

What's up fam? I don't know why everyone laughs at me. That's how I greet people, but y'all, it's good to be back in Texas. I'm from Dallas, Texas. Yes, Dallas, Texas. How'd you feel about that Cowboys call? No, that's messed up. It was not good. I am not even into the sport, but I was like that seems like that was a wrong call, but I was, yeah, nevermind. I don't want to get into Cowboys. I'm living in Tennessee. I just got married three years ago. Oh, that's good for young people. I've always wondered at what point do you not get the golf clap? Because whenever you say I've been married, it's like around five years. When you say 25 years, people give you the standing ovation, but at three years that's the first time. Usually I don't get anything. It's just like, oh, that's just information.

But at least you guys clapped a little bit and yeah, this is good you guys. I do want to honor y'all. It's been a long because of the storm. It was crazy getting here just recently got here and just along the way you kind of get to see character come out when things get squeezed. You guys know that. And every single person from this church that I've interacted with and there's been a series of them has been so kind, so intentional, so gracious. This church, even as someone who grew up in Dallas my whole life, has a legacy of helping so many people's marriages. I was hearing about what you guys have done in prisons and then even the fact of how I met Pastor Jimmy and Kim was them trying to engage the next generation. Any of you guys have kids that are under the age of 40? Raise your hands. Hi, raise your hands high, even grandkids. If you've got grandkids or kids under the 40, keep it high. I want to ask how was that going for y'all?

I heard one good, I only heard one good and then the rest was laughter, which again, why was that a funny question? I'm asking how is raising the next generation going? I think we can all agree this is a unique time in our nation. In fact, my other question for you is who's impacting and influencing and raising the next generation? I want to ask y'all this. I've only shared this with one other group and so please give me feedback when I say this, but I want to ask you a couple statements and ask you how often have you ever heard these statements, let's say in the last two years? Just some feedback.

If you've heard somebody say or you've heard this a lot, some type of statement like this one right here, "The world is so divided right now. I've never seen it like this." Anyone hear that in the last year? Once or twice. What about, "The church is dying, the next generation is leaving the church. We're definitely nearing the end times." Man, you guys laugh a lot at the interesting things. Here's a big one. As a young person I hear a lot, "I'm so glad I don't have to grow up in this world. You do." Anyone heard that before? Anyone maybe even said that before?

And then this is the new one. I mean, we're going into this new year and this is what I want to encourage you is brace yourself. It's an election year -- okay, we're going to have fun -- it's an election year and you're like, oh yeah, let's laugh about this. But I always tell people I think that I have a calling to preach, but I sometimes think I was supposed to be a standup comedian. I'm always thinking joke, but my heart's soft enough to be like, oh, but now there's an opportunity to preach and so just I love when I get to church that does to have fun and leads with conviction and so this is going to be good. Last one is, "I just hope Jesus comes back quickly."

These are statements that all of you guys have probably heard. I hear them often and I just want to say as a millennial and I even especially for Gen Z or Gen Alpha, if you don't know the generations, there was Gen X, which would've been in my parents' generation, then there was Gen Y, which started being called also millennials. Then there was Gen Z, which is about 25 and under. I thought Jesus was going to come back after that X, Y, Z, but instead we just started all over at Gen Alpha. That's the next generation. And all joking aside these statements, I just want us to be careful as we go into these tumultuous times and we go into what could easily be a year with a lot of tension of what kind of life or death we speak around young people because they do have to grow up in this world and they don't get in any other option.

And even as a young person when I would hear all the time, oh, I'm so stressed. I'm worried or I'm not stressed, but I'm worried about the future, I'm worried about your generation and I just hope Jesus comes back. I would often think, I hope he doesn't because I have a lot of friends that don't know the Lord right now and I've got a lot of work to do and we've got a lot of work to do. In fact, in one Peter he talks about I hope that God sometimes will so that more would come to know the Lord. And so I want Jesus to come back. I think we all want Jesus to come back, but we want to reach as many people as possible. We want as many people to know and we definitely want this lost broken generation to know the Lord.

And so what I want to introduce you to, you might have heard this phrase, but I want you to contrast these statements. We say, and I think Christians say these statements just as much as non-Christians, this fear of the future and I want an alternative path. Instead, there's this idea of what's called a non-anxious presence. Have any of you guys ever heard this statement or this term? It's basically the term originally coined by a Jewish rabbi and a family therapist Edward Friedman, a non-anxious presence. It's used to describe an individual who provides a calm, cool, focus and collected environment that empowers others. This can be especially helpful for clients who have varying levels of anxiety or are in crisis. I wouldn't just say the next generation is struggling with anxiety. I think all of us tend to be, and this non-anxious presence I think is so important.

I don't have any kids right now. I am for the young people. It seems like y'all sit, I guess right here. If you get one little thing from me, here's it. That gift of singleness. You know how they say that, right? And you know how it never feels like a gift? Amen. Or maybe you'll enjoy it, but when I was growing up, everyone wanted to get married, right? There is this window you have when you're single where you don't have to ask your parents for permission, especially when you go to college and you don't yet have to ask your wife for permission. You can just go and do things and buy things. But now, so you guys are like, I just want to get married. I would say, no, you want to live on the mission for God and then see who's around and that's who you should marry.

But often we're just rushing to get married and then to pursue whatever calling or thing God has for us and this thing that you have, you'll never have as much time as you do when you're single and when you could be chasing after God and a lot of anxiety can happen there a lot of stress, but I always say, man, they call getting married. I've heard a mentors call it golden handcuffs. They are gold by the way, and I don't know what kids are because at least a marriage is a semi mutual dying to self with kids. From what I hear, I've heard marriage is the

left lane to sanctification. I don't know what kids is. That's like a rocket ship then to sanctification because it's a lot of give. If you ever see a pastor who's never had kids have kids, I guarantee you the next year is about to be so many analogies of kids because all of a sudden he's getting to see what God is like towards us.

You guys know it. As parents, we see a shift of like, man, this is what I've been like with God. Well, as someone who's not a parent, but I just unfortunately, but also it's been a blessing as my brother, my youngest brother, his wife unfortunately passed away and unfortunately took her life in 2020 through a very lonely time, anxiousness, depression, and she had always struggled with depression. And so me and my wife, who had just been married at the point for about a year, year and a half just moved to Nashville away from both of our families, decided we are going to take in my brother and his two kids, a five-year-old boy Anders and a 7-year-old girl Danny. And I'm starting to see these parenting things and how important a non-anxious presence is, especially in a tumultuous time where I've seen it the most and I never thought about it.

I was the same way. Have you ever noticed what a kid is like whenever they're running? Because kids run a lot. I've noticed older people don't really get scabs and it's cause we just don't run anymore. We just don't do the things that could give us scabs. I'm starting to do that. I'm starting to become old myself. I felt like I got made fun of as a millennial for skinny jeans for so long and now finally I'm starting to say old people things myself. If you don't know what old people things is, it's whenever you have to explain to someone younger, back when I was your age, x, y, z, back when I was your age, I had to go to a building to get movies. It was called Blockbuster. And you're like, what is that? And I'm like, God, it wasn't even that long ago.

And so I'm like, dang, this is what it sounds like to be old is I'm like, got to explain the sound of the internet to this kid. They didn't know wifi used to make a sound. And so as I am pouring into these kids, I'm starting to notice something is whenever they run and they just go all out, there's times when they're going to fall. I've actually started telling them, hey, we're going to have fun, but you might fall and that's okay if you do and it's okay also to be sad for a little bit, but it might happen. But Andre is the little boy. Recently he was running so fast and they were having so much fun and then he fell and it's like a split second moment where when they fall or even a little baby falls, they kind of look at you for a second and then especially the babies I've noticed and they almost want to see how are you going to respond to this?

I start, have you ever tried just laughing or smiling? We're trying to psych them out that does this good thing. There's all these different approaches you can take. You can freak out, you can laugh, you can acknowledge the pain and say, hey, it's okay, I'm sorry, but let's get back up. Let's go have some more fun or take a minute and take a breather and then let's get into it. But I think we can all agree freaking out is probably not the best response and I think we're in a spiritual and cultural moment right now where the Christians in this nation, we've got to ask, how are we going to respond this year?

They say discipleship is caught more than it's taught. They're catching it, it's coming off of you and are you a non-anxious presence that no, there's an anchoring because it seems like Jesus was like that to the disciples that there's storm and he's calm and I'm not saying fake it. I'm

actually saying we could even acknowledge the difficulty. In fact, there's, if you've ever read the book "Good To Great" by Jims Collins, he talks to a prisoner of war named Jim Stockdale. Jim Stockdale had been a prisoner of war for many years. He had been beaten and tortured over 20 times and then finally got freed and he lost many partners and friends and people while he was a prisoner of war, and Jim Collins was a New York Times bestseller, interviewed him and asked him, how do you think you made it out when so many people didn't and especially who didn't make it?

And this was what Jim Stockdale said after again, years of being a prisoner of war. He said, it's easy. The ones who didn't make it were optimists. And so I just really want to pause. I'm not saying fake it. I'm not saying just the fake optimism. Jim says it was the optimist that didn't make it. It's not optimism that he was encouraging. He said, I never wavered in my faith that I would prevail on the end, but I was not optimistic. The optimist always thought we'd be out by Christmas. Of course, Christmas would come and it would go and then we'd say, oh, we're going to go be out by Easter. Can we just look real back at 2020? Y'all remember we did the same thing. It's like, oh, we're going to be back in church by... there's no way. We're not going to be in church by Easter.

That's just unbelievable. It's impossible. And then it was a new date and then it was a new date. We started attaching our hopes to certain dates and someone and he said, of course, Christmas would come and it would go and then they'd say, we're going to be out by Easter and then Thanksgiving and then Christmas would come again and they eventually died of a broken heart. When you're imprisoned by great calamity, by great difficulty, by great uncertainty, you have to on one hand never confuse the need for unwavering faith that you will find a way to prevail in the end. And on the other hand, the discipline to confront the most brutal facts we actually face. We are not getting out of here by Christmas, but we are getting out.

I don't know what this year holds. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know that our posture is not supposed to be the same as the world, and I know we're getting out because this is a prevailing of self. It is belief that we will get there. We have every reason to believe that God will come through. We just sang a song that your goodness is running after us. God is actively pursuing us. His goodness is this idea, you got to confront the brutal facts in the current reality. So I'm not saying let's, let's have hope, let's have optimism. No, we confront the brutal realities and we retain the faith that God will prevail in the end regardless of the difficulties. And so this is going to be the harder part of those messages. Then I'll get more encouraging and I'll throw some jokes in there to make it easier.

Here's my analysis of the next generation that are warranted reasons to be concerned. If any of you guys are like, no, it is a concerning time, then I think, yeah, I see some things that are different about this generation, different about the culture today in that if I was a parent or a grandparent or even someone concerned for the future of the church, I'd be like, man, this is not the same world I grew up in 20 years ago. Here's a couple things I've noticed about the next generation.

The next generation has been coddled by their parents. They have been criticized by their bosses. They have been confused by our culture. They have been cheated by their colleges and they have been canceled for their convictions. Not only what has happened to them but what they have partaken in. What have they done to make things even harder for themselves is they are consumed with technology. They are conquered by pornography. They are caged by comparison. They are coping with anxiety and you and the parents will feel this one. They are crippled by debt.

What happened? Laughter, y'all, what happened? These are some of the brutal realities. These are some of the brutal difficulties and I'm not just saying let's hope optimism happens, but also we're going to look at that and then we're going to look at yet even still, they are created in God's image. They are called into God's family and they are commissioned to bring redemption to the broken world. And so one of the biggest things I'm going to say is if they're going to bring redemption, they're going to bring hope. Then I also want to shift the question. For so many years we've been asking the question, how do we reach the next generation and I don't think they want to be reached. I think we should be asking how do we mobilize this generation to reach their own generation and those that are coming behind them?

I don't really want to be reached, but if you help me change the world, if you help me be a part of a bigger story, I found a lot of young people want a community to be part of and a cause or something to fight for, and the world is often giving them gospel list causes, but the most cause-oriented generation in the world should probably connect to the most cause-oriented organization in the world, the church. And I think we then have to not have a posture of fear, concern or worry alone, but in light of all that, we know his goodness running after us. We know you. Y'all know this movie. I don't even know this movie. I just know this one quote from this one movie. I think it's called Airplane or Airplanes. Y'all seen this guy before? What's the actor's name?

I really don't even know. Niel. Leslie Nielsen. Leslie Nielsen, okay. All I know is he always says they're saying something to him like, Surely you can't be serious. And he's like, I am serious. Oh yeah, and don't call me Shirley. That's the line every time he's like, no, surely, you can't be serious. I am serious actually and don't call me Shirley. By the way, I like the word "surely" in the Bible, and I want to, instead of this fear and concern alone, is what did the people of God historically do is they had this surely mindset, this assumption, because I hear this word, this quote about assumption where they say assumption is a bad thing. I don't know if you kids have heard it and I'm not going to quote it, I don't cuss, but you guys know it because you cuss. So y'all know the quote it says, don't assume because when you assume it makes "something" out of you and me, right?

You guys, by the laughter you cuss so you know the quote or at least you're around cussing people, which you could just say you're a friend of sinner, so that's good. I like that there's this whole negative assumption about assumption. I think God loves assumption if it's about his power and if it's about his character that if we would assume surely God's going to do this. Surely he can and not only that he can, surely he will. I mean these verses right here that such surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I'll dwell in the house of the Lord forever. What an assumption, and I think God loves it. As surely as the sun will rise, he

will appear and he will come to us. Surely God is my help and the Lord who will sustain me. Surely the righteous will never be shaken.

They will be remembered forever. Surely Lord bless the righteous, you surround them with your favor and then he who calls he is faithful. He will surely do it over and over again. If you pay attention to the word surely, it's often in this assumption God is going to prevail, God is going to come through. That's the contrast of what I want to see because show me some older people and I know people don't like being called the old people, honest to God. Show me some "chronologically superior" people that have this faith despite what's happening that have this confidence in the next generation. Show me older people that are instead of like, I'm so worried, I'm so concerned, they're like the best is yet to come. I believe your generation is going to see revival. I believe your generation is going to see things we didn't see.

I believe that the darkness is right before the light. Show me any older people that often have that posture and that cadence and I'll show you young people that often want to be around those people. It is a magnetic attractive thing to young people coming up in the faith. I want to see more of this. I want to see a faith that I see in kids today and when you did this, I don't know why we do this, but kids across the world in all generations for all the time have done one thing and I really don't know why and it's, we've said this statement, "My dad can beat up your dad." I don't know why we sign our dads up for fights. I don't know why. I don't know why. It's cross-cultural that we be signing our dads up for fights on the playground all the time and I don't know about you again, I don't have kids, but I've thought about this as I've had Danny and Andre in my life and if they signed me up for a fight to beat up some bum dad, I'd be like, hey, hey.

Before I stop them from signing me up, there'd be a part of me that I take it in. I'm like, yo, this kid thinks I can beat up anyone. I like it. It doesn't matter who the kid is. They don't even have to see the dad and she is convinced I can beat up anyone! Who wouldn't want a kid that believed like that of their parents and the reverse, if you were the father, how sad would it be if your children didn't believe you were going to prevail? You didn't believe you were going to come through or worse knew you could but didn't think you were going to or wanted to.

That's not the people of God. That's not the posture. Surely goodness, surely mercy, it'll follow us for the rest of our days. That is the posture the next generation is dying for. That is the posture we have to have because I don't know a lot of young people who are Christians who talk anything like that. Honestly, I have almost have hundreds and thousands now young Christians, especially young Christian leaders that I work with, I've never heard and met one that's always stressed about the future. We don't have that choice. It's the world we are given and we're either going to be a missionary in it or we're going to be an imposter. That's what Spurgeon says. This is the option our kids have is to be a missionary and imposter and I personally don't think that the church is dying. I think casual Christianity is dying and it's refining actually and it's creating young Christians who are forced or it's just always been the cases.

They are becoming missionaries, they are becoming refined and I'm seeing a movement towards away from the world and towards holiness like I've never seen before and I'm not

saying all of them. There are many that yes want to be famous on TikTok and all that, but there are more than I ever saw in the millennial generation that are like, I'm done with the world. We have seen the experiment of chasing after the world and chasing after Jesus is incompatible, that there's a rapper named Shylan. He said, "I got too much of the Lord in me to enjoy the world and I've got too much of the world in me to enjoy the Lord." It's stressful, it's exhausting and so surely God is going to come through. Last thing, I want to point out a couple stories where we see this assumption towards God's power and character and he likes it.

One of the biggest ones, the woman with blood issue, nowhere is she told if you touch him you will be healed, but she has this assumption, all I got to do is touch him and I will be healed and like us who I listed some of the challenges of the next generation I listed that's not even listed all the challenges in the culture today, so we may have warranted reasons to doubt warranted reasons to be concerned. She had 12 years worth of warranted reasons to give up faith and I don't know what it's like to go to the doctor over and over again and get bad results. I have friends and I see it wear and tear on them when it's like we don't even know what's wrong with me and that she could still have this assumption that God wants to heal me and that if I could only touch what an assumption.

In fact, when she touches Jesus, Jesus says, as the power leaves him, he says, "Hey, who touched me?" Peter, my old pastor used to say he must've wore peppermint socks because he always put his foot in his mouth, Peter said, "Jesus, how can you even ask this question? Everyone is touching you." That's a powerful thing to me that we could notice. Everyone could be literally touching Jesus but only one person received anything from Jesus because only one person expected anything from Jesus.

We can go through the motions and be in the presence of God because we think if Jesus was with us every day, if we could have lived like the disciples, we would live different lives. But people lived and touched literally physically touched Jesus and received nothing because they expected nothing. But this woman who had every reason to doubt warranted reasons to give up had this assumption, this holy assumption that God would heal.

The centurion, he says, "Hey." He stops Jesus. I don't know if you've ever been about really important or rich or celebrity type people. I've noticed whenever a celebrity is around a group of people, everyone just wants to listen to whatever they talk about. If I'm talking to some people I'm like, "Hey, that's good. I want to share something too" But have you ever seen this? If it's someone important or even just the boss, everyone's laughs at jokes that they don't ever laugh at or they just go with the flow of wherever that person who's very important wants to go and the centurion walks in. Jesus is literally, it's saying, is literally being crushed by people. That's how many people are around him. He is very important in this place, and the centurion after Jesus agrees to come, heal, stops him, interrupts the man and says, "No, no, no, you don't even need to do that. Just say the word."

And Jesus says, in all of Israel, I've never seen such faith. Most people were amazed by Jesus. This is one of the only times I've seen Jesus amazed by a man and it was because he had this assumption, bold assumption, maybe even audacity of faith to say no, just say the word and it will be done. I think God likes when we assume of his power and his character. Jesus visiting

his hometown. This is the opposite of the centurion. He goes to his hometown and they don't believe. They question, "Oh, isn't this just..." They are familiar with him. Again, this is the trap we can fall into is they're so familiar with him, they don't expect anything from him. They know him. They grew up with him. They've been around for a long time with him. It said because of their lack of belief, little miracles were done there.

I know we don't want to be in a place where little miracles are done. And then lastly, this is what I want. I think as a young person, the older people who have just so impacted my life and I'm a byproduct of older people messing me up at a young age, I was 16 years old and then right after I got saved, two weeks later I got poured into and disciplined by a man who said, I'm going to pour into you. I want you to reach your school. I've been trying to reach your school for years. It was the perfect setup is he said, if I pour into you, will you pour into your school? And I automatically had this vertical relationship with God and two weeks later a vertical relationship with a mentor who poured into me and then a horizontal mission where he challenged me.

He's like, "The next two years of your school and high school, I want you to reach as many people for Christ as you can because you may be the only light they see." And I later grew up and realized me getting disciplined at a young age was not normal that many of us, how many of you guys got saved before you were 18 years old? Raise of hands high. How many of you guys got disciplined within a year or two of that? It seems that many of us get saved when we're young, but we don't get disciplined when we're young and many of us have never been disciplined ever. I actually, I point to this story because the older generation, what I would say is if you see a young generation who feels paralyzed, stuck, all those negative things that I listed then what I like about this group of friends who broke through a ceiling is be that to the next generation instead of being concerned only, instead of being worried only is like, hey, this is the reality.

Yeah, you're in a bad state. I will do whatever it takes to get you to Jesus. And again, this is a big assumption. They break, they do some breaking and entering to get this man to Jesus. I don't think you got to humanize this story and honestly, I just bought our first home. Me and my wife did. It's a 90-year-old home in 90 years that it's been there. This a hundred foot tall tree decided within a month of us living there, finally it was going to fall on our house, right on our roof. I forgot, I wish I brought the picture for y'all to see this. It's like we are so glad we got this house last year when everything was crazy in Nashville for a hundred thousand dollars under and everyone was buying houses in Nashville, so we were like, this is such a miracle.

And then the tree again, 90 years, why couldn't you fall one month before and then I wouldn't maybe not get this house, but it broke through our roof and tore a whole roof. And so everyone likes the story of when these people break through a roof, me, I'd be like, nah, y'all do y'all's house, y'all's roof. Let 'em break through y'all's roof. I know I don't like it. I'm not digging when, yeah, a lot of y'all have roofs. Go do it in someone else's roof than mine. But they have this assumption, this audacity, this commitment to their friend and I would say the same. This is what we need from you. If you're worried about your kids, if you're worried about young people in this church, if you're worried about the next generation and the future of the church, then can you do whatever it takes to break through a ceiling?



I'm going to do whatever it takes to get you to Jesus and they use the language of a glass ceiling that's ironic as I've found those who will break through a ceiling for the next generation will ironically have next gen leaders break through glass ceilings for God because of the impact that you put into their life. Every young leader I know who's ever built a national business, nonprofit organization, anything that has a national presence, I've started to ask them, who poured into you at a young age? They always laugh or smirk or say, how do you know? I'm like, bro, you're 23 years old. You think you could ever get here without older people pouring into you, opening doors for you, advocating for you, putting their neck on the line, giving you advice and wisdom, showing you where to go, who you should talk to, all these things.

I have never met a young person with a national impact of some sort who doesn't have older people in their life. They broke through a ceiling for them and now that young person is a unicorn who's breaking glass ceilings for God in the next generation. So what does discipleship look like?

In a little bit of closing, I want to give a little bit of direction. What could it look like if I was like, hey, I'm convinced. Here's what I know about y'all before I ever came. I heard you guys are a very multi-generational church. The language I heard was Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and I love that personally. I keep saying passing the baton I think is the wrong analogy. I know it's challenging or that's a big thing to say because a lot of people use that analogy, but I like to think that what if Saul and David could have not passed the baton where it became tension and division and Saul had some challenges, but what if it could have instead of passing a baton, it could be doing what I sure many of you guys have started to do because there is a revival in our nation and it's the revival of pickleball.

Have you guys been a part of this revival who's been a part of the revival in pickleball, even the next generation? This is a multi-generational movement of God right here is half of this group and the older generation, I'd be getting beat by chronologically superior people all the time in pickleball. I've never actually beat someone older me and that's what I'm thinking is instead of passing the baton, what if we saw it as playing pickleball is I need to work with you. You need to work with me. We actually can't do this thing without each other. We need each other. And I want to say even as I'm kind of challenging a little bit and trying to encourage towards this assumptive faith that leads to a way more powerful story and a way more anchoring at peace that I also want to say on behalf of young people that I'm sorry and I apologize that young people have not always been the best at seeking discipleship.

Young people have not always been the best at seeking mentorship. That's why I would tell y'all again, this window of singleness is a gift because older people have things you don't have. Mostly wisdom, but the thing you have that they don't have is time. You have all this time they have the wisdom, and I think the enemy's strategy, again, he can't defeat us. The gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church. So if he can't defeat us, I'm convinced he's going to try to divide us. And if he could divide the people with wisdom from the people with time, then you've got a generation always learning from their own mistakes instead of those that have gone before them. You've got a generation always trying to intention and instead of building on the foundation of was what's set before. And so I apologize that my generation and the younger generation, sometimes we don't seek the wisdom of others and sometimes we're like

"Lord of the Flies," if you don't know the ending of this book, you did not do what you were supposed to do in school.

This was a mandatory reading, but Piggy dies in the end when all the young people make the rules. It's like seventh graders asking other seventh graders for dating advice. I remember it's crazy. Or how many people are on Tinder giving other people on Tinder advice on marriage or dating? No. I'm like, yo, let's be silent before God real quick and just stop talking. I want to talk to someone who's been married for 10 to 20 years that's got experience that's even learned through failure maybe, but they've chosen to stick through it and they aren't the perfect marriage, but man, if they've fallen seven times, they've always gotten back up. The Holy Spirit has not let them stay there. I want to learn from generations that have gone before us. Here's some distinctions I try to show and if I give a little bit of direction on hey, what does discipleship look like?

What does pouring into the next generation look like? Because, and this is why I want to say this because I'm convinced that we don't have a next gen problem. What I think we have is the discipleship problem. We have a problem where the generations are not united, they're not connected. Again, this division, and here's one thing I think we do is we often confuse mentorship. I believe for discipleship and I think mentorship and discipleship are both very powerful things that impact people, but they aren't exactly the same and they definitely don't function the same. However many of us have been impacted by mentorship and some of us have been impacted by discipleship, but in my opinion, mentorship is adding something to your calendar and discipleship is including someone in your calendar. Do you guys hear that distinction? Mentorship to a generation that doesn't have time is going to be hard because you have to add one more thing to your calendar.

Again, you guys, I know I'm like crowd participation person, I wish I knew how to preach on a circle. I've yet to do this. So you guys actually, alright, y'all over here? Yeah, raise your hand over all but especially I'm going to show some love to this group over here is raise your hand if you have a full-time job and put your hand high if you have a full-time job and keep it up high and then keep it up if you also are married, keep your hand up so you have a full-time job, you're married and now keep it up high. And then if you also keep it up, if you have kids, so you have a full-time job, you're married and you have kids, now put it up high. I'm going to point something out about this group. I want y'all to look at everyone raising their hand.

These are the people that don't have time. These are you guys can put your hands down. These are the people that just do not have time. They decided to invest, but they are a lot more limited because they have these commitments and that means if you want to pour into someone younger than you but you don't have the time to do it, then it's going to be really hard. The biggest excuses I usually hear for why someone doesn't disciple someone is because they don't have time and that's usually pretty true or that they don't feel qualified to do it.

I might need help on my slides. Sorry, one second. So I think that if y'all can help me with the slides going forward is discipleship. Sorry. Mentorship is where you're adding something to your calendar and that means you got to look at your calendar and you have to basically say,

let me see if I can find some time. While discipleship is not just looking at your calendar and saying, lemme see if I can find some time. Hey, here's what you can join me for. Look at my life and is there anything that you want to go to that I'm doing over the next month? And there's a lot less time if you're doing mentorship. There's only a few opportunities. We don't have a lot of time, but if we're talking about discipleship, then there's way more time to have someone that pours into us. Sorry, one second.

So also this goes line with one of the scriptures, 1 Thessalonians 2:8 where it says, because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel but also our lives as well. That's a pretty powerful thing. We know that the most powerful message in the world, the transforming of our eternities is to give people the gospel. But for Paul to say that we just share the gospel with you. We let you join our lives and see our lives. It's seeing the gospel in action. Again, discipleship is caught more than it's taught. I define discipleship as frequently following someone who is spiritually a couple steps ahead of you. It's frequently following. It doesn't have to always be all the time, but it's frequently following someone who's spiritually a couple steps ahead of you. And these four areas I try to invite people into, and I'd encourage you all to consider in your life.

You're like, hey, I want to have assumption that God is going to move and I want to also be active and pouring into someone younger. Then what are these four areas? Could you maybe in this church have someone younger that you're inviting into your world? Maybe it's your personal life, maybe it's your work life, maybe it's your church life or maybe it's your personal life, family life, your church life or your work life. Just to get an idea. The personal life is one of the easiest places to start. It's asking someone what is it that you like to do and then saying, do you want to do that with me or again, I keep preaching to young people. I'm sorry. I'm sure there's a couple other young people at other places, but here's how to trick someone into discipling you. The reality is not everyone has been discipled.

I'm going to be honest, and this is a little sad, but we could either cry about it or we can change. It is a lot of people don't disciple. I know because they were not ever discipled and so we're asking something of you that you never received and kind of like if you ever got saved and your parents weren't Christians or your father wasn't a Christian, but you've made that decision. I've seen a lot of families where they're like, I didn't come from a household of faith, but I'm going to build a better household of faith so that my kids can build an even better household of faith and they're going to build on that foundation. Anyone know that kind of testimony and story? The chain is going to break here and it's going to be a new legacy. That's my hope going forward for the next generation is that we can look back at why did we stop discipling?

Why is this not the most normal thing? Or we can say, hey, I'm going to do what I can to set up the next generation even better. And so here's how I though trick people who don't feel qualified to disciple, to disciple their personal life. They have things they like to do. For example, there's a guy I knew he helped make all these Christian movies, some of them like "Jesus Revolution" and "I Could Only Imagine," and he was on the board with Tim Keller and did a lot of ministry. So he is crazy busy but amazing man. But I found something that he liked to do is he liked to run. You guys heard this thing people for some reason liked to do, it's

called they just go and jog. So they'll start outside their house and then they'll go somewhere else on a journey.

You'd think, no, they just come right back to where they were and they do it. They tend to do it at four or 5:00 AM in the morning. So just everything you could think of, why this is not what I want to do, they add it, then they decide let's go do it with more people and let's do it for 26 miles and then let's get a participation trophy for doing it no matter what place you get in and they come back and they do it and then they post it on the internet. So everyone makes sure they know because they'll do it at times when no one's awake. And so that's what I saw that he would do. He is always posting about it. So I asked him, it took me three to four months to get a meeting with this man mentorship, but I was like, how do I get into this guy's life?

He's too busy to get time with. So I said, man, at the end of the night I just met with him and I text him and I said, Hey, I'm really trying to get into running. Totally lying for the Kingdom. I'm not trying to get into running, but for the kingdom and for the glory. God. I lied to him and I said, is there any chance I could ever run with you? And dude, y'all know, people like to convert other people to the things they love. And so that's why I like to start with a personal life. So I asked him, I was like, yeah, can I just run with you? And he said, okay, man, if you're serious, meet me tomorrow at four. And I'm like, God, why are y'all like this? You guys always have to do it at this time. Seven's still pretty early in my opinion too.

Eight even is fine. It's like nine to five. So that's earlier than work, but we had to do it at four. So I can't lie to him like, oh yeah, I got meetings at this time. I got to say yes. So I was like, oh, I'm fasting and praying. That's usually my fasting prayer time. So I go, of course I've got to show up. You got to show up. If anyone's going to pour into someone young, you got to be faithful. You got to be available. You got to be teachable. You got to be hungry. If you are not faithful, your yes is not yes, your no is no, it's not going to work if you're not available, you have the time. It's not going to work. The disciples, Jesus did not move his life around the disciples. The disciples moved their life around Jesus.

And then if you're not teachable, which can be a problem, sometimes we're just asking for advice so that they would just co-sign what we already want to do. Or if you're not hungry, you got to come with questions. I would even say, dare you to pull out this thing called a journal with paper and put away a phone and just literally take notes because the more they share and they see you writing down, they're like, I've never seen such a thing as a young person with a journal taking notes. I am joking, but legit, I have seen people's cadence change. You're like, I want to share more because you're literally writing down what I'm saying. And so I showed up at 4:00 AM and I love to tell you, man, this is my favorite best discipleship story, but that man did not even show up. He woke up when ordinary good citizens wake up around seven to 8:00 AM and texted me.

I was already home by that point. And he said, oh my God, I'm so sorry. When I said meet me at four, I should have clarified, I meant at 4:00 PM and I'm like, "If you're so serious, meet me at four." What's so hard about meeting you at 4:00 PM? But yo, y'all. I was like, yes. I'm so glad I showed up at four and this guy's going to feel like this kid is serious. This dude will show up if he really wants to get some time with me. He really will do hard things in order to be

around wise people. And again, I don't want to be a seventh grader around other seventh graders asking for dating advice. I want to be around those who can help me get further faster, who are wiser Godlier, not just to learn how to do what they do, but to be like they are to sustain and not be one more person that could potentially fall.

I became gifted but not anchored. And this man literally has walked through so many scenes in life. I have now done some of those races with him. This is so dumb. I got legit 600th place and they gave me a gold medal and he's like, now you can put a sticker on your car. And I said, dude, you've taught me a lot of things. I'm just going to teach you this thing right now. You guys made fun of skinny jeans and participation trophies for millennials all my life, even though y'all came up with them. By the way, you could have given millennials a Capri-sun, but instead y'all gave him trophies. But I said, this thing seems like a participation trophy. You're telling me I can put a sticker on for 600th places? He's like, yeah, but you did it. I participated. Yeah, I did.

I was just like, I'm just going to leave it. He did not like that. He did not like that. And so just to encourage y'all, you have your personal life, you have your work life, you have your church life, your family life is also huge because you don't have any idea how many broken homes, divorced homes, non-intentional homes that young people are growing up in. So I'm not saying it's this spiritually glorious thing that you got to invite 'em into, but just coming to dinner, especially in a generation that doesn't want to cook, is a powerful thing. I'm serious. When I got saved and I just got invited to dinner with certain families, again, it's caught more than it's taught. I started making notes and saying, when I get married, I want to be intentional like this man is. Or when my kids come home, I want to be intentional like this man, these mental notes.

He never said do this, but if it's caught one than it's taught, it started giving me a new scorecard. So when I looked to my left and I looked to my right and I saw my friends doing this, this and that, I'm like, this isn't going to lead to becoming like that. It changed the trajectory of how I wanted to live. And yeah, it's a beautiful thing. So here's a visual I really want to share. I'm just going to close with, this is a little bit of a visual. I want you to assess where you are and then we can, my goal is by the end of this year, you come to Zion next year and you're like, hey, I started at this stage and then God moved me here.

I had to do some proactive things, but now I'm not in this stage anymore. I'm in the next, no matter what generation, I'm speaking of all generations that if you are, I would say you are a learner. If you are still technically receiving and being fed, but you're not pouring into someone else. Once you make a commitment to pour into someone else, I would say that you become a leader and some of you guys will say, no, I already feel like I'm a leader. I already lead these things. And I think you can manage things. I think you can influence things. I think you can even teach. But John Maxwell has a quote where he says, "If you think you're a leader, but no one is following you, then you're technically just taking a walk." And again, I actually think walking is a very healthy thing to do.

So I'm not dissing walking. Walking's good, but if no one's following you, then I would say, you're influencing, you're volunteering, you're serving, and all those things are necessary vital things to the church and to our faith. But I want to disrupt division in the church generationally,

especially where it's like more are saying, hey, I got a shadow, a spiritual shadow, someone who frequently follows me and I help them get closer to God. I invite them into things in my world. Some of them you may not look like the most spiritual things, but they matter. They really, really matter. And then are a leader. Once you have that clear commitment to someone younger in the faith, after that you become a disciple maker. Once you pour into someone who pours into someone, this is when your fruit is starting to grow on other people's trees. And then lastly, you become a multiplier whenever you're pouring into someone or pouring into someone and pouring into someone.

If you guys go to the picture before this, there's a guy that I met, who's this pastor in Seattle and I knew the young man he disciplined, who's my age, who just took over recently took over one of the largest churches in Dallas at the age of 33. And this guy, the older guy in the picture of the blue polo vouched for him and said, I know he's got what it takes. I've been discipling him since college. And he's amazing again, behind every great young leaders, great older mentors.

And I saw this picture as I was preaching at his church. I said, is this what I think it is? Who's the kid on the far right in the picture frame? And he said, that's the kid who's disciplined by the guy I disciplined. Brian is his name. And then I was like, no way. So are you saying that the guy on the far left disciplined you because I've never heard of this guy. And he smiled. He said, it is for me. I said, this is like the scorecard for me. How often do you see generations of discipleship? And I just want to add this to the scorecard of what if we, like 2 Timothy 2 says is what if like Paul, we say to Timothy who he said, and what you have heard from me, Paul said this, what you've heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, I want you to now entrust this faithful men who will teach others also four generations.

If you can go back the full picture of the four stages, this when I saw as a younger leader who started kind of going through the routine of church, really excited me because I just was starting to go through the motions. They say that Christians are boring sometimes there's literal studies that say, I think 64% of the next generation, Gen Z thinks that Christians are boring. And I would actually sometimes go farther. Sometimes I think we are bored. That we are, they say born again believers, I would sometimes say bored again believers because if you're called and designed to do this thing, make disciples literally his last words. Jesus says, go and make disciples that his last words would become our first priority. Then we start doing this. And who does this really, really well? It really does motivate those that may get in the habits and the routines.

People that sell knives do this really, really well. People that sell Herbalife, I know someone in here does it. And I want to say I'm not knocking your hustle. People that do that will reach out to you after 20 years on Facebook, haven't talked to you at all and says, have you been considering any new knives lately? And they'll, their boldness, if we could put a fraction of that boldness towards evangelism would be insane. And here's why I think part of that happens is they have clarity of what's the next stage for me? I'm going to church, I'm giving, I'm volunteering in a small group, but I'm feeling like I'm getting into the routine and then I'm starting to see what's happening in the world and I'm concerned, and I don't have too many younger people in my life, but I want to pour in.

And what they do in that system is they have prizes. You're like Ruby and then diamond, and then double diamond and then infinity stone. And it just keeps growing new stages, each one. And you can get a pink Cadillac or you can get these different things. And I want us to get to a place where it's like we grow into these new stages each year we're trying to be a part because we will never know the fruit of what's going to happen. I want to get to Heaven and meet people that impacted by the fruit I poured into other people. And I know that's true of you as well, that we get there and we meet strangers who have sat under trees that we planted. This is a random analogy, but I've seen somewhat of this process in the make of all the things I've said today.

You're going to remember this because it's the most random. But it's funny is have you guys ever seen, you probably don't know the process of frogs. There's also a process there. And I was looking at this and I have no way to transition from what I had to what this is. This is random. But you also maybe never knew this. So if you thought, man, this guy didn't teach me anything, I guarantee you did not know that there was eggs and then embryo, then there's tadpole. We all know the tadpole, we knew the eggs, we knew the embryo. Did you know there's tadpoles with two legs and then tadpoles with four legs? No, you did not. And then they turn into frogs. And I think what can happen in this process, if you put this process on the church process is sometimes we get to the eggs portion, the embryo portion of the tadpole portion where we get eggs, we become, we get saved embryo, we join the church and we start serving and maybe tadpole, we start giving and we start joining a small group and then we keep coming and maybe bring our friends.

But the church then also scatters. It hinges on you guys making disciples. It hinges on the next generation desperately needs it. And sometimes we just stay at that tadpole stage. And there was a lake in Washington that somehow got so polluted that these frogs actually were getting stuck as well. And I don't know if you knew you can be a tadpole and get a little bit bigger. If you don't mind sharing this picture. This happened in Washington. This is a tadpoles that got stuck and just kept growing. Listen to the responses. No one's saying cute or awe like they would with a dog or puppy. Also, I'm sorry about, I did not take this picture. I'm sorry about the alcohol. I know some of you guys probably struggle. There you go. I got you. I'm looking out for you.

Nobody saw that and it's like, oh, that's what I want to be one day. It's one of these kind of tadpoles. This is obese. God has called us. And first just even before I call you to something, I want to just encourage y'all, I've heard for years again about what you guys have done and there's generations of impact already at this church. I know that. So I just want to be a reminder of what God's already doing. But I have noticed in life it's good to get a refresher and a reminder because there's always something else that's coming in that's urgent. And discipleship is a little bit in our private life. And so just as a reminder of, hey, continue the race and continue the fight and know that sometimes we drop the ball as young people of seeking you out and showing honor and knowing the value that you're bringing or taking it for granted.

But God has not called us to be in these obese tadpoles. He's called us to be fishers of men. And so just to close, these are two questions I just want you to consider and then I'm going to

pray is the two question is: [1] Do your words reveal concern or do they reveal confidence in the next generation? If you do an audit of your words over the last two years, I know it's hard times, I know it's different times even, but do your words reveal concern or confidence in the next generation? Is it a language that surely God's going to move no matter what I see, I know God's bigger than it. [2] And the second question is, what is one practical next step you can make towards discipleship? Can I pray?

God, thank you for what you're doing in West Texas. Thank you for a group of people that have such conviction, such compassion, such humor. You know that my favorite type of Christians are those that live on mission but have a blast while they do it. And I pray that you draw so many young people to this church and to these people, God, for the person here who's feeling a little inadequate to do it or the enemy saying, yeah, this sounds good, but you don't have a life glorious enough to follow and the name of Jesus. I rebuke that. God, I pray that you do so many times in the Old Testament and the New Testament, you are a connector of people, especially if it's for your purpose. And so I pray that you connect people at the right time, in the right place, in the right season.

And it's one of the most trajectory changing things that can happen not just for the young person but for the older person as well. God let there be so many story after story of what's happening through the mutual beneficial work of discipleship. And then lastly, God, I pray for good news. This is a year that people are already kind of trying to brace themselves. Would you put on us just such a conviction and confidence that the good news is right around the corner? God. And then lastly, especially I want to pray for any parent or grandparent that has kids that have walked away from the Lord that are far from church that just don't even want anything to do with faith.

God, CS Lewis calls you the hound of Heaven. I pray that you would go after them. God, in love and grace and mercy, I pray that you would awaken any young people around them that follow you. Give them the ears to hear the eyes, to see the confidence, to share a word, to be a friend. You have missionaries all over the world in all different facets of this culture. And so no matter where they are, there is nowhere they can run. There's nowhere they can hide. And there is nothing more powerful than us asking you and praying. That was always the most powerful thing we could do. And so we do not give up and relent on assuming you are already at work in their life. And Jesus name I pray, amen.