'll get to hear his great laugh.

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An Able and Faithful Ministry: Samuel Miller and the Pastoral Office

Transcript

I'm glad to have you with us on LBE. I want to mention a couple of our sponsors first Crossway. I want to highlight the new book by Nancy Guthrie Saved.

Experiencing the promise of the book of Acts. Nancy has been working her way through the books of the Bible. She is a theologically reliable Bible teacher.

Especially for women, and she's a friend also, and this is a good book for individuals, for small groups, and will give you a robust understanding to the book of Acts. So you can pick up a copy of Saved by Nancy Guthrie, wherever books are sold, or you can go to crossway.org. Find out how you can get a 30% off discount with a crossway plus account. Also want to mention again, our sponsor Desiring God, and highlight the book by Tony Ranky.

Ask Pastor John, 750 Bible answers to life's most important questions. This is not a compilation of transcripts, but Tony took 2.3 million words, 10 years of John Piper's podcast. Ask Pastor John, and turn it on.

Turn it into this book. Sinclair Ferguson says one of those rare contemporary books that can be described as should be in every Christian home. Ask Pastor John by Tony Ranky, and thanks to Desiring God.

Greetings and salutations. Welcome to life and books and everything. I am joined today by a very special guest, Jason Halopolis.

Jason is the senior pastor at one of the best churches on the planet, University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan. It's Mary Talia. He has two kids.

He is an author, and he is one of my best friends, and he's a great pastor. So Jason, it's a long overdue. Thank you for coming on the podcast.

Well, thanks for having me. That was quite a build up there. I appreciate it.

Well, most of the listens are about 45 seconds. You might have lost them in the first five seconds there. Jason Halopolis, you don't look Greek.

How did you get that name? That is true. So, yeah, my grandfather adopted my dad. Actually, I didn't find out until I was in high school.

I was doing genealogical research, and all of a sudden dates were nagging up and realized, huh, I think there's something here I don't know. And so, I called my mom into the room and said, Mom, is there something I don't know? And she said, I can't answer that. My parents were divorced.

On that drive that he was adopted. And so one didn't know if I wanted to know anything. I said, yeah, I would like to know what, what would my last name have been? I just want to know that.

And so he said, what? I've never asked your grandma. So we pressed. My grandma didn't want to talk about my great grandma did.

And she said, all I know is his last name was Levine. So I literally went from Greek to Jew overnight, just like that. Yeah.

Yeah. So the gospel to the Jews first into the Greeks. This is it.

This is it. So you weren't adopted, but your dad was. And what was the thinking on keeping that hidden or was that a couple generations ago, just the way people did it.

Yeah, it was very much so. I mean, it was, it's a fascinating story. My grandma, when she got pregnant out of wedlock, they sent her down to Biloxi, Mississippi.

So they were in Parsons, Kansas, sent her down to Biloxi, Mississippi. And they put a local wedding announcement and the Parsons, Kansas newspaper saying she got

married to so-and-so, made up the name. She had my dad.

Then they put an obituary in the local Parsons, Kansas newspaper saying that that made up name that guy had died in the Korean war. And then they brought her back home with my dad. Well, at least he was a he was a made up person of valor.

He was he was a hero. So yeah, this was a different generation. And my dad didn't know till he was in high school.

I didn't know till I was in high school. And this is kind of how it worked out. Did this background affect your decision to adopt? It didn't.

No. Both of our kids are adopted. So I have a daughter that is now 19, son that's 16, and we adopted both of them from Taiwan.

And Lee and I always thought my wife always thought we would adopt eventually she nannied for a family that had adopted children and we fell in love with the idea of being able to bring a child into our home that didn't have parents. We thought we would have our own biological children first and just in the Lord's providence that never occurred. We just were never never never able to have children don't know why.

And so both of our children are adopted and they are in absolute delight. They are how often has that part of your story come up in pastoral ministries is something you or Leah talk to people about a lot because as pastors we know that people wanting to have kids waiting a long time or not being able to have kids at all. It can be a quiet, lonely, extremely painful ordeal and there are usually many more people like that in the church than you might think.

Yeah. I just got an email last night from a congregante asking, would you guys mind getting together because we're struggling and want to know what it looks like? Usually one, it's the questions. There are so many questions you have when you're starting to explore the realm of adoption.

It's just helpful to have someone that's gone through it a few steps ahead of you. The other is what you're pointing out. I mean, it's just it's the pain of it, especially for for the wife, just incredibly painful.

And so to be able to walk alongside of people and talk them through that and say, Oh, even in this the Lord. Lord has you. There is a plan in this and it is amazing.

You will find that as you bring these children to your home, you will love them and there will not be thoughts of that. This isn't our child note. This is this is your child and you will be just as delighted if not more delighted.

So just to be able to walk with people through that is a great blessing. It's an honor.

Have you written much about all that or is that a short book sometime in the future that whole process and journey.

Yeah, I've never written about it. Yeah. All right.

Well, some time you got enough. You got a lot to do, but sometime it will be an encouragement. What is the what are some of the worst pronunciations of your last name? Oh, my goodness.

And I was that in high school. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Because you, yeah, when what I think most people think of you, they think of hip hop. Yeah. Cool.

And Jason don't usually go in the same sentence. Let's see. Yeah.

Heliopolis is often one. A lot of healing. Yeah.

Yeah. A lot of that. They want to, they want to make you the sun.

They just they really do. They really do. Yeah.

Anything along those lines. If someone pronounces it correctly, that just feels like a win for mankind in that moment. It is.

Or they're Greek. Yeah. Or they're Greek.

Yes. This is true. Yeah.

Yeah. You don't get that. Where did you grow up? Grow up in Springfield, Illinois.

So people actually live in Springfield. I thought Springfield is just a museum to Abraham Lincoln. It's like real things there.

Oh, my goodness. It is a wonderful place. Love Springfield, Illinois.

And it's more than corn and Lincoln's tomb. There, there is. It's made up of great people.

Love Springfield. But yeah, when you grow up in Springfield, Illinois, this is where Abraham Lincoln spent most of his life. You think he hung the moon and it wasn't until I moved to your neck of the woods, North Carolina.

And I was shocked that people were not fans of Abraham Lincoln. This was a new category for me. So.

Well, I remember having a conversation with someone in Michigan. You like American pie, right? Yeah. You root for the Americans in the, in the Olympics.

Yeah. To find. Oh, there's, there's a lot of negativity that I didn't, I didn't grow, especially if you're from Springfield, Illinois.

Yeah. So I had a pastor friend that we brought here to URC to do a men's retreat and we were doing a Q and A. I was doing a Q and A with him one night. And he's from the south.

And so I was asking the questions and I did a few rapid fire. You know, so just answer yes or no to these. And so I threw in just in the rapid fire.

Abraham Lincoln good or bad. And he just immediately went bad. And there was an audible gas in the room.

Yeah. Yeah. He has not let me forget that.

And what was bad? That Lincoln was bad. He, he just, well, I know what did he say? He didn't know it was just rapid fire. No, no, it was just.

Yeah. Okay. Well, all right.

Well, we don't have to talk about that. Yeah. I don't want to embarrass Jason, but it's not flattery to say what when I think about what a pastor should be like.

I think of Jason. I know a lot of great pastors. Jason is really in my mind.

The pastor's pastor, not only a pastor to pastors. He does do that and he's been a good pastor and friend for me. But someone who really models the multifaceted aspects of pastoral ministry.

Jason, I think of you in the best sense of the word as a generalist. Now, there are certain things you specialize in. We all do.

And you speak and you write books and you do lots of things. But a generalist in the best sense of the word that you, you do counseling, you do visitation, you do discipleship, you meet with, you have to lead a session, you got to preach, you got to the whole thing. You're, you're doing it.

What do you most like about being a pastor and what are one or two of the things that are regularly on your plate that you wish weren't. That's kind. I don't know if that is true, but you know what I love about past dream more than anything is that people give me and grant me the great privilege of entering into the most vulnerable moments that they have and the greatest struggles that they have.

That they'll allow me to speak into it, whether that is a hard word. Think of a couple of conversations just this week. You know, we're.

Had to confront someone with a hard word and they would hear it from me and allow me to do that. Or whether it's the comforting word we're just going through extreme pain and anguish and think about a woman yesterday that I got to put my arm a side hug around and pray with her and think through just a great struggle that her and her family are going through right now.

That's just. It's amazing to me that people will invite me into those kind of spaces and you get to ride the joys with them and the lows with me. You get to pray with them.

You get to weep with them. You get to rejoice with them and celebrate with them. That we get a look into intimate moments that that frankly most people don't in the body of Christ.

The others I and I often tell pastor people that are in training for the pastor along these lines too is that it is. Because what will often be asked is how does your family survive this or how do your wife and kids and seems like it would take a toll when I say. Listen, there are difficulties, but.

There are so many more blessings. We get a front row seat to what the Lord is doing in our midst. It is a incredible joy to.

I know all kinds of things that are going on in people's lives and people will entrust all kinds of things to me as a pastor and tell me. Look, we're praying about this or we're hopeful for this or. And you get to pray about those things and you get a front row seat to see what the Lord is doing.

Everybody gets to see what the Lord is doing, but we especially get to see what the Lord is doing and that is just a great privilege. What I don't like the things. You know, the thing that takes the greatest toll in ministry, at least for me, is conflict.

There's just, as I tell men going in the past, you're going into a realm of conflict. It's all about conflict in that. As you preach, if you preach, you're going to unsettle people and there's going to be upsetness.

You're going to often be mediating conflict. You're often going to cause some conflict because you've sinned or led in a wrong way. You are constantly going to be involved in conflict and people are going to have struggles with you or with decisions or with one another or with sin in their lives or.

And some of those conflicts can take quite a toll and keep you up at night and maybe take some steam off of you. It's probably that, waiting into some of the conflicts, it feels like, oh, it sure would be nice if we can quickly move through this. That, and there is a lot of administration and pastry much more than I ever thought there could possibly be.

So probably those two things. I sometimes will say, I mean, there are three things. I'm

sure you could come up with a bigger list, but there's at least three things you absolutely have to do as a pastor.

Whether you say, well, it shouldn't be the case. It just is the case, at least for ministry that we know and in this country. One, you have to be able to preach reasonably well.

There's different kinds of expectations and churches, but especially in a reformed church in the PCA, you have to at least be able to preach reasonably well. Or you're not going to make it doesn't mean you can't do other kinds of ministry, but if you're the senior pastor, the solo pastor. So that's one, two, you have to reasonably love people well.

Again, you may not be the chief visitor, the chief counselor, but if you're aloof, if you're awkward to be around, if you're angry. And then third, what you just said, you have to either administrate or have enough sense to put people around you to administrate. Meaning there are people, you are going to serve with men on your session, probably who are successful in their own sphere of life and their businessmen or they do other things.

And whether they're good at it or not, they often live in a world where it's just a necessity. And I have seen pastors who have a good heart, they want to stay in unnecessary conflict because they simply don't understand that to not run a meeting well, to not follow through on an email, to show up late, to say you're going to do something, and then you don't. And it's really, you're not, you're not trying to be a liar, you just said something and you don't, you're not a good administrator and you don't follow up.

And then the men on the session get upset and there's, you're fighting with a whole bunch of things and it's really at its root, you got to learn how to do some basic administrative details. Is that something you, because my experience is you are good at that, Jason, is that something you've had to learn? What do you tell pastors who just don't know how to do that very well? Yeah, same as you, you got to surround yourself with people that can help you in it, or you got to labor diligently to grow in it. Because what your point is, people interpreted as either a lack of love or a lack of care, one of the two, right? You don't care enough about this to actually be organized, or you don't actually love us enough to carry through on these things.

And it can pull all the power out of people receiving the preaching that you're giving them, the teaching you're giving to them, the leading that you're providing. If they don't just see that, oh, he's organized enough, he cares about us enough that he doesn't waste your time in this meeting. And he loves us enough that he shows up when he says he's going to, and he's available.

It's incredibly important. Yeah, and sometimes guys just, there's some skills and tricks of the trade that they need to learn, or like you said, people will interpret it. So for

example, sometimes if a pastor's got a vision, he's got a great idea, and he brings it to the session, or whatever his board is, and he launches into it, and he's laid it out, and he's passionate.

And he senses the men are kind of tepid, they ask a whole bunch of questions. He interprets that as you don't trust me, you don't follow my leadership. When if he would have just backed up and said, you know what, I can't dump this on them and expect a yes vote.

He interprets their tepid response as these people aren't passionate about the Lord, they don't care about vision, they don't want to follow my leadership. When what they're really meaning is, brother, you haven't given us time to think about it, and most people don't make decisions quickly, churches certainly don't. Where if he would have first talked to his key leaders, and had a breakfast, and had a lunch, and then he would have given a chance to talk about it at a meeting, and just we're not making a decision, I want to get your feedback, I want to put your input.

And then, you know, to think through a six month process could make that vision exciting, stick, rather than jumping in, and also you have all sorts of unnecessary conflict where you are misinterpreting each other in what you're doing. I just think that happens in churches all the time, and a lot of it can be avoided. Agreed, I mean this administration is just a part of what your point out, the greater overall just leadership, and that's probably what most young men, more than anything, they're focused on the preaching when they go into the pastor, great, that's our primary.

But what most of them need to grow in more than anything, it seems like to me is prayerfulness and leadership, and I will tell young men that are coming through University Reform Church that we're training to be pastors. I would say every meeting we're in, I want you to be watching the room, and I want you to be saying, that's effective leadership, that's not, that was helpful, that wasn't, because when you're a pastor, every room you're in, you're a leader. Now you may not be the focal leader, but you're leading in some way or another.

And so I want you to gather, there's all kinds of different types of leaders, but there are certain things that make people effective leaders, and make them effective in the moment. That's also why I read a lot of history, read a lot of presidents, read a lot of generals about generals. So I'm always trying to think through how are they leading well, and we're a ways that they failed in leading and then trying to examine my own life and say, ah, Jason, you could be so much better in that realm if only you were doing this or practicing that.

And don't you think that there are so many things we can't control? I remember Tim Keller saying one time something like, you know, if you're a healthy, fruitful, hardworking pastor, you should be able, in enough years, to have a healthy, fruitful ministry. Now he

said, the kind of explosive growth that some churches have, and like he had at Redeemer, he said, that there's so many factors outside your control. But he was certainly right in this, if you find a church that is really dysfunctional, and I don't mean you drop in and there's conflict, because you could drop in any church and there's conflict.

But all the way through, there's just a unhealthiness, a spiritual mass, or the opposite for whatever kind of conflicts are happening here and there, because it always does. There's a pervasive sense of being at rest, of being happy, of being healthy. I think both of those radiate out from the leadership of the pastor, they radiate out from his home, and then those concentric circles.

And like you said, it's one of those things that, yes, we're not denigrating the preaching at all. The preaching is like, I don't know the right now, it's like the engine, and you've got to have the engine to get the car going. But if you're putting antifreeze into your gas tank, it's not going to run very well.

How have you either had to grow as a leader, or do these things come natural? How much of this is caught, and how much is taught for pastors? I think there are some that are just natural leaders, and I also think the Lord, for some of us, pre-conversion, or even when we were just young men and already converted, I mean, he uses different things to shape and mold us as leaders, and puts us in different opportunities, boy scouts and sports and things like that. But I think it's always something that you can grow in, and that you can learn to become if you're not that yet. Because there's so many different types of leaders, there are some men that just have it intellectually.

So they hold a room because you know they're the smartest man in the room. So when they say something, it matters, and it has weight. There are some men that have great charisma.

I mean, it's just, oh, I want to follow him. He's going up that mountain, I'm going up that mountain. He's just, there are other men that it's just, they say the right thing at the right time, and they have real love for the people, and the people sense that they love me.

He loves me. And so to listen, there are other men that just have wisdom. All of our gifts that were differently gifted, I truly think anybody can be a leader.

It just looks a little different through the gift mix that the Lord has given to you. So it's figuring out how do I become a leader with the gifts that the Lord has given to me? How do I grow in the way that he's made me, not become the leader that I'm not meant to be, but the leader that I am with my personality and with my gift mix. And that's where history is so helpful to me.

I'm always looking for these men that say, he's more like me. And how was it that the Lord used him and how did he grow? And I'm trying to model some of those things in my own life. What you said there about understanding your own gifts and there's things we can grow in, but you and I were both close with Harry Reader and Harry was called the general for a reason.

Because his knowledge of military history, but he was that kind of leader. I had a lot of charisma, a lot of gravitas, and he led in that way. But other people in different ways, I don't want to embarrass him, but I was at some meetings at Crossway recently in Lane Dennis, the founder of Crossway.

I don't know how Lane is now 70s or 80s. His quiet, ever-present piety and prayerfulness and love for every person in that room. Everyone was, you'd be hard pressed to have a different personality than you and I saw with Harry.

And yet leadership, because you knew that this person loved and cared for you. And so when you talked, everyone wanted to be quiet and listened and wanted to do what he wanted to say. It's really important, lest we think our preaching needs to look like somebody else, our leadership needs to look like somebody else.

I want to come back to the pastoral ministry stuff, but I want to back up and get some more of your biography, Jason. So when did you become a Christian? In college, I went to a state university as an atheist, a self-declared atheist, was a very committed atheist. Tony Romo led you to the Lord.

Not quite, but he was there while I was there. So Eastern Illinois University, home at Tony Romo, Sean Payton. Oh, yeah.

Steve Maryucci, I think, went there. We have a tree at Eastern Illinois. But it was there that I first really heard the gospel in the way that the Lord opened the eyes of my heart.

It was there through a Christian fellowship. What I remember distinctly, so there was a friend in high school that made me promise that I would go to this Christian fellowship once. So I said, okay, I'll go once.

So then she did one better. She called up her classman, had them hound me and say, he promised me. So they called me every day for the first week of school.

And so finally to get them to stop calling, I just went. And when I went, I walked into this Christian fellowship and there were probably, I don't know, 80, 90 students there and three things immediately grabbed me. One, I was shocked that there were this many people my age that were excited to be at, quote, church.

I thought, what is wrong with them? And the second was, is that they seem to be mixing with each other. Like they were all talking with each other. I thought, this is odd.

I was putting them in categories and they were all mixing. And the third was, I thought, there was a palpable love in the room. I don't know how to explain it.

You know, when you've experienced it in the church or among Christians, but I experienced it that night where they were just loving each other. And I just thought they were really strange, really weird. And I thought, I was a curious young man.

I was always inquisitive. And so I really kept going back just to find out what was so strange about them. I just wanted to know what made them tick.

And that's the Lord Jesus said, you know, you will know them by their love for one another. And I think that's what grabbed me. And so it was then just sitting under the preach word where I knew nobody.

And an arrogant, proud young man that always had his mouth flapping had just to sit quietly and hear the word. And the Lord opened the eyes of my heart. And when did you think you wanted to go into ministry? When I was in between my junior and senior year, I got married in college, but I was kind of thrust into different leadership things in that Bible fellowship.

And I was leading different studies and I didn't know the Bible, but was leading. And so I remember asking people, how do you learn the Bible? And they said, well, if you really want to learn the Bible, you'd go to seminary. I thought, OK, well, I'm going to go to seminary then.

So I went to seminary just to learn the Bible. That's the only reason I went. It was, I went down for a THM and it was so it was in between my third and fourth year in seminary.

And I was really wrestling with whether I was called to the pastor. It was one of those things I knew but didn't know when I was looking around the classroom. And I thought, you know, they're all here to be pastors.

Maybe I'm supposed to be a pastor and I was wrestling with. And I came home to my wife one day who was incredibly wise and I had been wrestling with it for a number of weeks. And I said, I just don't know how you discern whether you're called to be a pastor.

And now this is unique to me. I don't think everybody has to have this experience. But I said, you know, there's some that will tell me, well, if you can be happy doing anything else, then you should do something else.

I said, well, that just can't be the case. I mean, there are all kinds of servants of the Lord. Moses wouldn't have done what he did.

No, I always thought that's a bad test. That's a bad test. Other people would tell me, well, if you have the gifts then you're called to.

I said, well, that just can't be the case. There are women that are better leaders and teachers than many of us men in the pastor. So that's not, that's not the ultimate.

And I started listing things like this. And my wife just looked at me and she said, Jason, do you think you would be obedient if you did anything else? And I felt like I just got walloped upside the head in that moment. I mean, it was, I just knew, yeah, I would be disobedient if I did something else.

So it was there. And why did you go to Dallas Theological Seminary? And then how did you get from Dallas to a Presbyterian greater than which none can be conceived? I went to Dallas. It was the early days of the internet.

And I can remember when my roommate took me to the, to the campus library. And he said, I want to show you this thing called Google. And he showed me.

And I thought, hmm, what? This isn't a big deal. I mean, what's a big deal about this? But it was early days of the internet where you could Google something. And so I remember googling one day, best seminaries in the country.

And some guy had already erected a webpage where he listed the top seven seminaries in his mind. And Dallas was on that list. And I called every one of them.

And Dallas stood out to us for whatever reason. So Lee and I went down there for a, they called it discovered Dallas days back then. And we went down on the plane ride down there.

I made a list of something like 25 things that had to be answered if we were ever going to do this. And on the return flight home, we were laughing because every single one had been answered. And some in pretty crazy ways.

So we just felt like that's where we're supposed to go. We, again, I knew nothing of the Bible knew nothing theologically. And the campus pastor that I came to save in faith under.

He said, Jason, you're going to Dallas. Let me warn you about two things, steer away from dispensationalism and Calvinism. And so those are the only two things I knew going down to Dallas.

I needed to stay away from 50 50 50 50. But while I was down there, there were two things that happened. One was I took a Jonathan Edwards class at Dallas.

And he was the first person and I've read a lot of people since then met a lot of people since then. But he was the first person that I read that I felt like he was truly wrestling with the deep things of God with the mind. And he had a true heart for Christ.

And that's the kind of man I wanted to be. So I started devouring everything I could that

Edwards wrote. The second was is that there was a one of the founding fathers of the PCA by the name of Paul Settle.

He actually chaired the steering committee that started the PCA. He was down there at the time and was an associate pastor at a church. And he and his wife, Georgia, would cook a big breakfast on Saturday mornings.

And we would show up at their house about six 30 in the morning. And it was a Westminster confession of faith study group for DTS students. And so there were there are probably about 20 of us that are in the PCA.

DTS theological seminary grads from those years that just fell in love with the reformed faith going through the confessions with Reverend Settle. So where did you go to church? Ended up at Park Cities when we got down there. I remember we first went to Park Cities Presbyterian Church.

But I was at Dallas theological seminary. And within the first three months, it became clear to me. I remember coming home to Leah one day and saying, I don't know what it is.

But I do know that what I'm hearing in the classroom is different from what I'm hearing in the pulpit. And I don't have the categories. I don't have categories for this.

And I'm getting confused. And I just can't do this. And so we left and went to a Bible church for a good year, a year and a half.

And during that time, I became reformed. And so we returned back to Park Cities Presbyterian Church. So you mentioned Edwards.

I'm curious. I think I may know the answer, but I'm not sure I've asked you this before. So who would be some of those other guys that, okay, if you got to understand.

Jason Halopolis, you know, Colin Hanson wrote that wrote the, you know, sort of biography on Tim Keller and. And said, okay, you got to, you got to understand CS Lewis and. Lloyd Jones and Edwards and Richard Lovelace.

So who are those people that threw it all into the, the pot. And shaped who you are, especially as a pastor. Yeah.

I mean, living, well, or, or recently living. Reverend Settle is one of them. He's now at home with the Lord.

Legan Duncan had a huge influence upon me and still does. Early years, Sinclair Ferguson does as a preacher. But the guys that are, that are dead, that have probably shaped me more than anybody.

It's Edwards and it's his, his passion for the Lord, his focus upon the affections. That has had a huge impact upon me. John Newton as a pastor.

I have learned more about pastoring from reading John Newton's letters than I have from anybody. John Bunyan and wrestling with the Lord and thinking about the entire Christian life has shaped me dramatically. And then probably the next would be Thomas Watson.

I've read a lot of Thomas Watson and he is, he has shaped me in the way that he can paint pictures in the mind in the way that he speaks and preaches the way that he brings teaching to life. I want to be a preacher and a teacher that when people hear things that they're lost in what they're hearing instead of thinking about the man that they're lost in the picture. And Thomas Watson does that for me.

And then, you know, probably the final and of recent years who's greatly influenced me Samuel Miller, who was the second professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, was really one of the pillars of Presbyterianism in America in the first century. And what I love about Miller is Miller was a man who loved the church and I love the church. This is Christ Bride.

He loved the church. And he was a man that was by all accounts, even as his greatest opponents that he would argue against would say he was just a gentleman. He was just marked by piety.

So he's marked by piety and learning. And I want to, oh man, I want to understand more of Christ. I want to dwell deeper on the things of Christ.

But I don't want to just to be in my mind. I want to be a man that experiences more of Christ. And I want to have to ooze out my pores and Miller was one of those kind of men.

So he sits on my shoulder an awful lot. It's interesting. I was just jotting down who I would say and I love all those and have read those people that you mentioned.

I didn't write down any of the same people. Get out of here. I didn't put Witherspoon on there just because, you know, so much of these are really what did you read when you were first growing as a Christian.

So Witherspoon now, I mean, I did my doctor work in love with Witherspoon. But Lloyd Jones, Piper, David Wells. That's one of the reasons I went to Gordon Conwell.

Turretan, Burkhoﬀ, Machen, Heidelberg catechism. That was my list. Love it.

You like all those things. I like all those things. I like all those things.

But maybe the armchair psychologist can see some difference as you lean into the Puritans and experiential pie. And I'm going for some of the scholastic, but yeah, not too

much difference between us. So you're in the PCA and we'll get to URC and we were there serving together.

And URC was in the RCA at the time. And you were not going to come into the RCA. You labored out of bounds in the PCA.

And so I've always known your heart for the PCA. Give us just as of now, August 2024. Are you bullish on the PCA? What is your elevator conversation when somebody says, how are you feeling about the PCA? My answer is always, I'm bullish.

Listen, I love the PCA and I'm biased. And this is, I'm sure it's going to rub some people the wrong way. But I think it's the best thing going.

And I shouldn't be in it. I think if I had a different opinion. But I love it because it's committed to its confessions.

You can't walk into a PCA church and not hear the Bible. It is a denomination that's focused on the scriptures. And it has all of that and it's concerned for the lost.

And we haven't lost that heartbeat. And that to me is incredibly encouraging. I look at what encourages me the most as the young men that are being pumped out of our seminaries right now.

I mean, you get a front row seat of a third RTS Charlotte, but these are men that truly love the word. Love reformed theology and love people and love the Lord. And I'm just impressed by the young men that are coming out.

And they're zealous to reach people with the gospel. They're on college campuses. Some of them are going to rural areas.

Some of them are going to big cities. I'm very encouraged about the PCA right now. I am too.

I mean, we have our problems. You could point it in easily always. But, you know, if you're going to have 400,000 people, you're going to have some people that you don't see eye to eye with.

And yet, I think I'm very thankful for many things in my previous denomination, the RCA. And I want to be respectful. But I always felt like I needed to tell people leaving our church.

Don't just go to an RCA church. You really want to, unless we tell you to, I'm probably not going to work. I feel like, yes, there's some PCA churches I would disagree with in some significant ways.

But I feel like I'm very comfortable with a default. Like, go and see what the PCA church

is there in your town. And, you know, it's not all roses everywhere.

Not everyone is a fan of Jason Halopolis or Kevin DeYoung in the PCA either. But I think it's more reformed than it was a generation ago. You would know that better than I would.

I think it's gotten much more conservative in a good way in the last five or seven years. Or I think even that conservative just clarified some things around sexuality. So, and the people coming out of the RTS and the Westminster's, our seminaries are encouraging.

You know, when we, when University Reform Church came to the PCA in 2015, we can joke about it now, though it didn't feel so funny at the time. You know, then Ben Faulkner, our friend, was called to a PCA church and left and was at 2016. And then the beginning of 2017, John Saunders was called to play in a church for the PCA in Detroit.

And then I was called and I came here to Christ Covenant. And I know URC felt like, well, man, when we were in the RCA, nobody liked you. Nobody liked any of our pastors.

And now we're in the PCA and suddenly you got a home here. But it has been a home. With all those positive things, Jason, then just real briefly, I bet a lot of our listeners are not familiar with the ins and outs of the PCA.

What is the GRN? What is the Gospel Reformation Network that you're on the board of? What does that seek to accomplish in the PCA? Yeah. So the Gospel Reformation Network, it's been a joy to serve on that board for, I don't know how many years now, maybe a decade or so. But it was started because there were some concerns about differing views on sanctification that were kind of working their way into the PCA.

Some of the Tullian debates. Yeah, some of the Tullian stuff. And so it started because of that.

But what it's become is just really a kind of platform to help encourage and cultivate good Presbyterian churches. So we put together seven couplets a number of years ago. And those seven couplets just kind of say, look, this is what a Presbyterian Church should be focused on.

And this is what it should look like. And I think every Presbyterian should be able to agree with those seven couplets. And all we're trying to do and we've been doing the last number of years is just to help promote that kind of view of planting and growing and continuing to mature Presbyterian reform churches along those lines.

Overlapping with that but not identical is a group that you've had for many years. You call your band of brothers. What is this and how has this been a key role in your pastoral longevity? Yeah.

I have a lot a number of friends. You are one of my dearest friends. And we we keep track of each other quite well.

I'm not in the band of brothers. My band of brothers. Yes.

We have a two person band of. This is two. We're on the side.

I'm very happy for all your brothers. Yes. So it was a number of years ago.

I watched over the course of months where there were four pastor friends. Men that I would have counted as friends that all had a moral failing in a significant moral failing. Three of them lost their families.

One ended up in prison for 12 years. All of them lost their ministries. And I was looking at that.

And the thing that struck me about each of them is that I thought, you know, I counted each of them as friends. But the reality was is they weren't really friends. They were acquaintances.

And I started thinking about them more and thinking it. When I look at their relationships, I don't know anybody that truly knew them. That really knew the ins and outs of what was going on in their hearts and their minds.

And it seemed to me that was a common thread in each of their lives. And I thought I could be one of those men. I mean, it's easy.

The pastor is one of those things where everybody thinks they know you because you stand up front and you'll get personal illustrations here and there. And you're talking with people in the hallways. And everyone feels like they know you.

And the reality is you can be the most known person in the room while equally being the least known person in the room. And I think a lot of pastors live their lives in that bubble. And nobody really knows what's going on in their heart.

So a number of years ago, I guess it was probably 14 or so years ago now, 12 years ago. I can't remember somewhere in there that I called up six, seven other brothers that I thought they all have different gifts. They all have differing personalities, but we're all the same in this and that we love our local churches.

We're involved in the denomination. And I thought it would be a good gift mix of putting together. And I asked each of them, would you want to enter into a kind of band of brothers where what we do is we will have a zoom call each month.

Where we're going to share about our lives. And we're going to be praying for each other. And then we're going to get together three times a year.

We get together at General Assembly. We get together at what's called Twin Lakes Fellowship, which is a gathering of pastors 200 or so. But my band of brothers commits to go to that each year.

And then we get away for a three day retreat each year. We're literally on that three day retreat. All we do is press into each other's lives and ask hard questions and pray.

And then the thing that really helped along the way was we started up a text thread as well. So my phone will blow up every day with a question or with this prayer request. Or does anybody know about this? And it just maintains that connection and it has been lifeblood for me in that.

I know I have men around the country that are praying for me men that know me. Men that are going to ask the hard questions. Men that are going to encourage when you need it.

And I also say it's wonderful because I have it's like having text at theologian on your phone where I got it. I got a theological question. I can send it out to seven of the brightest guys I know.

And I got an answer within 30 seconds. So that's a good thing. Yeah, I've thought one of the questions search committees need to ask is tell me about some of your closest friends.

Now you can fake it and somebody could come up with something. But you really need to press in on that. And probably something as pastors we need to ask some of our elders or deacons or office for training.

Because beware the man who doesn't really have any friends. And I don't mean just networking and acquaintances and people that he has to do things with. I mean, tell me about who are you.

You know, we use this antiquated technology of WhatsApp. You and I do sometimes and with other friends. But yeah, who's on that text thread? What do you laugh about? What are you doing? It cannot be overestimated the importance of having friends.

Obviously, it's not foolproof. You can have friends and still mess up your life. But boy, there are a lot of warning flags that go up when you don't have that.

So any men listening to this do, you know, right now this week think about what can I do to, you know, maybe it's the person on the other side of town and say, brother, this may sound awkward. Could we just meet together? And you got to allow that maybe he says, I don't have time for that. But you need to put something like that in place.

There are so many dangers and to do it by ourselves. And you hit on Jason. You know,

I've never agreed with people to say you can't have be friends with people in your congregation.

No, of course you have you have friends. If you really say that to yourself, no, and people should understand you're not going to be equally close with everyone. Look, Jesus had, you know, 120 and then 70 and then 12 and then three went up on the mountain.

It's just the way human work. However, you hit on it, our relationships and paths from ministry will be asymmetrical, meaning they are going to know more about you, at least on that one level, then you don't get from them an hour of monologue each week, but they get that from you. They're not leading you in the same way.

So that you can still have real friends, but you just have to understand it's a different kind of relationship with asymmetrical. So you need those people in your life that it is symmetrical. They know you.

You know them. You don't have to lead them to do something so really important. And I've always respected that you have that band of brothers and have deeply appreciated your friendship.

Let me let me let me jump in, though, on that. So then bearish you for a second. You have been such a dear friend over the years and some of the things that I know about friendship, I learned from Kevin to young.

So when I first moved to East Lansing to plant a church, someone said, Oh, there's a pasture your age across town. You should get to know. And you hadn't written anything yet.

We didn't know each other. And we got together at Coral Gables. It's like only where 80 year old people go for lunch.

The two of us sat there and we hit it off. And you and I started getting together every couple of weeks or so for conversation and accountability. But one of the things that you did was you were very intentional in our meetings in those early years.

I remember where I noticed it took me a couple of months. But you would come with this is a question I have for Jason. And you would ask a question and it would be, Jason, what is it that is most on your heart these days about the church you're pastoring.

And it would just start us in conversation or you were very intentional in that way. And I've watched that over the years and that's greatly influenced me as I have conversations with people. Well, that's very kind.

Thank you. And I've learned a lot as well. So mutual admiration society will celebrate later with some Lincoln regalia.

Okay. And Jason has a great laugh, which is one of the things that everyone who knows Jason appreciates. I want to take a moment to mention a couple other sponsors, Reformation Heritage Books, RHB.

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I would be remiss as we're coming up on the hour mark if we didn't ask you about the churches that you've served. And it's one of the things that I really believe young men in particular can learn from someone like you, Jason. You have served as an associate in a small town in North Carolina.

You went in church planted and then you served on staff at a medium church, a university reform church. Now you're the senior pastor of this church. Just tell us some of the different things you've learned in the different not only locations, but sizes and ministry roles.

It's good. The first church I served in was Medeville Reform Presbyterian Church in Lexington, North Carolina. As you said, it's a rural community.

But they, what I loved about that congregation, I'm going to be there here in a few weeks. I get to return, they're having me back for a missions conference and I'm just delighted. About an hour north of Charlotte.

An hour north of Charlotte. Yeah. About a half hour south of Winston-Salem.

They just loved each other and they loved the gospel. It was a family church, a lot of

close families. I learned a lot about just loving people in that church.

They were very kind and gracious with an overzealous young man. There I did youth ministry and family ministry and they were just very gracious with me. It was there that I learned that there are times to be quiet and there are times to defer and that it's so important to learn the story of the church you're serving.

There's so many things that inform a local church and a lot of it's in its history. So I learned a lot a lot about sitting down with older members of the congregation and picking their brains about what is it that you love about this church. Tell me the story of this church.

What formed this church? What were the different epochs in this church? The different dispensations in this church? What were the different highs and lows? All kinds of things come out and just knowing that history, that became key and they taught me that there. I went from there to plant a church here in East Lansing, a PCA church, Providence, PCA. And there I learned the importance of the centrality of preaching and that you also have to pastor as you preach.

It was a small work and then it began to grow. Learned a lot about perseverance in ministry there. It's not easy to be a church planter.

And the Lord taught me an awful lot about calling and persevering and loving people. It was a humbling time for me in many ways. And it was a growing time for me in many ways.

And from there I went to the University of formed church and was a system associate pastor under you. I think at URC I learned the importance of going deep. And I learned a lot about the differences between small churches and medium churches, the large churches, that they just have to operate differently and pastors have to operate differently.

And those were new categories for me. I think one of the things that you taught me an awful lot when I first got to URC is I had been a church planter. And before that I had been at a church in North Carolina and both of them had gone through different trials while I was there.

And I think I hold people too tightly. And you and Ben helped me to realize that sometimes you got to let people go. And that's not easy for me as a pastor.

That's not my nature. And that was one of the things that I just remember lights going off as soon as I was at URC and we were hashing through different things. And you would let some people go.

And there's a health to that. The Lord moved some people on. And I was clinging too

tightly to some people.

I learned a lot about leading from the second chair under U. Yeah, I always said about you and Ben. Not everyone can do it really to lead from the first chair and the second chair. Meaning it's a mark of gifts and also humility and leadership.

You know, some guys can only lead if they're the first guy and they're just, they are recluses in the back or they're just under mind if they're not the number one guy or they're only comfortable being the number two guy. And that's fine. Some people are slotted for one or the other.

But you and Ben were really good at that. And it's something that I saw in you and now you're leading URC and things are going as well as they ever have been. So I interrupted you, but just say more about that leading from the second chair and the first chair.

Well, don't you think I think it's harder to find a good associate assistant pastor than it is a solo or senior pastor? Yeah, I think that's right. The gift to mix for a guy that really excels in that it's just, it's hard to find. Unless you're, unless you're getting the 27 year old out of seminary who knows he's on his way to be a senior pastor and he's probably going to do this for three years and he's doing it.

But a guy who's going to be in it for a little bit. Yeah, you're right. That's hard to find.

It's hard to find a guy that is content and not striving for something more. A guy that respects and yet isn't a sick event. The senior pastor, a guy that can lead.

But follows a guy that will be honest with the senior pastor and yet it's always tinge with humility and respect it. A guy that knows and you can trust with leading up front and yet he's not directing attention to himself. I mean, there's so many things that go into that associate system that the weight that men carry in that position.

It's pretty significant and a good, good associate pastor where he's not looking to move on to the next thing or how do I find that solo or senior pastor call that's beyond this. Those are just hard guys. Fine.

You and I've talked about this especially some of the larger churches. I remember you coming home one day from Bethlehem when Piper was there. And I remember you saying, you know, you go to some of these large churches and you realize the guys that are associates or assistants at these places.

They're such great leaders and they're so gifted. They could be leading the church of four or five hundred years. So it's thought that.

Yeah. Yeah. And yet the humility to be able to stay where they're at and strive with all their heart where they're at.

I mean, it just it takes a unique man. So very good. You said good alliteration, supportive, but not a sick offense because you don't want to just be a yes man.

And this is on us as senior pastor sometimes. We don't always realize that we can be more intimidating than we think or we feel like, I'm nothing. You know, anybody could tell me what they think.

And we may have to lean into really pull it out of somebody who more than we realize may be nervous to give us their honest opinion about something. So we don't want just yes men, but you want someone you want people who are supportive. I remember at a church, you know, where I was hearing the associate pastor and the senior pastor and they had some disagreements and the associate pastor was frustrated with some things.

And I think he was probably in the right in what he was thinking about some things theologically. But I remember one of one of the one of the elders said to do now this can sound off. This is sound like, you know, bad charismatic theology, but he said, don't lay a hand on the Lord's anointed.

Now, I know you can twist that like the big guy's always right. That's not what he meant. What he meant was, look, if David with as bad a king as Saul was wanted to show respect, then you want somebody in those positions to do the same.

If you just can't serve under a man, then you need to move on. But that sort of thing is difficult to do. Now, let me talk about because we're almost out of time and I want to mention some of Jason's books.

So this one is the series that Jason is editing on the blessings of the faith that PNR puts out. So these, there's a number of these little books. So here's one.

This is by Guy Rashard on persistent prayer. Maybe the world's greatest forward ever to the series. It is a great, great forward.

By Kevin DeYoung and Jason, you did the one on baptism. David strain on expository preaching. Guy on prayer.

What other ones are out now? We have one on worship by John T. Rhodes, who I just think is a great writer. We have one out by Jonathan Masters on Reformed Theology. Jonathan Cruz has one out on church membership.

Down at Kalamazoo. Got a new one coming out pretty soon. It will be the inaugural announcement here.

Your buddy in mind there and Charlotte Blair Smith has one coming out on creeds, confessions. So very excited. So this is a great little series, especially for Presbyterian Reformed churches out there.

A neglected grace family worship in the Christian home. Jason, when people at conferences ask me about family worship, I always just say, talk to Jason. Jason is an excellent model, much better than I am of faithful family worship.

So this, you have some other books about children, about families in worship, and which we sell at our books nook. So get that. And then this one, which I'm assigning as one of the options in my pastoral ministry class at RTS, the new pastor's handbook, help in encouraging for the first years of ministry.

I read a book like this. I even forget who wrote it. But when I was in ministry, starting out, maybe in my last year's seminary, first year's of ministry, and it was a senior, a seasoned pastor who just went through short pastors, just chapters, and talked about funerals and sermons and leading session meetings and mistakes he's made.

And I was so glad when you did this book. So tell us what, real quickly, what's the burden behind this book and what's in here? The new pastor's handbook, which we want to be clear, it's not the nude pastor's handbook. That would be true.

It's hard to say it correctly, but the new pastor's handbook. Appreciate that clarification. Yeah.

You know, it's just trying to pass on things that people passed on to me. So I've had a lot of wonderful mentors in my life that have shaped my pastoral ministry. And it's just, you know, quick little wisdom things in thinking through things a little more.

Some of the practical sides of ministry and some of the things that maybe we just don't quite touch on as much in seminary. Love that seminary is focused on systematic theology and the languages and biblical theology, et cetera. And we need all that more, but this just tries to round it out a little bit.

Yeah, it's a very good book. Forward by Ligon Duncan. So slightly inferior forward, but, you know, it was decent.

And what are, just give us a few of your favorite pastoral ministry books. Young guy says, what should I read? Or if you were teaching the PT class, what would be the two, three to five books you would want them to read. Number one in my mind is Thomas Murphy.

Early 19th century. He wrote a book called a pastoral theology. It is wonderful.

What he does is he walks through the pastor in the pulpit, the pastor in his prayer closet, the pastor in the counseling room, the pastor in relation to other denominations, the pastor. And he's just walking through each of those and it's just, it's brilliant. You've mentioned that before.

I don't have that one. Who publishes it? Is it? I think it's out of print. You can get kind of these reprints.

Was he a Southern Presbyterian? I don't know. I don't know. I haven't done research on who he is, but it's brilliant.

I think second would be, I love Stott's little book, *The Preacher's Portrait*, where he just takes five kind of words regarding the pastor and does kind of word study on them. Timothy Whitmer's book is always good. The Shepherd leader just kind of setting an overall kind of framework.

But the two that I want to keep returning to and I mentioned one earlier, read Newton's letters. Young pastor. I mean, think through, how is he getting to the issue that the person's actually struggling with? And he approaches people different ways based upon what he knows of them.

And so when you're reading it, you need to think about how he's doing it as a pastor. He's an incredible pastor. So that, and then you and I have a, well, a little bit of disagreement on this book.

I do believe Kevin, but I love the little book and able and faithful ministry about Samuel Miller that. James Garrison did it. Yeah.

No, you and I love James Garrison. Yeah. That book though, I think this was just teasing you when it came out.

It was, it was like you were no longer a cessationist. Well, that's what I was saying. I think that's where we disagree.

I put it number one. To me, it is the number one book out there because I just, I fell in love with Samuel Miller reading that book and fell in love with just wandering through all that. So I know he's not, he's not John Witherspoon to you, but I love Samuel Miller.

And so we disagree in that way. So that book is, is, I love that book. Yeah.

No, he's great. Last thing or second, the last thing, give us an update on your health. I know you just sent out an update to the congregation at University Reform Church.

If you're willing to share, there'd be people who would love to be praying for you. Yeah, I appreciate that. Last year, about this time, I was diagnosed with cancer with melanoma and had surgery and just a few weeks ago, about a month ago, it, I have a recurrence.

And so we'll be getting treatment here and have another surgery in my future. We'll start immunotherapy here this week, actually. So when welcome people's prayers, I though him, this isn't just a pastor's speak, I'm truly at peace.

I'm in the same hands I've always been in, and they are the best of hands. And I'm thankful to be in those hands. So no matter where it leads.

So it's, I mean, it's anytime you get the C word, that's hard to hear and coming back is hard. But there's some good options. There's good treatment.

There's good plans ahead. So that's hopeful, but ultimately the hope is in the Lord's care as you and I have often remarked to each other, you know, that famous line. We are invincible as long until we get to the end of the days that the Lord has measured for each of us.

And that doesn't mean we ought to be careless or foolish. And it gives us means to extend those days. But it should give a joyful confidence.

The Lord will get done what he wants with us. And then he'll get his work done with other people. That is right.

So you have been a good testimony and I'm sure your congregation is seeing that. And it seems like you're feeling fine. I feel great.

Yeah, I feel great. It's one of the benefits of melanoma unless it is taking over my brain or something like that. That there really aren't major side effects.

Now there can be from these drugs that all start, but there aren't major side effects in that kind of way. So very thankful for that. You know, what often goes through my mind is, I've told you or see this is, you know, polycarbon, when he's standing there in the in the Colosseum and says 80 in four years, he has done me no wrong.

And that's my savior. He's done me no wrong. And he has done me no wrong with this with this cancer.

It is, it is the gift in the moment, though it's not a gift that you wish for. And we will, by God's grace, use it for his glory and keep on keeping on. I want to let you go because I know Mondays you do grocery shopping.

Uh huh. And there's just a rule in our house. No, no comparing me to Jason when it comes to cooking and grocery shopping.

Sorry, ladies. He's already taken. He does all the grocery shopping and he does the cooking.

Uh, I mean. That's because I can't do half the things that you do, Kevin. I got to fill my space and my time somehow.

Oh, man. I will say I do go to the grocery store every day. And so do like three or four others in our family.

We are at the grocery store all the time. Um, I cook often for myself chips and cheese and Mountain Dew. Yeah.

I've taken that. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

It is great. No, you, you are a, a good model for us all hard for the, the brothers out there. But my last question I mentioned earlier, you do have a great laugh and it is a gift to people.

Uh, you know, on, when Colin and Justin and I are talking people often remark, Colin has a, has a great. Yeah. And so do you.

What, what do you do? This may sound unspiritual, but I think it's, it's really important. How have you kept a sense of humor and life and in ministry? I mean, you and I could, could share some stories. I do think it's important for pastors to laugh.

I know we all have our personality. It's, it's important even to be laughed at. Sometimes I look at, at guys out there in ministry right now who they have a sense of humor, but at least what I see of them publicly.

It seems to be they can get with their buddies and laugh at other people. I want to know who's laughing at you. There's something that's really helpful.

And I mean, we made funny you Jason for, you know, some of your outfits on our pastors retreat. This is true. I remember, yeah, I remember you saying to me one day he said, I was wearing these socks and you mentioned Ben's daughter Claire.

You said, Oh, did you borrow Claire socks? Yeah, you always said great. Yeah, we're like sitting out on the beach and you're in hiking boots and knee length socks. It's like channeling Francis Shafer or something.

And the shirts that you would call my bowling shirts when they were Cuban. Cuban Cuban shirts. They were like loose fitting, multicolored polyester shirts.

You come into work and be like, Jason, did you, how's the league going? And you remember the one time at one of those retreats? I have to tell you, I'm a much, much better swimmer now, but I don't know what I was doing. I jumped off. I don't know if I was racing.

You're racing. You're racing. Yeah.

Yeah. And I like just like an outboard motor. And then I don't think I had anything I looked up and I had just gone in about four tight circles.

Yes, yes. You were out of the wrong direction, but very quickly headed in the rough direction. I mean, I was intent on winning that race.

And when I popped up for air, all I heard were tackles of laughter from the, from the boat. But, but the next everlasting shame and done to make your head too big. You still did.

I still beat him. Well, many, many, many kids. Yes, you do.

So is that, is that always been part of your personality? How do you foster that? How do you, I mean, I do think it's really important. I want to know church staff, elders retreats. Do you, do you guys laugh? Yeah.

That's, the ministry is not about laughing per se, but that is all necessary. I say you need to have lots of what appears to be wasted time. So when you get into the stuff you're going to disagree on, you have lots of thick, thick relationships that come from we have belly aches.

What do you think you're going to do to make laughing together? Man, I, I just like to laugh. So, yeah, this is what I think about, especially pastors, but man, I think we press materials. We, we, we get a, we rightfully get the label as the chosen frozen in that we take some things just too seriously.

Like let's take the Lord seriously. Let's take our ministry seriously. Let's take the preaching of the word seriously.

Let's, but he also gave us taste buds and he also gave us lungs to laugh. He also gave us eyes that are delight in the beauty around us like we're meant to enjoy life, even as we take the things of Christ seriously. So I love to laugh and I want to laugh.

Most times it seems like when I'm with friends like you were laughing at me, which great. Okay. But I just love to laugh.

So, yeah, want to be laughing. Well, thank you for that. Give me a number.

How many wins for the Bears this year? Oh, man. I, I think 10, Kevin. I had a written down here.

I had a written down here. I can't see it. Ten and seven.

I said wild card. We're in. We're in.

This is it. Do we, do we talk about the Cubs and White Sox? The Bears could win more points than the White Sox. Did the White Sox get relegated to AAA yet? Yeah, they second fastest ever get to 100 losses.

Early on, I was like, wow, they could, they could lose twice as many games. And then it was they could lose three times as many games as they win. Now they are well past that.

It is horrible. The Cubs are like 500. Yeah, we're not an embarrassment.

That's right. That's right. And we're almost to football season.

We're almost to football and Spartaeon. Jason Halopoulos, thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your books.

Thank you for being on life and books and everything. Thank you for everyone who has stuck with us. And until next time, glorify God.

Enjoy him forever and read a good book.