

Lord of our Leading

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[0 : 00] All right, thank you, Alan. Hey, good morning, Harbour. How are you? You guys doing good today? You guys were really, like, you guys were like buzzed just a few minutes ago. Come on, come on. You didn't waste all your energy on the community moment, right?

It's good to be here with you. I'm Jesse, one of the pastors, and those of you that aren't here, you may be listening to this later in the week online. So glad that you're staying up with us. We are coming to the end of this Colossians series.

I think we only have a handful of weeks left. It's been amazing. It's been a time, we looked at this rich, robust book, which is all about Jesus, and we've looked about who he is. He's not just this amazing teacher that lived and died.

He's not just this wise person that gives us really good principles to live by. Who he claims to be is the Lord of all, the Lord of creation, the God who created all things, the God who, because of sin and our fall and how we separated ourselves from him, he came and redeemed us.

And so this book talks about not only how great Jesus is, not only that he's our savior, but he's also our Lord. And that's how we relate to him vertically, right?

[1 : 05] He's not just the guy that saves us and gets us out of our messes. He's a guy that commands us and tells us how to live and says, follow me, right? The call to salvation is a call in grace, but make no mistake, it is also an authoritative summons by a king, the king of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

And that's what we're talking about, right? And so we've seen not only how we relate to him vertically, but because of how we relate to him vertically, how we relate to each other, right?

There's a horizontal change now. And we've kind of started looking at that over the past few weeks, what that means for us and how that changes us, but also how that impacts our relationships. And that's the essence of life, isn't it?

Relationships really is the essence of life. It's not only our relationship with God, but our relationship with each other, right? A lot of life is relationship management. Relationship is so central to the human existence.

I mean, think about this, guys. Relationships are so powerful. Before we could exist, two people had to come together and relate, if you know what I mean, right? That's how we came about being. Relationships are key and they're crucial.

[2 : 11] And relationships can be this great source of joy. They can really be a great source of joy, but you know what? They're also our greatest source of pain. Why is there joy in our relationships?

Why is there such great joy and a desire for us to constantly be in relationships? Well, it's because we're made in God's image, right? God created us. He created us like him. And who is God?

God is a relational God. He exists as a relationship, as a community. He's not there existing by himself. He is three persons. He's Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And he's always been that way. So he's a God that has a lot to say about community. In fact, he is the original community. And so the very fact that we're created in his image means that we were made for community.

We were made for relationship to each other. And so God has a significant thing to say about this and how these things work. But then there's pain because of relationships. Not because God failed us somehow, but because of sin, right?

[3 : 10] Sin is this. We chose self-sovereignty over happiness. Before Adam and Eve succumbed to the snake's temptation, right?

They had everything they needed in the garden. They were fully satisfied. There was no conflict and contempt for each other between Adam and Eve.

Everything was good. And yet the promise that they could be in control, that they could determine for themselves what is right or wrong, to be their self-sovereign, self-governing persons, they chose that over happiness.

And guess what, guys? That is the problem with relationships that dog us to this day. A relationship conflict, a problem that the difficulties we have in a relationship is because we are two individual wills, two individual kingdoms coming together, and we butt heads.

We want it our way, right? That's why that is happening. Genesis 3.16, the latter half of it says, he says to the woman, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing.

[4 : 16] In pain you shall bring forth children, and your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you. Now, this is at the very beginning of God's response in telling him, because you guys chose self-sovereignty, this is what's going to happen.

Now, I don't want you to read this and say, oh, this is scripture putting women in their place. No, this isn't like God dogging women. This is him pointing out a fact. It's like guys are just as guilty in this thing as women are.

So it's not a guy versus girl thing. It's pointing out the fact that God's original relationship structure has been fragmented and fractured. It's broken, and it's because we all want it our way.

So what is the hope? What is the hope for relationships? Well, the hope for relationships is a surrender to God's way. It's a surrender to him. It's a surrender back to his original plan.

And so we see in this passage in Colossians we're reading today what this redemptive reality looks like. Colossians 3, 18 to 21. It says, wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

[5 : 18] And before all the husbands are like, yeah, guess what, guys? The very next verse it says, husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Can I say that Paul, the same writer elsewhere in Ephesians, actually extrapolates that out a little bit more to help us understand.

He says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. So he points to the greatest example of what love looks like. And then it goes on to say, children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

And all the children in the audience said amen. Fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. So we see here all these important relational dynamics.

And obviously that's not all of them. But man, all of us, you know, we're parents or kids or married or whatever. There's somewhere in there that we can relate to this. And the gospel shows us the pathway to peace and harmony for the main relationship structures in our life.

And while the verses here focus on family relationships, the gospel, the gospel virtues described here apply to every relational reality in our lives. So I'm going to say to you, if you're single in the room, don't check out.

[6 : 28] Man, this is going to be so helpful for you. If you aren't a parent yet, don't check out. This is going to be helpful for you. Young guys and gals in the room, don't check out.

This is going to be really helpful for you. This goes beyond just where we are at in life. It teaches us how to be good leaders and good followers, how to be both in authority and under authority.

And let me just add that I leaned really heavily on Paul Miller's book, *Loved Walk Among Us*. Actually, can you? I'm going to just jump down and grab it so you guys can see. I was supposed to bring this up with me.

But this is a book that, man, I often go through a lot for myself. I mean, one of the ones I read besides the Bible, I probably have read through this multiple times. It's just a really helpful book.

It looks at the life of Jesus and how he loved and how he led with love. And so I really leaned heavily on this for this sermon. I just want to give honor to where honor is due. And so, yeah, here's the thing, guys.

[7 : 29] This passage, while it's really short, there's no way I can cover significantly like an unpackage, like how the gospel speaks into each of these relationships uniquely.

And so what we're going to do is we're going to split it up. We're going to take two Sundays to kind of cover these things over. And so I had mentioned before how it speaks into our leadership, how God calls us to lead by gospel virtues and how we can be Christlike in our leadership.

And then the next Sunday, we're going to look at how Christ gives us an example to follow, how Christ is Lord in our following. And so today we're going to look at the leadership quotient of this.

Okay, the gospel teaches us how to lead like Jesus. So again, Colossians 3, 19 and 21, husbands, love your wives. Do not be harsh with them. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

So men in the room, we're in the crosshairs on this one, okay? This is aiming at us, all ages of us, right? Like if you're a teenager, if you're in your 20s, if you're single, if you're married, it doesn't matter.

[8 : 37] Pay attention, listen up. Ladies in the room, I want you to say, God, what we're talking about today, this is the kind of man you're looking for. This is the kind of man you pray for and you desire, okay?

And that's a man of great character because character is better than a man of great charm. See, charm is like froth and bubble, right? It eventually goes away, but character is the substance.

It's the substance that you're kind of left with. And so you want a man of great character. And here's what this passage is saying. The greatest character a leader can have is love, right?

Now, I'm not talking about romantic, low-light, soft jazz kind of love. That's not the love that this passage is talking about. Sorry, dudes. I know we could wish we could have it that way, but that's just not it.

Actually, it's loving like Jesus. It's loving how Jesus loves us. And what do we see? He leads with sacrificial love. See, bad leaders are consumed with themselves, right?

[9 : 35] We call that narcissism. And God, everybody, we all, because we're humans, we all have a bit of narcissism to one degree or another in us. I'm up here and I fight narcissism all the time, fighting it right now.

I'm thinking in my head while I'm preaching, I wonder if they like my sermon. I wonder if they're gonna tweet it or Instagram it or Facebook or whatever else it. I wonder if they think my outfit is cool, if they like my haircut, you know?

Why are they staring at me? Do I have a booger hanging from my nose? I mean, there's just like all these things that can like constantly be going through our head, but they're all me-focused, right? They're all wondering like how am I doing and how am I performing?

The point is that I'm trying to make here is that our nature has a tendency and a proclivity to think about ourselves and put ourselves first and be at the top of our minds all the time.

We have minds that are me-focused. But here's the thing, Jesus wasn't like that. He had a mind full of others all the time. And so we're gonna look at a story, an example of how this works out in Jesus's life, how he led with sacrificial love.

[10 : 40] Luke chapter seven, verse 11, it starts out this way. Soon afterwards, he, Jesus, went to a town called Nain and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.

So I'm gonna stop there because we can read that and kind of the big thing that stands out isn't like where Jesus was going. It's that there was a great, great crowd following him, right?

And you know what? Bad leadership, what we do is we use bad markers to gauge success. See, in this case, Jesus, he's seen in his day as a teacher, as a discipler.

And so it would have been easy for him to get his value, right? It's easy for them to get his accolades or praise from him based on the crowd size. How many followers can I get?

And as husbands and parents, what do we look for to validate our markers? What are our markers of success we look for to validate ourselves?

[11 : 41] Because we have those, whether we like it or not. And here's the thing, we often look at the wrong things, right? As husbands, man, we can think, what's a validation of my success?

Well, I'm a provider and I'm a protector. And those are the two most important things. And my wife better be happy with that. And if she wants more than that, well, tough luck. You're just a big and great, right?

As parents, do we look to my children? Do I look to my children? Do you look to your children to validate you based on their performance? Man, guys, can I say this?

I've been, we have a relationship with some counselors in the area, good Christian counselors. And I got into a conversation and just asked, you know, what's their biggest growth area?

Because they've actually expanded. They've probably quadrupled, if that, their staff. And all of their growth is counseling kids ages three to 18.

[12 : 43] Think about that. And so I asked, what's going on? What in the world is going on? And so there's the reality of social pressures out there with their friends. And social media kind of like exacerbates the problem, makes it worse.

But there's another quotient to there that we have to own as parents. We have bought into this lie that our kids need to be exceptional. We talked about how God the Father loves us in our singing today.

Philip brought that up. You know what he said to Jesus at his baptism? You're my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. You know what Jesus had done? Nothing.

But we're so driven. We're so driven to make our kids exceptional and perform. And really, what is that about? I want to challenge you to think about that as parents.

What is that really about? Is that because it reflects on you and it validates you? Or is it really about your kids? See, we have to wrestle with these realities, guys.

[13 : 51] It's not easy to do, but it's good to do. See, anytime we find validation outside of God, we are on the pathway to bad leadership. And how do you know if that might be you?

Well, here's the thing. I don't know about you, but this is how it manifests itself in my life. It comes through in anger or anxiety. Think about the last time you got really, really angry at your spouse or your kids or someone you were just leading.

The last time you were super anxious about the future. Why is that? What is going on in your heart at the time? See, we can't truly love those we lead until we stop using them to validate us.

And that is why Jesus leads with such an amazing love. It's the Father's love, like I said, man. It wasn't based on his performance. And so he wasn't caught up in the hype of these false measures.

Ooh, great crowd. Yeah, now I can feel good about myself. Now I can feel confident. Now I don't have anxiety or anger. I have a quiet, submissive wife and kids. Life is so good and perfect.

[15 : 05] Check out what happens next in the story. It says, As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother. And she was a widow.

And a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, Do not weep.

See, Jesus in this moment isn't concerned about his entourage that's following him. He is not caught up in that at all. In fact, he's not even concerned about himself.

And let me tell you how amazing that is in that moment that he wasn't concerned about himself. It said he just came into this town called Nain. Most likely, he had walked a full day at least 20 miles in a desert climate.

And he finally made it to this town. No joke. And so he walks in. He walks into this place. And he doesn't think about himself, right?

[16 : 07] He could be thirsty. He could be hungry. He could be tired in this moment. And yet, what does he do? He stops and he sees and he notices what's going on right in front of him.

Here's the funny thing, guys. It's in moments of weariness where we really find out how sacrificial and loving we really are, right? Like weariness and tiredness and the difficulties of life, what they do is they squeeze us like a sponge.

You don't see what's in a sponge until it gets squeezed and then stuff comes out. We're like that. Our hearts are like that. And weariness and stress of life, they squeeze us and we get to see what's inside.

We get to see what's inside Jesus. He doesn't come and it's not like these two paths are merging and Jesus sees like, oh, shoot, man, there's this funeral. I see the cracker barrel right there.

I'm gonna run as fast as I can so they don't like stop me. I need to eat. I'm hungry. That isn't what's going on. Jesus doesn't lean toward convenience in that moment. Why is that?

[17 : 06] Because he's always looking away from himself. Loving leadership starts with looking out for others. See, Jesus doesn't see a problem in front of him.

He doesn't see an obstacle in his way. He sees a person and he sees that person's need. So when I come home from a long day of work, my brain is fried and I'm sometimes can just be emotionally spent.

And I just finished walking my long walk from Nain to my house, like proverbially, right? Sometimes I open the door and the house is in chaos.

Kids are running around, screaming, fighting with each other. My wife's in a bad mood because of that. She needs help. She needs... And all I want to do is just silently shut the door, put it in reverse, be like, maybe I can go somewhere quiet.

And though I might not physically walk away, and you know what? I can emotionally check out. I can be like... I can be there without actually being there, right? I can be present without really being present.

[18 : 17] But Jesus, man, he's not like that. He's present wherever he was at and in every situation. See, bad leadership, what we do is we walk in the door and feel sorry for ourselves and think, you know what?

I don't deserve this. After the day I have... the day I've had, I don't deserve this. How can they treat me this way? But leadership like Jesus walks through the door looking and learning.

That's what loving leadership does. Loving leadership doesn't just look. It learns. It isn't just that Jesus saw the situation. He was seeing with understanding, right?

He was noticing something here. This lady was in a bad way. This wasn't the first time she had buried a family member, right? It said she was a widow. So she had already buried her husband.

She had already lost her husband. And now it says she's burying her only son. Now that's a huge bummer. I mean, that is really painful. But it gets even worse if you understand the context of that time.

[19 : 21] She had basically lost all the social kind of security, all the social network that she could possibly have as an older widow.

Imagine today being a senior citizen having no family, no social security, no Medicare, and no job. that's kind of where she's at to give you context.

Jesus didn't just see a funeral. He understood. He looked. He learned. He understood what this woman was going through.

Man, husbands, parents, spouses, we are called to love each other this way. We are called to love our kids this way with understanding. understanding. Recently, Sierra, our four-year-old, it was this past week, she woke us up the other night with night terrors.

I mean, I thought she was dying. She was like screaming at something. So, first time I ever experienced this, she was losing her mind. I walk in, she's like out of her bed, like just screaming at something, and I'm like, what's the matter?

[20 : 31] She's like, Dad, there's spider webs everywhere. And me and my brilliance, solving this, like Mr. Fix-It solving problem, and I just look and I say, no, there's not. Ta-da, problem solved.

Let's go. Right? The problem didn't end there, obviously. She just kept on screaming, no, there's spider webs everywhere, and she's pointing at walls, she's pointing at places, there's obviously no spider webs anywhere, but she was, she was convinced that was her reality, right?

She, this persisted for probably five minutes, although at two in the morning, that feels more like 30. And my brilliant plan was to keep repeating this dialogue.

What's the matter? Spider webs. No, there isn't spider webs. What's the matter? Spider webs. No, there isn't spider webs. Point them out. No, it's not. No, it's not. No, it's not. Finally, my wife steps in and like picks her up and holds her and begins just reading this little, simple little kid's book about like, you know what?

When I'm sad, when I'm scared, when I'm angry, I can go to God and I can pray to him. It's just a really simple thing. And it just, she just quieted down after that. It was like the most simple solution.

[21 : 36] I was like, brilliant. I should have turned to God and asked for help. But here's the thing, guys.

So, man, what I saw was a problem. What I saw was an obstacle. What I saw was somebody getting in the way of me getting my full eight hours of sleep. and I was getting more angry and more frustrated and more upset the longer this went on.

See, I was focused on the problem and I saw my daughter as a problem in that moment. And that's how it was affecting me. I didn't have compassion. I wasn't looking.

I wasn't learning. I wasn't listening to what was going on. I didn't have compassion in that moment. And so, I was totally unhelpful. I was leading poorly. But leadership like Jesus, man, it's fueled by that.

It's fueled by compassion and that starts with looking. That starts with learning and that grows compassion in us and compassion can only come that way. And compassion happens is when we're willing to enter in to another person's reality.

[22 : 44] Loving leadership seeks to close the gap. Loving leadership seeks to close the gap. This is the whole point of Jesus' incarnation. It's why he came down to earth, right? Incarnation, it's a fancy word and it literally just means putting on flesh.

By becoming human, when Jesus became human, he put on flesh. He chose to enter into our world, right? He chose to experience our limitations, our pain, our weaknesses, our suffering.

And so, when we incarnate with people, that is what we are doing. And that fills us with compassion. And it is why community is so important. It's not an optional extra to Christianity.

And that's why I say, man, you can't get community through social media. That doesn't put flesh on. That doesn't go and sit with people in their junk and their difficulty and their pain and their sorrow.

We show up. We come together. These moments on Sunday, it's a beautiful thing because what we're doing is we're choosing to show up in the flesh with each other even though it may not always be convenient, right?

[23 : 52] We're doing it together. It's why community groups are so important and why we're always pushing them, get in one. Man, it's meeting together on a regular basis. It's showing up.

And I want to say, it's showing up in a way where you're there. You're present. You're coming to add something to that moment because you want to incarnate with people. You want to show up looking and learning and understanding where people are at, right?

So you could help them and be a blessing to them and show them compassion and be and show Jesus' love and heart for them. They experience God's grace working through you toward them.

Too often, the question we ask is how often do we have to do this, right? Man, we're so good at trying to find the minimums for incarnating in community. And if that's our question, then we've totally missed it.

I mean, what would you say to me if I told you, man, what do you think the minimum is like that I could spend with my wife and my kids and still kind of maintain a relationship with them? Man, you would say like, well, you know, that kind of makes you a really sucky husband and dad.

[25 : 02] If that's where your heart is at, if that's what you want. But when I'm looking for ways to distance myself, I'm not a loving leader and I'm not a loving person. But here's the thing, guys, physical distance isn't the only way we do that.

We create relational distance. We widen that gap when we judge others, when we're self-righteous, and through legalism. See, these things all block love and compassion.

They widen that relational gap. When you think about those three things, they directly tie into that original sin of Adam and Eve. They wanted the authority to judge right and wrong for themselves.

And so, the natural side effect of that, the natural result of that is relational distance, relational schisms. At the heart of sin is this, I get to analyze you.

That's judgmentalism, judging others. At the heart of sin is I'm right, self-righteousness. And at the heart of sin is I get to make my own rules that I get to measure you by.

[26 : 08] And that's the ugly side of legalism. We all fight this, guys. Christian or not, we all fight this. There's this interesting parable Jesus told. He said this in Luke 18, verses 9.

We'll start there. Jesus, he told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, self-righteousness, and treated others with contempt. All right?

Judgmentalism. Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all I get. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. So the Pharisee in this story is the example, shows the example of what a heart clogged by judgmentalism, by self-righteousness, and legalism, what that looks like.

[27 : 20] He starts this prayer by judging everyone around him. And that's the thing, man, judgmentalists, people that are like into judgmentalism and just like super judgmental, we're great analyzers, right?

Man, we can look at someone from a distance and analyze the snot out of them. We know exactly who they are, what they're like, what their motives are, right? We can size them up.

We don't need to talk to them, we don't need to look and learn and listen and move towards them and close the gap to learn anything about them. We already know everything we need to know. And this thing of being judgmental, man, it's really fed by self-righteousness, right?

Self-righteousness is a curated moralism. It's a curated moralism that fits our personalities, strengths, and weaknesses, right?

And it really pushes towards our strengths and minimizes our weaknesses. Self-righteousness makes us morally superior to everyone else. It makes us feel justified and qualified to judge others, to stand at a distance and just analyze.

[28 : 27] And from that place of superiority, we actually find it hard to come down to other people's levels from where we're at, from our ivory towers. And the other thing is this judging, this being judgmental, this self-righteousness that clogs love is fed by legalism.

Legalism. And legalism seeks righteousness through rule following. The problem here is that we create the rules that define our righteousness.

And legalism gets really ugly because we use these rules as weapons against people. That's what we do. Think about what that Pharisee did. That Pharisee in his prayer is listing his rules and using them to accuse everyone around him.

so that he could prop himself up. That's what legalistic rules do. They don't lead people into freedom. They actually turn us into accusers.

Accusers of each other. This is different to calling people to repentance for sin. See, when we call people to repent, we're recognizing we are also sinners that need to repent.

[29 : 35] But man, that judgmentalism, that self-righteousness, that legalism, it stands and it condemns and it accuses in order to draw distinction for our own superiority.

And as much as it causes us to not like being around certain people, guess what? People really don't like being around us if we're that way, if we're honest. Colossians 3.21, it says, fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged.

The language here, provoke your children, is this idea of like a consistent, prolonged contention. Think of like berating. It just goes on and on and on and on.

It's actually, it's funny, this idea behind this word, it's a botanical word that refers to a rough plant that's covered with hard projecting points, right? It's okay, people that are provoking, people like this, it's like, you're like a prickly person, a prickly pear.

nobody likes to be around you. You know, we might step back and say, hey man, people just don't like me because I keep it real honest. No, people don't like you because you're a jerk. That's really what's going on.

[30 : 49] If your kids don't like being around you, if your spouse doesn't like being around you, man, stop and consider that the reason that they might be at fault here, the reason might be you.

And the call is to repent for those things. Those things block love, compassion, they create distance, but leading like Jesus, leading with sacrificial love, it closes the gap, it moves towards others to love them and to serve them.

Loving leadership serves and encourages others. The opposite of being harsh, the opposite of provoking is encouragement. And here's what this passage is saying.

Our words and our actions matter. Our words and our actions, they could be life-giving, they could be life-building, or they could bring death, they could tear down, they could destroy people.

Our leadership, good, godly leadership that we're meant to take on is meant to encourage and cultivate people. It's meant to bring life, but too often we use it to lead people poorly.

[31 : 54] We don't encourage them, we don't cultivate them. Actually, we encourage, we use our leadership to try to encourage ourselves and cultivate ourselves at other people's expense.

So, let's finish by looking at the rest of this story of Jesus with this widow of name. Look how he uses his words and his actions to bring life. Verse 14, Jesus' Jesus' words and actions led to this young man being raised from the dead and the life of this widow being renewed, renewed hope, changed the game for her.

in a similar way, I want to ask us, how are we using our words and our actions? Parents in the room, husbands, spouses in the room, how are we using our words and our actions?

What would your spouse, your kids, your friends, your coworkers say about that? Do they feel like you build them up? Do they feel encouraged by being around you? Do your words bring a help that heals wounds or do they make the wounds?

See, the cross is the perfect example of the actions of sacrificial, loving leadership. Jesus was wounded in our place to heal our greatest wound, the impossible gap between us and God.

[33 : 28] And godly leadership, whether you're a husband, a parent, a boss, a pastor, whatever, godly leadership is the way of the cross. It is sacrificing yourself to build and bless others and pain in relationships.

Though they come from two competing wills or kingdoms, peaceful relationships come when we lay down our will, when we lay down our kingdom and surrender to God's will.

We surrender to the Father's will, just like Jesus did, and we seek his kingdom first. If I could have the band come up. If you're here and not a Christian, I want you to hear this. Jesus, Jesus died for your sin.

We just talked about that. He died to close that gap and to bring you into relationship with him as a child of God. You have a Father who loves you, who delights in you.

You don't have to perform. You receive this by grace. That's our reality. Christians in the room, it's the same way. We have a good Father who loves us. He loves us for who we are.

[34 : 28] He loves us not for our performance, but because of Jesus' performance in our place for what he did for us. Our response, whether you're a Christian or not a Christian, is reminding ourselves of that and surrendering, surrendering to him as Lord and Savior.

I want to invite all of us to do that. I want to invite you today, if you are a Christian, to think about, man, how has Jesus been calling you to surrender that way?

What is he calling you to do today? What do you need to repent of as a leader, as a husband, as a parent, as a wife?

I want you to think about those things and ponder those things as we come to communion and be reminded that, man, you don't have to stay.

You don't have to stay in this place thinking like, oh, Jesus is never going to forgive me of the faults I've committed. Actually, that is totally untrue. We're reminded when we come here that Jesus paid it all.

[35 : 36] He paid for our sins, his body broken, his blood shed, and he reminds us that we don't have to be perfect leaders. We can come humbly. We can become humble, loving leaders that realize at the same time we're both the Pharisee and the tax collector.

We can be both arrogant at the same time, but we can also be the tax collector that beats our breast and says, man, Father, forgive me, a sinner. We're reminded that, man, we live by Jesus' grace.

We depend on his grace to do any of this. He was the perfect leader, full of love, full of compassion, and full of forgiveness. And he speaks life-giving words over us today.

Pray with me. Lord, we thank you. We thank you that you are the leader that we really need. You