



Allowing Our Pain to Turn Us to Christ | An Interview with Joy McCullough

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 It is finally available. I've been working on a manuscript for the past four years, and it's finally a book I can hold in my hands. It's titled, *Is God Disappointed In Me Removing Shame From a Gospel of Grace?* This book has gotten so much attention that it is already a number one Amazon bestseller. I'm Beyond amazed in just a few words I wrote, *Is God Disappointed in Me* for Latter Day Saints who often feel overwhelmed by the gospel and who are constantly worrying if they are doing enough. It's for the latter Day Saint who have stepped away from the church is for the individuals who appear to be living right but still can't find peace and happiness. And frankly, it's for everyone who enjoys listening to the Leading Saints podcast. You will love and cherish this book. Now, warning, you might want to consider purchasing multiple copies to share one Bishop who got an advance copy, read it in one weekend, and then literally purchased 100 additional copies. You can order it on Amazon. The link is in the show notes or starting in March, you can find it in your local Costco in Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. It's called *Is God Disappointed In Me?* And you can order it Now.

Speaker 1 00:01:20 So you're checking us out as maybe a potential podcast you could start listening to. I know many of you have been listening for a long time, but let me just talk to the newbies for a minute. What is Leading Saints? What are we trying to do here with this podcast? Well, let me explain. Leading Saints is a nonprofit organization, a 5 0 1 C3 is what they call it. And we have a mission to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead. Now, of course often means in the context of a calling, it may mean in your local community, your work assignments. We've heard about our content influencing all sorts of leaders in all sorts of different contexts. We invite you to listen to this episode and maybe a few others of our 500 plus

episodes that we have out there, jump in and begin to learn and begin to consider some of these principles we talk about on the Leading Saints podcast. Here we go.

Speaker 1 00:02:16 This past week we published a phenomenal discussion between myself and Pastor Jeff, who's the creator of Hello Saints, a YouTube channel where he as a evangelical pastor explores all things in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And Pastor Jeff's become a great friend and I didn't realize it until I'm sort of putting these final touches on these episodes, but today I'm releasing an episode where I talk with the other half of the McCullough clan, which is Joy Pastor Jeff's wife. Now my wife and I have become great friends with, uh, Jeff and Joy as they've moved to Utah and we've hung out more and more and I've had some great just casual conversations with Joy about different topics, about therapy, trauma, mental health, because Joy has some phenomenal perspectives, especially with her evangelical background. And I love bringing to the table different thoughts, especially those from a different faith tradition talking about similar concerns that all sorts of Christians are wrestling with. And so in this discussion we talk about the concept of trauma. How trauma impacts not only our wellbeing, our life, but even in a religious context, how does it impact the ways we sin or why we sin and how we show up to church and what we are looking for in the church experience. And so just a fun discussion with me and Joy McCullough and you will love her perspective as we talk through this. So here's my interview with Joy McCullough.

Speaker 1 00:03:49 Welcome back to another episode of Leading Saints. And today we're bringing someone you, you know, but you don't know. And that's Joy McCullough. How are you? I'm good. <laugh>. Now you are the Mrs. Hello Saints. Is that okay?

Speaker 2 00:04:01 Is that what I am <laugh>?

Speaker 1 00:04:03 Yeah. You're the wife of Jeff McCullough who, uh, produces Hello Saints. Right? This

Speaker 2 00:04:06 Is true. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:04:07 Nice. And we've uh, greater friendship 'cause Jeff and I have a friendship. Yep. And so as we talk, we have geeked out on some therapy concepts and things 'cause you're a therapist. True. And, uh, and thought we should get you on the podcast and explore these things. So, and you don't, it's not a require to be a latter day saint to be on Leading Saint. So we welcome you.

Speaker 2 00:04:25 Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I'm glad

Speaker 1 00:04:27 To be here. And, and we'll plug your, your husband's, he's got a, obviously his YouTube channel, but he's starting a podcast as well called Hello Saints. Okay. Yeah. And you were the first guest on that, so they want more joy.

Speaker 2 00:04:37 Best episode ever. That's right. <laugh> the only episode, but it's the best. Well,

Speaker 1 00:04:43 It's good stuff. <laugh>. So maybe just from a personal standpoint, like what's that journey been like with you moving to Utah, being more familiar with the latter Saint world?

Speaker 2 00:04:51 It has been an interesting journey and I feel like I'm still very much at the beginning of it, but it's been a couple of years since Jeff has really been kind of interested. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> in talking about moving, thinking about moving. And I kind of pulled the reins back a little bit at first. We love Utah, it's gorgeous, like the mountains every day I have, I don't know, all my pictures on my phone are of the same exact mountains. Right? Yeah. Every day is beautiful. And we're living among people that we are the minority and it feels like a privilege to be a part of the community. Yes. So, and everyone is super kind and welcoming and we've loved it so far. So

Speaker 1 00:05:32 What was your, like, I assume Jeff brought up the idea long ago about what if we moved to Utah? Like do you remember your response to that or <laugh>?

Speaker 2 00:05:40 My response, I was very reluctant at first. It actually is a little bit of a role reversal probably for us because I'm pretty adventurous and pretty much like Yolo, let's do whatever we wanna do, uh, like let's adventure. And so I think, and he's usually a little bit more conservative, so I think it scared me a little bit. And I most was concerned about our kids and just that transition for them and what that would be like. But they really, almost all of them for most of the time we were talking about it, were really actually wanting to move. They were up for moving. Yeah. So, and we had been out here to visit a few times and so it really actually helped to make, build some connections out here with you, with other people that we know out here. So I think over time kind of starting to build some of that helped in our final decision to actually make it happen.

Speaker 1 00:06:29 So. Well, we're glad you're here. Thank you.

Speaker 2 00:06:31 I'm glad too.

Speaker 1 00:06:32 Yeah. So let's maybe just put your faith in into context. We, I think a lot of people in the leading Saints audience, they've heard Jeff's story and you know, he is pastor and his journey. But, uh, how would you describe your faith development or your faith journey?

Speaker 2 00:06:46 I grew up in a Christian home in an evangelical home and went to a private Christian school K through 12. My family, I actually am one of five kids and we all went to the same school K through 12. My family still is very much a part of that school. So then we also went to the same church all our lives and my family still is actually attending that church. And so, and then I went to a, a Christian college and then I went to a Christian university for my master's. And so I really have been in kind of a Christian bubble. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, evangelical bubble. All my, all my life, my personal relationship with the Lord. I would say probably in, I mean, I would say at a young age I accepted Jesus into my heart. And then obviously over time, mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that became as I developed and grew, that became more personal and more real for me.

Speaker 2 00:07:40 And so obviously as you get older and like, especially in high school, I felt like that started to grow and I had a lot of, a lot of opportunities to kind of practice my faith. And then when I went away to college, I had to choose to whether as to whether or not I was gonna make that like continue, you know, I'm leaving my parents and so I get the choice to decide if this is how I want to walk, if this faith is what I'm choosing. And so for sure I chose that. And yeah, I've just gradually continued to learn and grow and had opportunities to serve and minister. So

Speaker 1 00:08:14 Yeah. And then you end up marrying someone who becomes a pastor and I'm just sort of putting it up to our faith tradition where, you know, even my wife, you know, growing up wanting to marry a return missionary, it sort of become a, a stigma to some extent. And it's unfortunate how it impacts our culture that way. But it's sort of, you know, it's been said like in our culture, like, hey, let's make sure we date return missionaries. 'cause what does that mean? You know, that they, they have like a foundation of faith or, or you know, even being married to a bishop, it's sort of like, oh wow. They, yeah. So I mean, is that a thing? Like are

Speaker 2 00:08:47 There expectations for the wife of the bishop?

Speaker 1 00:08:50 I know that, but I, I guess I'm wondering like, did you see yourself marrying a pastor and then when, when Jeff ended up becoming a pastor, was, did your mom like drop it into conversations with friends like, oh and oh, Joy. Yeah. She married a pastor and it's sort of like this, uh, you know,

Speaker 2 00:09:05 I don't know if my mom ever had that in conversation, but I will say that when we were dating in college, she was very set on being like a rockstar. So, I mean

Speaker 1 00:09:15 Like a literal rockstar, like a

Speaker 2 00:09:17 Literal

Speaker 1 00:09:17 Rockstar like in a band. In

Speaker 2 00:09:18 A band, yeah. Uhhuh. Yeah. He was in a band and I felt like that was kind of what he was set on and kind of what he was pursuing. And I actually, I mean, rockstar and pastor, like kind of close to one another, but I actually really felt, I remember actually having conversation with the Jeff when we were dating about how I could see us ministering together. And I don't know if I specifically knew that meant being a pastor. I knew I wanted to probably go to school for counseling. And so I didn't know what that would look like, but I just felt that sense that we could do that together. Yeah. So I do think that there's a stigma attached with being a pastor's wife.

Speaker 1 00:09:57 Yeah. And I wanna go here 'cause there's a similar stigma for being a bishop's wife

Speaker 2 00:10:01 In our church. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. I'm curious about that. And I, I would say that I'm probably a little bit like I have an aversion to that stigma

Speaker 1 00:10:10 I think most, most do. Right. I mean, okay.

Speaker 2 00:10:12 I don't know.

Speaker 1 00:10:12 But

Speaker 2 00:10:13 I mean, some people might,

Speaker 1 00:10:14 I guess I hope most do. But yeah,

Speaker 2 00:10:16 I think in my experience so far, he pastored for about 15 years in Illinois before we moved out here. And I would say that some of my experience was negative in the sense that people viewed me differently than I'm, I'm not super like self-conscious. So like, I'm not always maybe like being mindful or like being a people pleaser in terms of like, okay, what is this person wanting from me? What are they viewing me as? Whatever. And so I felt like I was disappointing people a lot. I felt like there were a lot of expectations on me that people held me to that didn't maybe feel fair. And I think also sometimes in relationship it felt maybe one sided Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like in terms of like people wanting and me giving versus the return. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:11:05 Yeah. So what, like, what would be some pieces of advice that you'd give to a new pastor wife or even a, a bishop wife, like as they're starting this journey? Because I think the temptation is like, okay, now all right, kids, we gotta take it up, uh, to another level here. Yeah. Because people are looking at us

Speaker 2 00:11:20 Together.

Speaker 1 00:11:20 Yeah. And obviously that leads a lot of shame, which we're gonna get into later. Yeah. And you know, the, there's endless stories about the, the pastor kids, right. They're the, the bishop kids, you know, that are really damaged from that church experience 'cause

Speaker 2 00:11:33 From the pressure Yeah. Those expectations to have to kind of perform and not be able to be real. Right. I mean, I think some of that, unfortunately, I don't always know how to function real well if I'm not being genuine. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so I do think that that kind of like maybe rub people the wrong way or can just make difficult then when I'm like in a role where, where there is that pressure to kind of be something mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that maybe I'm not. And so I don't know what my advice would be. I mean, I think I do think it's really super important to stay kind of in touch with yourself and who you are and almost stay grounded in a sense. Mm-Hmm. And so there's probably multiple different ways. Yeah. Is

Speaker 1 00:12:15 There any specific thing you did to stay grounded during that experience?

Speaker 2 00:12:19 I think developing relationships with people that really know me and see me. And

Speaker 1 00:12:26 You were Joy rather than the pastor's wife, right?

Speaker 2 00:12:28 Yeah. And people that Yeah. Could be compassionate and understanding and almost call me back to and remind me of who I was in times where, you know, maybe somebody over here is saying something different and challenging certain things. And so I think developing deep, meaningful relationships is really important. And then, I mean, I always, I'm always a, an advocate for therapy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> therapy and being honest Yeah. Is really important. And sometimes, you know, and this might be something we talk about in a little bit too, but I think that can be difficult to do at times when there's shame attached to honesty. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:13:06 Yeah. And I appreciate the, you know, doing, just being willing to do your own work in those things because I think the, the stigma and the pressure is like, you know, like we, we've become to this level because we've figured life out to some extent. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I shouldn't need those things. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, so let's triple down on just being in the church and being in the community and rather than taking a breath and saying, wow, this is really hard, or I need to talk to somebody, or

Speaker 2 00:13:31 Yeah. I would say for sure in the context of where we come from, I think especially just pastors in general, I think one of the things that we need to do better in terms of our system, even for pastors is almost integrating self-care. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because yeah, somehow we're like in this role, so now we're just going to like endlessly, you know, care for other people and be limitless in what we're providing and giving and offering people as we minister, which we want to be able to offer. But it's really a challenge to do that when you're depleted and when you're not taking care of yourself and your needs and yeah. So I think self-care is really super important. Cool.

Speaker 1 00:14:11 Mm-Hmm. Awesome. Alright, well let's, uh, tell me about your journey becoming a therapist and how would you describe being a therapist? Right? Because you're not like clients or,

Speaker 2 00:14:20 I'm officially Yeah. I'm not. I have a master's in professional counseling. Okay. I got that about probably 12 years ago. I think I finished that, it was after my second kiddo was born and he was a couple years old that I finished that. And so I kind of always had in my mind like, I'm gonna put this, you know, set this aside for right now while I'm home with my kids. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so I have four kids and last year was the first year that they finally all were in school. And so I kind of had in my mind, like once they're all in school, I will start pursuing this more part-time even. And so really any therapy that I did over the last 15 years has been kind of just volunteer like things. And so I have definitely been learning a lot outside of, you know, I have the masters, but then the last few years have done a ton of personal work because of some things that kind of surfaced the need to do that.

Speaker 2 00:15:14 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so I've actually been learning a ton and I love learning, like the information is really fascinating to me, but I love learning. So these last few years have spent a lot of time doing a lot of personal healing and learning about a lot of

different counseling methods that I hadn't learned prior. Some because they weren't that taught then. Yeah. And so now that we are actually here in Utah, that's something that I am wanting to pursue. I can definitely do therapy without a license, but I think I am planning to look into licensure in this state. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:15:46 So, so what, was there a moment where you thought, I'm gonna be a therapist, or you're playing with your dolls as a five-year-old thinking, when I grow up I wanna be a therapist? Where did that

Speaker 2 00:15:54 Cover? No, there actually was a moment where I really kind of felt a call and it was in junior high and I was at a, I don't know if we were having a bible study or something, like several girls in the youth group in the junior high youth group. And we were sitting around talking and talking kind of deeply about different things. And we were reading, I don't remember what scriptures we were reading, but then there was a moment where I had actually, I don't know, in a really like, gracious way kind of, I don't to say confront, but like challenged something really kind of deep for someone. And that person actually specifically said to me like, you should be a counselor. Like her response Oh wow. Was really, she was really moved by whatever I had said. And I actually felt like what kind of came out of me and like my interaction with her in that moment felt like really maybe natural.

Speaker 2 00:16:45 It felt like something like, you know, I wasn't trying to like impose something in that conversation, but I felt like almost the spirit was moving in me. And so I always kind of held onto that and felt like something about that just felt like it fit, it felt right. And so I didn't get my undergrad in counseling because I knew I would probably need licensure and a master's anyway to practice. And so my master's or my, my bachelor's is in speech communication, which is half psychology, half sociology. So I still like, loved that information that I was learning there. But then I went on for professional counseling and loved every second of That's cool

Speaker 1 00:17:22 School. So

Speaker 2 00:17:23 Awesome.

Speaker 1 00:17:23 Yeah. And it always helps when there's a part of like feeling called by God to into that world and Yeah. It

Speaker 2 00:17:29 Feels important. Yeah. Especially in a, in a role that is difficult and comes with challenges and where you're serving. Like, it feels important to know that that's something the Lord's wanting you to do. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:17:38 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's sort of led to some of the conversations we've had, you know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I've written the, the book recently is God disappointed Me Removing shame from a Gospel of grace And from my own experience, the more I've talked with therapists, the more I've understand these dynamics of shame, the more I've been able to recognize it in my own life. Like Oh wow. Like for several years I was just sort of driven by shame and was God in that and or 'cause shame works as far as like Yes.

Motivating people. Right. It's effective. Yeah. It's very effective. Mm-Hmm. And so the temptation, even as a parent, I'm like, well, I mean maybe sometimes I gotta pull out the shame and, and get things going here. But, but I wanted to really explore it in the context of my faith, our theology. Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:18:16 <affirmative>. And what I've, what co the conclusion I came to is that God doesn't use shame. He's a god of love and a God of grace. And, you know, shame and disappointment can coexist. Or I'm sorry, shame and grace can't coexist. Disappointment and grace can't coexist. And so what does this look like in day-to-day life? And so when you think of like shame, like just introduce us to this world, like especially in the world of, of religion, a Christian world Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> Christian faith journey and shame. Like, where do we begin to understand this concept or

Speaker 2 00:18:49 Of what shame is?

Speaker 1 00:18:50 Yeah. What shame is or what role it plays and why we should desham things or

Speaker 2 00:18:55 Desham. Okay. I would say I might need a second to kind of think about this answer.

Speaker 1 00:19:02 Let, let me, uh, let me try this. Like, like people, a lot of people especially who leave faith Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they look back at their experience and they just feel a lot of shame. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that, you know, I was never good enough for my parents, for my faith community. And, uh, we've misused shame Mm-Hmm. In so many ways. And so just des shaming or the nons shame approach to things, right. Because it's so easy to default to shame. Right. So from a fate, like if you're talking to pastors, 'cause even pastors sometimes will rely on this concept through their sermons, or one-on-one counseling of like, well, let me write my use a little shame here to make sure you get back on track. Right? Sure.

Speaker 2 00:19:38 To help control. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:19:39 So why, why shouldn't we use that? Why not? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> go the, the route of shame. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Speaker 2 00:19:43 Well, because I don't believe that that is the love of God. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, we don't experience his love through shame, um, or his grace. And I would say shame is, I think I'm right in saying this, that shame you can't experience shame except in connection to another person in connection to, it's a

Speaker 1 00:20:01 Relationship

Speaker 2 00:20:02 Thing, right? Yeah. It's a relational, what's the word? Like experience, dynamic experience. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And shame not only like you can do something wrong and you can ask the question like, or feel the conviction of like, okay, I need to change

this. Like, this is sad, this isn't right, this isn't correct. Without feeling like you can feel like I did something bad, this was bad without feeling like I am bad. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I think in your book too, you talk about identity and shame being an attack on our identity and Absolutely. And I think through that, through shame, we often, our response is often to hide. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, right? Yeah. So we become isolated and disconnected from our communities. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:20:50 Mm-Hmm. Yeah. And I appreciate you emphasizing that. It's a, it's a relational thing and that's that, you know, acceptance is at the court. Like, if, if I'm experiencing shame, that means I'm not accepted here or I'm not accepted in this relationship. And so, and, and from the moment we're born, right? Like Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, we come into the world feeling accepted. Like, well, we're

Speaker 2 00:21:08 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:21:09 When we cry, we expect to be fed when we, or have our diaper changed or whatever. Right,

Speaker 2 00:21:13 Right. Like the, we're designed to be connected and attached. Yeah. And there's a lot of attachment theory.

Speaker 1 00:21:19 Oh, yeah. Yeah. That's a whole nother theory,

Speaker 2 00:21:21 Right? Yeah. Which really is connected too to shame as well. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:21:25 <affirmative>. And so from your experience, or just in the context of faith, right? Like how can we begin to approach to helping people without relying on shame or, or, I don't know, if a story comes to mind where you felt shame, you know, in, in your life or, and how you dealt with that? Or when you meet with people as a therapist, like how are you helping them through shame and to live life without, because it's so fun with shame?

Speaker 2 00:21:50 I think there is something really super powerful about being able to be present with someone, even if it is in their shame, to hear someone, to make space for someone, to allow someone to use their voice. And to almost not hide, to allow someone to like show up. There's something really powerful and transformative that happens just even in our presence with one another. And to be able to do so. And I think this is a little bit to connect it back to even Hello Saints. Like, I think this is a little bit the approach with Hello Saints. Like to be able to come and allow space without there being judgment. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, like, I know that part of healing for me has looked like me being able to be honest and say, say what I feel ashamed of, say what I feel like is wrong, say and communicate and express the feelings that I have about something that I have like long buried, because I have felt like, oh, this is not okay, this is wrong.

Speaker 2 00:22:51 And yet it's real for me that I'm experiencing these bad feelings. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So sometimes I think, even sometimes unintentionally I think

sometimes our religion, even for me personally, for my own personal experience in reading scripture and in wanting to do right, and in wanting to be obedient and honor God, I would hear certain commands or certain scriptures, certain rules, and I can try and think of an example of one, but something in wanting to honor the Lord. Like I felt like, okay, well this is what is right. And so behaviorally I'm choosing this even if my heart isn't totally aligned with this Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because I know that this is right. But then I would feel shame and bury and kind of repress parts of me, parts of my heart that that aren't, that I'm assuming are not correct

Speaker 1 00:23:39 Because your heart really wasn't there. You're not being completely sincere just going through the

Speaker 2 00:23:44 Motion, but there's not this complete like transformation in my heart that is aligned. And so I'm hiding, I'm hiding these parts of me that I think are sinful or wrong or disobedient, and I'm really genuinely trying to honor the Lord. But in so doing, I've disconnected from almost his love and his grace and my brokenness. Like I'm, you know, trying to just kind of maintain this Yeah. I'm in this place over here.

Speaker 1 00:24:10 Yeah. Now what you described is extremely human experience, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And, and this leads to why so much therapy is needed, because the authenticity between our, who we think our true self is and what we're doing. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, there's a gap. Right? Right. And, you know, we talk about like sin Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, this is often how, how we cope when there's a, there's a dissonance there between who we think we are and what we're doing. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And, you know, we're sort of hiding. We, we can't, we can't reconcile that. So Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> we'll turn to sin or we'll turn to other ways to numb out. Is that a fair way to say it? Or how, where am I off there as far as what, what do we do with that experience? Typically?

Speaker 2 00:24:47 What do we do? Meaning

Speaker 1 00:24:48 When we fill that gap,

Speaker 2 00:24:50 When we feel that gap, yeah. Sometimes people may not even realize that they're, they're feeling that gap or why they're feeling that gap. So I would say you're talking about sin, and in my mind, as I've done some healing work, I've started to kind of frame sin a little bit differently for myself as I've done, as I've worked through trauma. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And instead of the ways that I've kind of always regularly viewed myself as this, like, just I'm this like terrible worm of a person, which, which I am like <laugh>, I'm, there's, there's lots of grace for me. Right. Um, and yet like I was created by the Lord, and I am dearly loved and beloved, and sometimes I have a little bit of an aversion to the word beloved. I feel like it's kind of trendy word right now. Uh, but they're really in my healing that that has happened in my heart.

Speaker 2 00:25:48 Like that is actually, literally what I've experienced is, is this sense and this felt sense of knowing that I'm beloved. Mm-Hmm. And sin oftentimes causes us to, basically it's us trying to meet some sort of need. Mm-Hmm. So I kind of always am now asking myself

this question, if I see myself sinning or feel tempted to sin or see other people sinning and, and see them entering into that, I'm, I'm wondering, okay, what is, what is our need? What is your need? What is my need? When I am choosing to do something like that, and instead of viewing myself as wrong and terrible and horrible and kind of this shame-based response to that, I am able to actually look and see, oh wow, this is actually correct in the sense that you were designed with a need Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And your need is not something to be ashamed of.

Speaker 2 00:26:45 Right. I think that's a lot of personal healing I've done is, is realizing I grew up in a space where I couldn't have a need, and I had to oftentimes reign that in and feel shame for things that were very natural and for things that we were designed for. And so, so recognizing the beauty in our design in that there's no shame in having a need. Right. Or even having a desire. There's absolutely no shame in that, but finding ways that are honoring to God to ourselves, to others, to meet those needs, and being able also to just be honest about those things and confessing those things without shame attached to them.

Speaker 1 00:27:29 Yeah. You know, as I have a friend who actually is a therapist, and so maybe he knows these right things to say, but as I've reached out to him going through different tough times with different relationships, one of the most powerful things he says he has said to me is, you deserve to have your needs met. Right. And I've used that with other relationships when I'm giving counsel, and it's so empowering, and it's one of those things like on paper's, like, well, yeah, duh, but it's simple. Yeah. When you, when you hear that in that moment of shame, you're like, oh, good. So I can, I'm not crazy here. Like Right. You're right. And even going back to never do we get mad or frustrated with our newborn for needing to eat again. Right. Or Mm-Hmm. Oh, you pooped your pants. Like what really, like isn't about time you get a job. Right. We're never frustrated the need. Right. The newborn has Mm-Hmm. But then as we progress in mortality, that somehow how that message gets turned off of like, I can't believe you, you need this. You know? Right. And that's the shame just, just flows in. Right.

Speaker 2 00:28:24 Right. Yeah. And we're created, we're absolutely created with needs and with desires.

Speaker 1 00:28:29 Let, let me ask you this question before a quick thing. You said that you said, you know, I'm just a, a worm, but I am a worm. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, and this is an important dynamic that, that is really attached to shame is so often we're afraid of letting people know or admitting that we're broken. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But it's in that state of brokenness Mm-Hmm. That orients us towards Jesus. Yes. Right. But it's, there's such a nuance in there that when we feel broken Yes. We can also shift to shame. Right. Which is away from Jesus. Right. Right. And so I, the debate comes up a lot in like addict circles. Like there, there's like one camp that says you should never say you're an addict. Like, 'cause that's admitting to your weakness, and that will just perpetuate the weakness. Sure. But I feel like some people find it very empowering to say, I'm an addict because in a way they're saying, I'm broken and I need Jesus. Mm-Hmm. Right. But it's the people who

Speaker 2 00:29:18 Say they're acknowledging their need Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:29:19 The the need that, right. Yes. And so this is where the, I feel like it's really valuable for leaders to understand that when somebody's sinning or somebody is under a lot of shame, they're screaming that they need something. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And your job isn't necessarily to fix their behavior, their sin, but how can we figure out what do they need? Yeah. And, and make sure they're getting that

Speaker 2 00:29:38 Right. So you're asking how to figure out what people need? Well, yeah. Or, or how people can identify for themselves.

Speaker 1 00:29:43 Yeah. Or, or what, how, how else would you articulate just that dynamic that's happening as far as this need for Jesus? 'cause we need Jesus Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, but sometimes the having the need feels so shameful. How do we help people with that, that dynamic? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:29:55 I mean, I think in my context and what I've learned, like it really is so attachment based Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> to me. So I think someone over here could be experiencing the same brokenness or level of brokenness, but they're doing it in connection and in relationship to people, and they're sharing about that Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> experience. And I think that there is a lot of healing and wholeness that can take place in connection with other people. I think it gets really difficult when we are isolated and alone, which is where the enemy would want us to be in our brokenness, where we feel like we have to be on our own in that, like we are connected to one another. And so our brokenness is really nothing to be ashamed of. There actually is kind of what you're saying. Like, it's an opportunity to be oriented towards the Lord and his grace.

Speaker 2 00:30:46 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so I have come to realize like, I don't need to be afraid of my brokenness. Mm-Hmm. And I don't need to be afraid of your brokenness, because this is how we, this is reality. This is life. This is how we live and function. And there is so much opportunity for something really beautiful and almost glorious in these like, crevices between what we feel like we want to be what we are and what we want to be. And I think the Lord's grace meets us in between those places and kind of holds all of that together. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:31:22 Mm-Hmm. Yeah. And this makes my mind goes to often call it the cousin to shame, which is stigma. Right. It's like, yeah, Joy, I get it. Like, we need to admit that we're broken, and of course we need Jesus. Yes. Yes. But I mean, dealing with a guy's, he's looking at pornography several times a day. Mm. That's the, the stigma's there, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, yeah, sure. I get mad at my kids sometimes, but this guy, you know, he's, he's really sinning in a way that's a problem. Right? Mm-Hmm. And so, and what comes to mind with that dynamic? Like with the stigma of it, where, where that's why a lot of people, they feel so much shame that their stigma and then they definitely can't show this. Right?

Speaker 2 00:31:55 Yeah. I mean, I do think that in order to receive grace, you, whether there's stigma or not, it requires a certain degree of humility and a certain degree of like acknowledging wrongdoing or brokenness. And so I guess I would say there's really no way to

like necessarily remove that stigma. Yeah. I think it's more a matter of like allowing yourself to be humbled and to be honest and to need. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:32:26 Yeah. So I'm curious, just taking it a more practical level of, you know, a bishop is there, he, he doesn't want any shame in his office as he's meeting with people. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> an individual comes in and maybe there's moments, you know, we all experience this as parents too. I mean, kids feel shame all the time. Mm-Hmm. Or especially adult kids. But when that person comes in and they're feeling, they're buried in that shame and that stigma, and they're, they're acting out sinfully of where do we begin there?

Speaker 2 00:32:53 I mean, where I would begin is to simply listen. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and appreciate, I mean, the fact that a person would be sharing with you Yeah. That they're even stuck in their shame is really a privilege. And honoring their voice and their willingness to share whether they're stuck there or not. And knowing that people are a process that gets really right. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that gets annoying, but <laugh>, it's just like, this is like, this is life. Yeah. And this is people, and like people don't walk in the door. And I know, even in my own personal work, I have come back to the same place. And especially with trauma specifically, like you end up kind of, you almost default back to a place. And so I've had to rework and rework and keep untangling and keep untangling the same thing over and over and over again.

Speaker 2 00:33:40 And so it takes time and it takes presence and it takes love and it takes, I mean, that person coming in the office needs just as much grace as I do. And so, but I do think that there is opportunity to recognize like where someone maybe is acting out in certain ways, like that can indicate, you know, places where there has been harm. Yeah. Before that, in my personal story, which is actually very public, I had an experience with a youth, pa youth pastor that was abusive. And this was in high school. And I didn't realize until a few years ago, I mean, I think I knew all along that this was not right, but I always took personal blame and moved on with carrying the abuse, and I carried it as shame. I carried it as what's wrong with me. And so I didn't realize until a few years ago, whenever the church this happened at, reached out to me.

Speaker 2 00:34:38 And we kind of began this journey of pursuing justice and healing not just for me, but other people involved as well, where I'm acting out in one way. Like, I didn't realize, especially because some of the wounds that occurred to me happened in my childhood. I didn't connect some of my behaviors to those things. And so I carried the, that as shame and even my current behavior as shame. Instead of saying what is wrong with me, which was my whole life, I started saying what happened to me and started seeing through ice of compassion, being able to look at my story and look at certain instances that were really actually damaging and starting to discuss and process those instead of burying those. And then trying to like kind of just survive over that and get my needs met, which now I have more needs. Right. 'cause I've been wounded, but I don't realize it. And so I'm trying to meet those needs in ways that are counterproductive. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:35:44 'cause you're not just hungry and tired, like Right. We, that words

Speaker 2 00:35:48 The baby, the natural, normal need. Right? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:35:50 But now it's this other need. 'cause this wound is screaming deeper and

Speaker 2 00:35:52 Uglier. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:35:53 So much appreciate that framing you give of, of not what's wrong here, but what happened here. Mm-Hmm. And, and for a, a bishop or a church leader, like that's so helpful to walk into because it's so the sin is screaming. Mm-Hmm. Like, listen, you can't be looking at pornography or Mm-Hmm. You know, you're treating your family like this, or I can't believe you did this. We're we're focused on what's wrong. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, because sin is wrong. I mean, I'll be the first to admit, sin will destroy you. It will decay you from the inside out. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Like, we know that. And so it's easy to be like, well, we gotta get the sin, the behavior handled. But it's so refreshing to maybe step back and be like, what happened?

Speaker 2 00:36:28 But what does sin destroy in us? Because I feel like I've always heard that I've grew, grown up in a Christian circle, so I've always heard Yeah. Like, sin will destroy you and you need to, you know, we need to not sin and we need to do this. And there's this almost legalistic, like Yeah. Yeah. I was very good at like, doing what I knew to be. Right. Right. And I really genuinely felt like I wanted to honor the Lord, but I wasn't, because I couldn't view and understand my story through the eyes of compassion. I wasn't able to wholly choose righteousness because I was disconnecting from myself, my body, my feelings, my emotions. And so,

Speaker 1 00:37:05 So this is where the rub is. I, I'll interject here because this is where I, why I bring up stigma a lot. Like, 'cause me, if you look at my life, like I've done all the things I, you know, graduated from seminary, went on a mission, I became a bishop, you know, like somebody could look at my life and like, you're

Speaker 2 00:37:20 Writing a book about grace.

Speaker 1 00:37:20 Yeah. Right. I'm, I'm a I'm published author. Like, and this is, this is The Rub. Because someone would be like, well, Kurt, and I use this analogy of like, if, if the savior came to you right now and said, said, Kurt, I'm here to heal you. What can I heal? I'd look at him and be like, I'm good. I mean, my shoulder kind of slept on it wrong. You, you know. Yeah. Or, and this is where I think a lot of like church leaders that are like, I don't see where my problem is, but because there's not some stigmatized sin that we're hiding, but we are turning to other things that aren't the savior. Because there's this dissonance here. It's nobody, as Brene Brown says, nobody writes for free. Right. Like everybody's, everybody's got, so this is why it's so important is that even though you are doing all the things Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, like I was doing all the things. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, like, I got the commandments down. I do, you know, I read the scriptures, I do the things, but that doesn't mean that you, you're proving that there's not a brokenness in you.

Speaker 2 00:38:11 Yeah. Yeah. And I think what, what we were talking about a minute ago about like, the enemy is like destroying something like sin will destroy. Right. And I was asking,

what is that destroying for me? I've learned what it has destroyed is my identity. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> in terms of my belovedness. Yeah. And not having to do anything. I have to do nothing. Absolutely nothing. It is simply the pure grace of God that allows me to experience that belovedness. And I would say in my story, I knew, I knew the truth that God loves me, but I hadn't felt it. I hadn't allowed myself to really deeply feel it and know it. And I would say that my healing has restored the feeling of being beloved. Yeah. And knowing that.

Speaker 1 00:38:58 Yeah. And that's sort of the center of, of the book that I want to get across is that oftentimes we say, we, we get on, on paper. Yeah. God loves you. Yeah. Yeah. We learn, we learn that all the way, you know, from nursery and primary, but man, he, he's kind of disappointed in you, you know? Mm. You're, you keep frustrating a little bit. I mean, he loves you just like, I love my kids, but my parents, my my kids kind of frustrated me and you're kind of frustrating God. And that's where we have, we've held off that grace that completely loves us. Like no, no, no. Like you're beloved. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like completely mm-Hmm. Like right now. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Not if you do all these things. Right.

Speaker 2 00:39:30 Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:39:31 That's the power of grace.

Speaker 2 00:39:33 Absolutely. Yeah. It's amazing. Yeah. It's amazing. Amazing grace. Do you know that song? Or

Speaker 1 00:39:37 Let's, let's let sing you start. No, I'm just kidding.

Speaker 2 00:39:39 Uh, okay. Just kidding. I mean, I would sing it with you if you want it, but it's fine. Even with grace, it doesn't mean that our lives will be pain-free. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that if we know our belovedness, that our lives will be void of

Speaker 1 00:39:56 Pain, sunshine and butterflies from here on. Right.

Speaker 2 00:39:59 I know. It'd be great.

Speaker 1 00:40:00 But, and it feels that way in the moment you're like to be saved. Like, to feel that is like Yeah. When you think life is good for now, <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:40:06 Yeah. When you experience God's grace, like in a really deep way and feel his love in that way. Like we want to just stay in that Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> place forever and always, but there's going to be pain. And so I think another thing that I've personally learned and seen in the lives of other people too, that have had to heal is that a lot of times in order to experience and feel and know God's grace and his love, we are going to, we are going to walk through grief. We're going to have to navigate grief and sorrow. And that feels awful. And yet on the other side of that Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and through that path is something incredible and amazing. And you almost can't achieve, you can't feel and know in that way when you haven't allowed yourself to go to those hard dark places to feel that pain. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:40:55 Yeah. That's powerful. So a few terms I think that are more readily used in the evangelical faith tradition that I've sort of learned more about, and it's really helped me sort of contextualize some of these, these dynamics. This is concept of healing of even woundedness. Like I have a chapter in my book about wounding. Yes. I've had several people approach me. So I, I just don't quite get it yet. Like, I don't, um, I don't know if we do as well of a job as sort of articulating the brokenness that we experienced because we, we want to sort of just hold up the expectation of like, well, but just do the things and you don't have to talk about your brokenness. Right. And that's a, on the surface it feels like an encouraging message, but it's not because it gives more reason to hide. Right. To hide. And even this, and we'll, we'll touch on all these, but spiritual warfare is another one. Mm-Hmm. That is very

Speaker 2 00:41:41 Foreign to us. That's a new terminology for you. Yes. What do you, what kind of terminology do you use?

Speaker 1 00:41:45 Well, here's the thing is we talk about the adversary and we know, you know, he's tempting us. He's coming after us. I worry sometimes, and I don't think this is just a latter, a saint experience, but we sort of categorize, he's sort of like a, the bad guy on Saturday morning cartoons. Like yeah, we know he is evil, but ah, you know, but you don't think too much about it. Where in reality, like no. Like Satan will, like he will, he's coming to destroy us. He's not like

Speaker 2 00:42:09 He's prowling around like a lion looking to this story. Exactly. That to devour that

Speaker 1 00:42:13 Script, to devour. I love that scripture Right. To devour. He's not like trying

Speaker 2 00:42:16 To, it's not the scripture you have up on your wall. Yeah. Should be. You love that scripture.

Speaker 1 00:42:19 It should be. I love that scripture. It's cross stitched. So <laugh>. But so I, I sometimes we, we talk about the adversary sort of as this thing in the greater picture of our theology. Hmm. But hearing it in spiritual warfare of like, wait, I was born into a world at war, like, and so that really helps me get my guard up a little bit better rather than, 'cause Right. When we sin, I think we blame ourselves and we don't consider No, there's an adversary that keeps coming after you. Right. And take that into the calculation of it

Speaker 2 00:42:47 And what is he trying to attack? Right. He's trying to attack your identity. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:42:51 And our, through our wounding, I would imagine. Right,

Speaker 2 00:42:53 Right. Yeah. Through our wounding, through our pain. Yeah. I think our pain presents an opportunity to the enemy. And I think a lot of times, and this is my own personal theory, when it comes to like counseling and people that come in with dysfunction in different ways, I think oftentimes it's because of people's pain. They're looking for ways, you

know, we end up choosing things that we're trying to alleviate, relieve ourselves of pain, numb ourselves from pain, and that can lead to problems. And so it feels really important to be able to know what it looks like to handle our pain in a way that

Speaker 1 00:43:30 Would you say where there's healing.

Speaker 2 00:43:32 Yeah. Learning to allow our pain to lead us to Jesus as opposed to a away from Jesus. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:43:40 Because I was saying, our faith tradition is like, you recognize there's hurt, there's pain, life isn't going well, and we often default to the behaviors like, well, you know, just really get into your scripture study.

Speaker 2 00:43:51 Accountability.

Speaker 1 00:43:52 Yeah. Accountability. Yeah. You know, really pray and get to the temple more often. And, and again, these are all good things, but we're trying to solve the problem the wrong way. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's where your question of what happened is so powerful rather than what's wrong.

Speaker 2 00:44:04 Well, and I think one of the words I haven't really used here that I like to use, 'cause I feel like it's significant, is that a lot of times our theology about certain things or our belief that our behaviors should be the priority causes us to bypass. And this is kind of what we were talking about earlier, but we bypass our hearts, we bypass our feelings, our emotions, and try to just achieve this behavior and what looks good on the outside, where on the inside we're still a mess. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. There's like, there's nothing substantial there in terms of healing. And, and sometimes I've had to untangle some of my theology in order to allow myself to feel without shame.

Speaker 1 00:44:43 Okay. Tell me more about that. Like what does that look like as far as untangle theology? Because you'd think the theology just leads you to that place, but it can be cumbersome.

Speaker 2 00:44:51 Yeah. Yeah. Where, where sometimes, you know, our theology or our religion can become a legalistic form of like right and wrong and do this, don't do this versus the gospel, which is like transformative for us. So I would say, I'm trying to think of like actual scriptures that I know I like clung to things like always be joyful, pray continually, and give thanks for whatever happens. This is like my life verse. Like this is the verse I love. And at the same time, there, there is a demand in that verse that has caused me often to not allow myself to be honest about the times I'm not joyful or the times that I'm not thankful, or when it says, don't be anxious about anything. Well, I'm over here anxious, trying to like, meet this demand of don't be anxious. Mm.

Speaker 1 00:45:41 Or fear not. Right.

Speaker 2 00:45:42 Fear not. Yeah. And how do I look at Yeah. How do I like try and like maintain this? Right? Right. Like, oh, I'm not gonna be anxious, I'm not gonna be worried. I trust God. You know, whatever. Just in, in appearances. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> versus really deep internally, like experiencing that. Those are just a couple Yeah. Examples of like ways I almost have felt forced to bypass the reality of my embodied existence, my humanness.

Speaker 1 00:46:12 Yeah. This is ing and I, I appreciate you bringing up, 'cause in our tradition it's like, we'll go to the temple and we're in the temple and we're still like a mess. Right? And it's like, no, no, no. You're in the temple. Like, relax. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you're here. Mm-Hmm. Like, yeah, but I can't, I still have to reconcile these feelings or Mm-Hmm. You know, I can't get past them. Mm. But and so that's where like almost the, the, you have to separate all those things and lay 'em out so you can see 'em all together rather than try and solve it through that theology

Speaker 2 00:46:38 And where you're saying like, I have to get past this. Like, I am uhhuh, whatever's going on inside, I have to like, that's a problem.

Speaker 1 00:46:43 Fix

Speaker 2 00:46:44 It. Yeah. I need to like do what's right and be what's right and think about what's right and take every thought captive and like have it all pulled together. Know like how to be living rightly right now. And at the same time, I think really what the Lord wants is like no, like bring me all of that. Like I, that is the sacrifice he wants. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, he wants like every last bit of your mess that you feel internally, every last bit of your shame that you're experiencing. He wants that. He wants to see it.

Speaker 1 00:47:09 Yeah. And almost like suffer with you through it. Right? Yes. That

Speaker 2 00:47:12 Be with you in it.

Speaker 1 00:47:13 Like, he wants you to feel that anxiety he

Speaker 2 00:47:14 Is with you in it, whether you know it or not. Yeah, exactly. Even when you're feeling shame. Yeah. And living in a place that is isolated and alone. You, he is with you there too. Yeah. Whether you feel it or know it, he is there.

Speaker 1 00:47:29 And that's the power of his suffering that he went through with us is that he's the only person he's to be like, I know, I know exactly where you're at. I know exactly what you're feeling. There's even an example, not necessarily scriptural in the new chosen Yeah. Where we want, like, you're the savior, fix it. Mm-Hmm. Like, just heal it, make it go away. Mm-Hmm. Like, isn't that your job? But instead he just says, I'm so sorry you are

Speaker 2 00:47:49 There. Yeah. And I remember in the chosen, we just watched that the other night,

Speaker 1 00:47:52 Um, not biblical. Okay, we get it. But anyways,

Speaker 2 00:47:55 <laugh>. But it was talking about how Jesus is the man of sorrows. Yeah. They like brought that up. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:48:00 That's powerful to see. It is

Speaker 2 00:48:02 Powerful to see. And I, I was actually having a conversation with Jeff on the way here and kind of looking back at some like, different notes that I had taken when I was in a really kind of like, intense part of my processing and healing. And like, one of the things that I felt like the Lord kept kind of reminding me of is like, if we don't know sorrow, we don't know God if we haven't experienced grief, like we haven't experienced, we haven't experienced what God knows and what God is well acquainted with and there's something we want to, we spend our lives trying to like shy away from that and trying to run away from that. Trying to not feel that pain. So there's a difference between like feeling our grief and being able to lament. And I think that's actually something that our churches, and I don't know, I don't know in the LDS context how often there is conversation or even services around the idea of lament.

Speaker 2 00:48:54 But, and I, I have experienced that in my context to a small degree. But I think that it would be really powerful and significant to practice as a community in connection with one another to practice lamenting Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And not practice like it's fake practice, but like practice together and just allow opportunities for lamenting in a public communal way. Because our ability to grieve if we know how to grieve, I don't wanna say grieve. Well I don't wanna put pressure on like, you have to grieve the right way. <laugh>. And yet I think that maybe even almost this like a shame-based grief would look more like torment and a god-honoring grief would look more like lament and allowing, allowing our grief to move towards lament. And somehow in that there's transformation. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:49:50 And when you say grief, you know, it's easy to default to like the funeral or the loss or the cancer diagnosis. And I think even getting in that space of lamenting with that individual who's sinning or who's obviously struggling with an addiction, but come there with a heart of lamenting and be like, wow, like this is so hard. Rather than just doing it at the funeral.

Speaker 2 00:50:10 I think that people experience a lot of times in isolation from other people, such deep pain and such deep grief that where do we go with that? Especially for the person that's isolated. Like, what does this look like? Like help me know how to handle my pain in a way that I don't have to bypass it or dismiss it or pretend like it's not there, but allow me to connect with you in my brokenness and allow space for me to feel really hard things. And for that, not to mean that I'm a terrible human, but really that I am human and that, that I am human. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:50:53 And maybe, and I'm always drawn here as far as the, the practicality of it all. Like what does that look like? Because oftentimes I, my heart breaks when I hear that and I feel it myself sometimes when someone goes through a tragedy or is needs that lamenting, it's like I'm just, just give 'em space. You know? They're going through a lot. Let's just give 'em space. And I don't, I don't wanna burden them with showing up unexpected, but, and that's, they need actually the opposite, right? They need that community who's willing to, to lament with

them. And so how do we do that when maybe I've never lost a child or I've never had cancer. Sure. And so I don't know how to show up for you, and what if I say the wrong thing, Joy, and then I make it worse? Or, you know, what comes to mind as far as the practicality of doing that?

Speaker 2 00:51:32 I mean, I think it depends a little bit on the situation, because I think that even outside of like a tragic loss or something very clear to everyone that you should be grieving or lamenting. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Like, I think that there are ways to almost train ourselves to move towards a posture of lament and allow ourselves just in our mindsets, it feels bigger than just like, oh, I need to be with you in your grief right now is you're like, you've just tragically lost someone. But like, almost systematically, like making space for and valuing our grief not to run away from it, but to discover something through it and making it safe to move through that, that I'm not gonna be outcast. So I feel like it has to do with our attitudes and our mindsets and sometimes the systems that we're in that can kind of then practically play out in what does this look like.

Speaker 2 00:52:32 So, I mean, we just had a service at the church that we attend recently. There was a service called an Empty Chair service. And it was kind of based on this idea of being able to come and lament and it was around the holidays. So it was really aimed towards people that were experiencing grief or loss around that season. And just literally having a service and making space for you to feel those things and express those things and bring them before the Lord and do it within community. And I mean, I think there's lots of opportunities 'cause yeah, grief can look like losing a loved one, but it looks so many other ways as well. Yeah. It can look like just needing to process abuse that you experienced or some sort of other loss.

Speaker 1 00:53:14 My mind goes, I dunno if this is a, this maybe too superficial way of framing it, but just coming together as a community, we're in a relationship and recognizing the hurt, the pain, the loss, whatever it is, without any intention of trying to fix it.

Speaker 2 00:53:28 Yeah. And not being afraid of it for one another. Like I think sometimes we wanna pull people away from their pain. Yeah. And really that pain can be such a transformative place. We're doing each other a disservice to not actually be able to be present for other people when they're in that place.

Speaker 1 00:53:42 And as a church leader, sometimes so much pressure of that person coming in heartbroken for whatever reason. And you feel like I am failing if they don't walk out of this office. Mm-Hmm. That upbeat back on top, you know? Mm-Hmm. But there's so much power in just coming and saying what happened and sitting with it. Yes. With no intention of fixing it. 100%. Saying like, let's do this again. Yeah. Wow. I feel like because that, that healing happens whether we re recognize it or not.

Speaker 2 00:54:09 Yeah. And healing takes a lot of time and healing actually requires a lot of feeling of discomfort. So it is really super important to be able to a laugh space and be present nonjudgmentally non pressuring for recovery and for whatever, but just genuinely meeting a person where they are. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:54:28 Awesome. Any other point, principle concept that you wanna explain before we wrap up? Or I

Speaker 2 00:54:33 Think maybe I would, I don't know if we touched on this very much, but, and I don't know exactly how I would say it. I know in your book you're talking about like shame having like, like you can't experience disappointment and grace at the same time, that sort of thing. But I almost would connect it also to compassion. I don't know if you're familiar with Dan a I don't think

Speaker 1 00:54:56 So.

Speaker 2 00:54:56 He's a Christian therapist, author, I believe he's a professor as well. And he specifically specializes in like sexual abuse and trauma. But he has written a few really excellent books and he talks a lot about the subject of shame. And one of the things that I have kind of taken from his book that I not only really resonate with and have experienced, but I see, and it really like makes sense the connection. But a lot of times where there's shame, there's also self-hatred. So, and oftentimes it can actually look like self-hatred or it can look like contempt for others. And oftentimes we, you, I think he kind of talks about it in terms of like, you will, the contempt is almost a way to keep someone away from your shame. It's almost protecting you from other people seeing

Speaker 1 00:55:47 Yeah. Because that person does not wanna get to know you. Right. If you keep pushing them that way. Yeah. Or

Speaker 2 00:55:50 If you hate yourself and keep yourself hidden too. But his books are really excellent and really talk about the subject of shame in a grace based way as well. And I would just say, I think in some of my last thoughts, like simply is that one thing that transforms shame is compassion. And I think where they're, you're experiencing pain and disconnect and isolation when there can be connection made with other people and you experience other people moving towards you and compassion. In my own personal experience, I've experienced shame as being very much connected to self contempt. And the way that I've experienced that being transformed in my life has been the experience of not only the Lord's grace, but his compassion.

Speaker 1 00:56:44 Perfect. So if people want to listen to your, your episode with, uh, Jeff on the Hello Saints podcast. Yep. Where should they go to learn more about Hello Saints.

Speaker 2 00:56:53 Hello Saints channel on YouTube has his YouTube videos and his podcast videos on there. And then any, any podcasting platform has his podcast available. Awesome.

Speaker 1 00:57:04 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Okay. Last question I have for you is, as just on your own personal journey with Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> wounding trauma healing, like, how would you articulate the way that Jesus has shown up for you and all that and offer healing? Are

Speaker 2 00:57:17 You trying to get me to cry at the end here? | This is what you do. Okay. Oh wow. I would say Jesus has held me together <laugh>. I would say I have experienced a depth, I have allowed myself to kind of explore and experience a depth of brokenness that I have long avoided. And then in the midst of trying to heal, there have also been other really heartbreaking situations or circumstances that have come up for me connected to healing that have been even more deeply shattering. And so it's even a little, I dunno, shocking is the right word, but like to even be able to, able to sit here and express God's love for me that I've experienced and felt in the midst of some of the deepest, darkest places in pain in my life. I just simply would say like, there is something under me just completely holding every single piece of my brokenness and my shatteredness. And I think being able to come and sit and talk and not be ashamed of my brokenness or afraid of my brokenness is the way that he's shown up because I don't, I don't need to have it together. And none of us really actually do. And I long for what I find on the other side of my brokenness and that is his grace and his love.

Speaker 1 00:58:51 Now that we've reached the end of the episode, I quickly wanna thank you for supporting the Leading Saints podcast. There's so much content out there to consider, and you picked this one. If Leading Saints has made an impact in your life, we would sure like to hear about it at leading-saints.org/contact. And if you could quickly text or email this episode to a leader, you know, I bet it will bless their life. You can mark off your good turn daily and let's even call it ministering. Okay. Maybe not that far, but seriously, thank you. And help us share this content. And remember, grab your copy of my new book, is God Disappointed In Me on Amazon or in select Costco stores?

Speaker 3 00:59:40 It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of Heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the Declaration was made concerning the own and only true in living church upon the face of the earth, we were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.