

Talk 1 - When Have I Done Enough?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 May 2026

Preacher: Kelly Kapic

[0 : 00] Well, I am grateful to be with you all. I know your lives are full, so the idea that you would take half of a Saturday to be here, I consider a great privilege and honor and praying that when it's all done, you're not thinking, wait, why didn't I just go for a walk or something?

So, I don't know, by the end of the talks, you might have thought, actually, a walk is good advice. So, I want to begin by, just to give you a sense of how this morning is going to go, I'm going to begin by kind of orienting you to thinking about this idea of being human from a Christian perspective, and we're going to talk through some of that and some of the ways maybe we're being shaped or misshapen in ways we don't even realize.

Then we'll have a little bit of a break, and then for a second session, we're going to talk about the question, why doesn't God just instantly change me, right? So, this first session, they're both trying to answer questions. This session really is the question, when have I done enough? And the next question is, why doesn't God instantly change me? And I want us to think through these things.

And the way I want to begin this morning is, I want to think about, I was thinking about, in Christian circles, often we talk about growth and development. For biblical reasons, we think in terms of fruit. And so, it made me start to wonder, like, biblically, what's the fruit that's often being thought of, and it's actually olives. And so, even though I'm from California, where we do grow, I'm from the Zinfandel capital of the world, just so you know, if that means anything to you.

[1 : 36] No, okay, whatever. Come on, people. Anyways, but, so I started looking into olives, and here's what's fascinating about olives, is it's not like so many fruit trees where you can, especially in our day, where you can plant and get production very quickly.

When it, when you plant an olive tree, if you want to get to full, you, you're not going to get anything before three years, but really, that's just the first fruits, and you're really at about 12 years before you're any kind of maturity with the, with that tree.

And what's interesting is, the trees, at first, they'll grow a little faster, but on average, at first, they might grow anywhere from 2 to 12 inches, but after that, it really is about 2 inches a year, at most. And, you know, some of you have children, or remember, you know, children around, or that kind of thing, and you, you know, and you're, and you're, somewhere in your house, you have, like, pencil marks, right, where the kids are getting bigger and taller and taller.

And, and what's funny, though, is when you live with the children, you don't notice it happening. But when you get an out-of-town guest, right, who hasn't seen the kids in four years, they're like, what happened to you, right?

[2 : 56] Or even just 12 months, because they have not been nearby, they can see the growth, but when you live with it, it's very hard to recognize. And so part of what I want us to think through is, as Christians, we rightly think we should produce fruit.

But in a Western civilization, we tend to, and we're going to talk a lot about this today, we tend to put everything in terms of productivity and efficiency. So even what it means to bear fruit must be, I need to bear it, I need it now, and I need a lot of it.

And if that is our image, it's going to create all kinds of shame, and it's going to malform us. So I want us to reimagine what it looks like.

Because just so you know, an olive tree grows very slow once it gets going, but it can last for a thousand years. But it grows very slow.

So now let's start to think about us, and think about how these things, how this, in a sense, theologically, we're going to be talking about creation.

[4 : 09] So I want you to think about your own life. And it's fun for me to be in different cultural settings, because, you know, even during break and afterwards, you can tell me how close some of

what we're talking about hits, or if it's just way off.

But I want you to spend a little bit of time thinking about this. And this set of questions, I would encourage you over the next, you know, maybe this weekend, if you're willing, maybe tomorrow after church, sometime after your nap, right?

To write this down, this is going to feel like a weird set of questions. But I want you to answer the question, how much do you think God expects of you? How much does God expect of you in a day? In a week? Maybe in a year? And in a lifetime? Right? You get the idea. You can change the time periods as you want.

But how much does God expect of you in a day, in a week, in a month, or a year, or a lifetime? That's a weird question, because if I just say, hey, what does God expect of you? Does God have unrealistic expectations?

[5 : 18] You're like, we don't even talk in those categories. It seems very weird. But part of the reason I would encourage you to actually do the written exercise is, if you're like me, when you have to write, there is some kind of distance.

And you will be surprised what comes out of your hand. It's almost like you're looking at it like, really? Really? And when you get the distance, you'll think, I don't believe that, do I? And that distance can allow you to start going, wait, is that God, or is that my parents?

Is that some kind of cultural thing? Is that some bad preaching I received at some point in my life? Is it, like, what's going on? What, and so the question is, what does God expect of you? So let's think about your life.

Let's think about my life. How are you doing? For me, one of the things that drove a lot of this research is, because I, these are all serious struggles for me.

And for the longest time, the hardest, one of the very difficult times for me during the day would be at the very end of my day when I finally put my head on the pillow at night.

[6 : 23] Now, I don't know where it is for you. Maybe it's you sit on a couch or a chair or there's some kind of, but for me, it was the end of the day. It was finally quiet. It was dark.

I'd put my head on the pillow at night. And so often, a wave of guilt and shame would come over me. And, you know, many of you in this room may have heard of the term, an examine.

An examine is, many Christian traditions use the examine. And the idea is, you kind of go through your day, and you think about your day, and you think about ways in which maybe God has shown up, right? And you praise him for that.

And the idea would be, as you go through your day, and you think about, oh, I can't believe I spoke to that person in that way, right? Or I can't believe I was manipulative in that kind of way.

Or I was covetous. I was wanting and trying to take something that wasn't. Whatever it is, as God brings those things to mind, the idea is we should recognize it. We should repent and then bask in God's kindness and grace, right?

[7 : 24] In his forgiveness. What took me forever to realize, though, was so often that wave of guilt and shame was not those things. It was this voice in my head, and I'll let you decide if you have had a similar experience.

So often, it was finally quiet and dark, I'd hear this voice. Kelly, why didn't you get more done today?

Why didn't you get more done today? And after a long time, I eventually, as a theologian, it shouldn't have taken me to something, but I was like, wait, am I supposed to feel that every day?

Like, I don't know about you, you know, how many of you, I don't really want to see hands because we'll revolt, but how many of you, like, at the end of your day, you just get to the end of your day like, I crushed it. My workplace, everything in my job site, I did it.

I did it, and I did it all well. And you know what? I got the exercise I needed. I spent all the time with my friends I really wanted to. My children got all the attention I think they should have gotten. We ate the kind of food that we should eat.

If you have a friend who's like, yeah, I crushed it all, you have my permission to punch them. I don't know, you're like, but you know what I mean? That's funny because it's absurd.

[8 : 39] Start to think about all the areas of your life. Are you keeping up with your correspondence? You have families scattered around in different places. Are you keeping up with them? Are you spending time, like, just go area after area after area of your life.

And if you're like me, you're like, nope, nope. And they're not bad things. So how do you not just feel perpetually overwhelmed with guilt and shame?

And when you're a Christian and we live in a Western world where we baptize efficiency and productivity, now you've just got this Christian guilt and shame. And in some of our churches where some of you have heard the idea of creation, fall, redemption, consummation.

Yes. In some of our churches, like the tradition I come from, we believe in creation, fall, redemption, consummation. But the way we often put it, I mean, we don't say it this way, but it's really, we believe in creation, fall, redemption, consummation.

In other words, the main thing is just to get you to feel guilty. Like, if you feel like you're a sinner, we've really gotten you somewhere, right? And so I want us to think through this a little bit.

[9 : 50] And I want to begin by actually, and this is where some of the cultural translation will come in. And I want to help you understand how there's different ages here, how you might have gotten to be how you feel, or your children or your friends are feeling.

And I haven't talked about this in Scotland yet. I have talked about it in Australia, in America, and other places. And so I'm very curious if you say this doesn't relate at all, or it does.

But I want to take you through three stages. And I want to start with what we would call high school. You would, I'm thinking really secondary school. And I think really the latter half of secondary school is kind of what I'm thinking.

So, and here, I didn't plan on studying that age group when I started the research, but it became actually super interesting. And here's what I found in the environment and in the research I did, which was primarily America, but, and here's the qualifier.

What I'm about to describe is relevant in public, and I know these terms mean something different here, but public and private upper schools, or secondary schools, public and private middle and upper middle class schools.

[11 : 07] If it were lower income areas that weren't, didn't have the support, it would have different challenges in those schools. But, but middle class and above, this is what an average day looks like, and still does right now.

Kid leaves for school normally about 7.30 in the morning. I'll try and be conservative. They head off to school, they're there, and they're in classes till like 3.30 in the afternoon, often sitting much of that time, absorbing, absorbing.

Then they might change and go off to some extracurricular activity. It could be band, right? It could be some instrument. It could be theater. It could be a sport.

It could be robotics. But you do that extracurricular activity till like 6 p.m. And then at that point, you rush home, you shove some food in your mouth, maybe take a shower, right?

And then normally off to some other extracurricular activity, and then homework till 11 at night, or just straight homework until 11 at night. Every day.

[12 : 06] And what's interesting is I hear about this again and again and again, that this is what it looks like to be a teenager in schools of middle and upper middle class.

And what's interesting is if you're grumpy curmudgeon like me, you hear that and you're like, that's dumb. They don't need to be doing homework till 11 o'clock at night. The only reason it takes them that long is because they're staring at their screens, right?

And so when I started the research, I thought, I'm going to blame screens for all of this stuff and social media, right? But that is not where I landed.

I'm fully aware. We can talk about it later if you want. And we'll hopefully do some Q&A; stuff. But I'm fully aware of even how social media affects us. And we could talk about even some of the chemical reactions and stuff.

But what I thought was the cause I now think is a sign of a deeper malady, right? In other words, it's really fun in an environment like this to go, oh, those young people.

[13 : 16] But think about the last time you were at the grocery store and there was a line. What did you do when you waited in line? You got out your phone.

And you didn't even think about it. Of course you get out your phone. I actually was talking about, I used this example one time with this group of students in Colorado. And these were actual high school kids.

And I was saying, you know, what happens if you, you know, if you get out your phone? And during Q&A;, this girl raised her hand. She said, and I could tell she was being sincere, very honest, you know. And she said, you mentioned this waiting in line and not looking at your phone.

And she said, I genuinely don't. What would we do? We don't even know what's happened to us, including me.

And one of the interesting things, though, and the reason why this relates, is if before this session, if 15 minutes ago you saw me over here on the side and I pulled up my sleeve, I got out a little heroin, and I took a shot.

[14:23] You think anyone would be concerned? You guys are like, I don't know you. You seem, why are we listening to you right now? Why is this even an option for you, right? I think one of you would be like, hey, someone needs to talk to Kelly.

That's not a good way to handle anxiety or stress or whatever, right? But what's interesting, I'm not saying they're equivalent, but this is a socially acceptable drug.

And when there is any time, a gap, we will distract ourselves with a screen. And here's how it relates. It's because one of the reasons we need to constantly distract ourselves is if you don't, you think about all the things you should be doing.

And it is a way to navigate a life of endless demands. Think about the last time you binged some show. I didn't ask if you do.

It says, when was the last time you did, right? And after you watch some show for an extended amount of time, when you finish, you're like, oh, I feel great. No, it's again one of these like, oh, as soon as you're finally done, you're overwhelmed with like, I wasted time or I got to get to things.

[15:38] And part of the reason that that phenomena has grown is because we need radical distraction to avoid feeling and experiencing all the things we're not getting done.

Otherwise, we're just endlessly trying to produce. And so part of this is what is going on with us. So that's kind of the teenage years.

Now, I teach at a college. I taught at a college since 2001. And when I started researching these things, I like to ask students and I want feedback. And so early on, I had this student. She heard I was working on this stuff.

And she said, I want to have lunch. See, I want to talk about it. And so we sat down for lunch. And she was a very organized person. You'll get this in a second. So we sit down for lunch. And she pushes over to me one sheet.

It was originally just a white sheet of paper. And what she did on that white sheet of paper is she made little boxes, one box for every hour of a week.

[16:38] So seven days, 24 hours a day, and had all of those boxes on this one page. And I saw colors all over it. And she said, here's what I did.

I tried to map out on an average week all the things that people I respect tell me I should be doing. People like my parents, people like you who are my professors, people who are, you know, my pastors, all these people in my life that I respect, I just tried to take into account the things that they basically say, explicitly or implicitly, that I should be doing.

And I tried to map it out. I would encourage you to do this similar kind of practice. So she did. And she said, you guys all say that sleep really matters. And so, and I remember that color.

That was black. So she had eight black, you know, everyday blocks for sleep. And she said, you guys say I'm a Christian, so I should spend a little time in the word, you know, in scripture and in prayer. She had those down.

And then you say, don't just shove food down your mouth, but sit down, actually have a conversation with someone. So she had three little meals. And she was in university. So she had like 18 hours worth of class scattered around the week.

[17:45] And then she had, you know, in different colors. It was like 10 to 15 minutes before and after each class, which starts to get annoying at this point. Maybe you're even getting annoyed listening to it. I'm like, come on, what are you doing? But actually, she didn't use the word Star Trek's not real.

But what she was saying is you don't just show up for class. It actually takes 10 to 15 minutes to get there. And the fact that I'm annoyed by having to look at all this doesn't make it not true. And then, and I'll stop here in a second, you know, if you're at a good university, like I teach at Covenant College, it's high academic.

So for every hour in class, you're supposed to be spending two to three hours outside of class. You see where this is going, so I don't have to belabor it. She maps all this out.

We haven't even talked about having any friends. We haven't talked about any kind of job. We haven't talked about any church activities. She passed. She's like, she has an aha experience. She realized it's literally impossible. Literally impossible to do all the things that she thinks she's supposed to do. And the reason why I would encourage you to do something like that is because you don't have to be 20 to feel that.

[18 : 51] You can be 60 and feel that. But if you don't map it out, you will perpetually feel bad and feel like you're disappointing God because you're not doing all the things that you think you're supposed to do, having no sense of actually how realistic or unrealistic that is.

Because, you know, listen, as someone who preaches sometimes, we can make you feel guilty. Because there are a lot of good things to do. Right? So what, what, you don't even need preachers. You just need your, your internal voice. Right? Whatever it is. Let me, let me complete this. We've talked about, you know, secondary school, college or university.

I want to talk about the working world. So any of you know the name Oliver Berkman? He's an Englishman. His, his area, he's not a Christian, but he's very thoughtful.

Uh, and I want to explain, so Oliver Berkman is, is a New York Times bestselling author, uh, in the area of time management. And I turned in this manuscript for You're Only Human, and shortly after, Berkman's newest book came out called 4,000 Weeks.

[20 : 03] And I, I don't, I don't want to read another book on time management, but I thought I should keep up with the industry. I kind of need, because I'm critiquing, I need to know what's going on. Um, and it turned out to be a, it's, I, I would encourage you to read the book.

It's very interesting. So first of all, let me tell you what 4,000 weeks are. 4,000 weeks, and some in this room, this is going to sound exciting, and others, this is not going to sound exciting.

4,000 weeks is the average lifespan of someone in the Western world. And I checked, and on Amazon, you can buy a wall chart. And you can cross them off as you go, right?

Right? So depending on where you're at, that'll either be, you know, and I thought it was going to be like, 4,000 weeks, you can do it. And Berkman, whose area is time management, doing the research, has an aha experience.

And again, he's not a Christian, but he read like Augustine, because Augustine talks about time. He's an honest broker. And this is what Berkman says. He said, those of us in time management industry, his aha was, we're in the business of convincing people they're not mortal.

[21 : 12] We're trying to convince people they're not mortal, which is an amazing insight. And his whole thing was to realize, oh, you only got 4,000 a week. Stop feeling guilty about it, right?

It's this fascinating kind of thing. And so Berkman, he realizes, no, you can't do it all. We're trying to, even the idea of time management, which we throw out like, really?

You and I can manage time? How powerful, like what is going on there that's shaping us in a way? So I want to tell you fundamentally this morning, I don't think we have a time management problem. One of the things that has concerned me is that this problem is dealt with in the church often the exact same way it's dealt with in the world. When someone tells us, I feel overwhelmed, I'm feeling exhausted, I'm feeling, just listen to the language we use.

I'm stretched, right? I'm crushed. I'm feeling, you know, overwhelmed. These are all terms of things happening to us. But the church often responds the same way as the world is.

[22 : 21] We say, oh, really? You know what you need? You need better time management. Maybe you need my email program, right? And in fact, let me, I want to use this illustration just because I want to put it to death.

So this, like, as a sign of like what Berkman's talked about, and many of you in the business world will have heard this very illustration, right? You'll get a guru who will stand up and they will show you a glass jar and it'll have like rocks and sand and it'll have like six different ingredients in that and it all fits.

Have you seen this? And then they'll have a table with an empty glass jar and all the ingredients and they'll have some volunteer come up and try and put it all in. And how does it go?

It never works, right? And then the guru gets to say, ha ha, yeah. But, and then they'll show you. And if you just put in this first and then this and then this. What's the lesson there?

The lesson is if you do it right, you actually can do it all. If you just do it right. And for \$19.95, I can sell you, right?

[23 : 31] The program, the email program, my whatever. And the good part of that illustration is, yeah, priorities are helpful. The problem is you will spend your whole life trying to get it exactly right. And until you do, you will just think it's perpetually your, your organizational skills that are the problem. So here's what I want to tell you. I don't think we fundamentally have a time management problem.

I think we have a theological and pastoral problem. I don't think we fundamentally have a time management problem. I think we have a theological and a pastoral problem. So I want to start by giving you some vocabulary, okay?

Finitude. I'm going to, I'm going to teach you a phrase and I want you to memorize it. And I don't care if you know what it means yet. But I'll, I'll break it down in a second.

So here's the phrase I want you, if you remember nothing else this morning, I want you to learn this. Finitude is not sin. Finitude is not sin.

[24 : 38] Finitude is not sin. So let's, let's break this down because we don't use the language of, except maybe if you study mass or something, we don't use the language of finitude or finite very much. Let me explain. Finitude or finite just means limits, limits in space, time, knowledge, power, right?

To be finite means you're limited in space. You can only be one place at a time. You're limited in knowledge. I don't care what your IQ is. You can only know so much, right? You have, uh, entropy is a real phenomenon.

Like you have only so much energy, limits space, time, knowledge, and power. So finitude means limits. But do you know what the Christian word for that is? It's creature.

It's just creature. To be a creature is to be finite. And one of the things that's happened, particularly in the Western world, and whether it's last 50 years or 200 years, you can debate this, but we have confused finitude and sin and collapsed them.

And when we do that, we misunderstand what it means to be a human creature. We misunderstand God and the goodness of his creation.

[25 : 54] So I was talking to a group of, it was basically 18 to 24 year olds. And again, explaining some of these things, the idea of finitude is not sin.

And, and explaining that we're human creatures. You were never met. And so during Q&A;, a meet, you know, hands go up, but I could see this guy and the mic goes right up to this kid.

And I could, as soon as he grabs a mic, I can tell he hates me. Which makes me like him because I'm a professor and I get, I just, it's great. She's like, Dr. Gepin, I got three questions. And I could tell he's mad.

I'm like, this is going to be good. Number one, does God have limits? Now, as a theologian, I'm like asking me a question.

I don't know. Well, he can't sin. Is that a limit? You know, but I didn't say any of that. I knew that's not what he wanted. And so I said, no, God does not have limits. And he starts to smile. Number two, are we made in the image of God?

[26 : 58] And then I start to smile. And I said, yes. And I'm not trying to shame or call out, you know, this isn't actually about the kid. But I, and I know what I'm about to tell you, at least half of it is word for word.

But then he basically said that number three, how in the world can you say that we should have limits? And I know he said this line or word for word. He said, show me the verse.

Now, as a professor, like, how do I as nicely as possible say it's not a verse here or there? It's every page of the Bible. It's what theologians call the creator creature distinction.

Right? I'm not interested in shaming that kid. What's interesting to me is what did we do to him that he thought I'm some crazy, you know, non-Orthodox theologian because I just told him he's a creature.

He thinks I'm a liberal or whatever these terms mean. I don't know around here. But he thinks I'm, I'm problematic because I'm telling him he's a creature. And the fact that he's a creature and has limits, he thinks I've done something like, and some of that's Americana and some of that's other things, larger Western things.

[28 : 20] Right? What, what is going on? And that's what I'm interested in. How have we now been catechizing one another in ways we don't even know that's deeply affecting our understanding of our lives, of our God, of what faithfulness looks like, of what Christianity looks like?

And how is that hurting us? How is that affecting us? Finitude is not sin. Finitude is not sin. So this is a little abstract.

So let's get, I want to give a concrete example. I want to talk about humility. Should we be humble as Christians? What do you think? Yes.

Okay. In America these days, I have to ask. But that's a side issue. You're going to, right? But I'm not going to argue we should be humble. I'm just going to assume it. I assume you all know, right? Humility is, so here's the interesting question though. So why should we be humble? And some of you may remember the American late night talk show host Jay Leno.

[29 : 22] There was a guy who would come on late at night in America called Jay Leno. And he used to have this, he used to have this stunt called Jaywalking, given his first name. And he would send some of his staff out to the streets in Hollywood and they would just come up to someone with no preparation and shove a microphone in their face and without any prep, just ask them a question.

And it was always funny. And it made you feel bad about America because it was always like, who's the governor of California or who's the vice president of America? And they were like, I don't know. Right? So you, it's just funny. Well, if you did the equivalent of Jaywalking and you just, to unexpected Christians and you put a microphone in people's face and you say, why should we be humble?

My experience tells me that our gut instinct is to say, because we're sinners, that's why we should be humble. Now, just so you know, I do think you and I sin.

I think that this is a real phenomena as Christians. Nothing I'm about to say is going to deny that. Just, just so you don't misunderstand. Having said that, in the history of the church, whenever the church has tried to build the idea of humility on the foundation of our sinfulness, it actually really distorts things.

[30 : 41] Like I remember, I teach at a Christian liberal arts college in the States. And I remember, this is probably 15, 20 years ago. And forgive the illustration, but I just don't know a better one.

But I went into the restroom and I'm standing there as one does. And there was a student who I did not know. But when I tell you this story, you'll know he had to be a first year freshman, right?

So anyways, he's washing his hands. He said, hi, Dr. Capic, how are you doing? And I thought I was doing fine until you asked me any questions, right? You broke protocol. So anyways, I said something like, I'm doing fine.

How are you? And I don't know what he said, but it felt like it was some version of like, oh, I'm just such a bad sinner. I don't know if he used the word worm, but it sounded like, you know, I'm a worm.

And then as he was walking out, but saved by the grace of God and left. Now, again, I don't really want to pick on a kid. So what's interesting to me is not why someone like that says that.

[31 : 41] I'm actually, because obviously I'm a theologian. He must know I'm a theologian at the college. So the interesting thing is, what happened to him in his journey that made him think that's what I needed to hear? You get it?

He said that stuff because he thought it's the right answer. That's what he thought was most important. I'm just so bad. So the question is, because you see what happens.

We all sense we should grow in our humility. And so if you want to grow in your humility, what we often say is, here's what you should do. Focus on what a bad sinner you are, which some of you are clever. I don't know which ones.

No, I'm just joking. What's happening when you're focusing on what a bad sinner you are? You're still the focus. It just sounds very pious.

Now, I am for, there are times for absolute brutal honesty, self-reflection. We need friends, etc. This is not about pretending we're not sinners. None of that. But if you've been around the church for a while, you know people who recognize their sinner and then just spend all this time focusing on how bad they are, it actually can breed some very disordered understandings of the self.

[32 : 53] And it all becomes about how bad you are, which actually, even though it sounds pious, can be very self-absorbed. So to skip, to make a long theological conversation very short, here's the shortest way I know how to put it.

Think of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve, before they sin. Before they sin, before there's any fall, should Adam and Eve have been humble?

There's no sin, there's no fall. And the answer is yes. Why? Because Adam and Eve were created to be dependent on God, to be dependent on neighbor, one another, and to be dependent on the rest of creation.

Dependent on God, neighbor, rest of creation. That's humility. But here's the question.

Right? Think of our culture, and I assume, you can tell me later if this is true here, in America, if someone says, hey, you met Allison, what'd you think? And I said, oh, she's really great. She seems really dependent on a lot of people.

[34 : 03] Would that ever be a compliment here? I can tell you in America it certainly isn't, including in the church. So my question is, how in the world can you grow in Christian discipleship when fundamental to growing as a Christian is growing in healthy dependence on God, neighbor, and an understanding of your dependence on the earth?

In an environment where dependence is bad, and the goal is independence. In medieval theology, they did talk about independencia, independence, and there was only one being that was independencia, and that's God.

And by God being independent, all of us are dependent. It's kind of like the theological significance, right?

Let's put it this way. Again, I don't know how often this phrase is used here, particularly my wife and I are not from there, but we've lived in the American South for a long time, but it's all over in America.

But you hear this phrase, self-made man. Have you ever heard that phrase before, right? Please never say it again, right? There's no man who just went, I birthed myself, right?

[35 : 13] Your belly button has incredible theological significance. It really does. Because our belly button, especially in a day when we keep being told, you are who you want to be.

Just look inside of yourself. You get to decide. Well, actually, your inside is turbulent. It changes. It's all over the place. And you have a belly button, and that belly button every day in the shower tells you, you didn't make yourself.

And you belong to others. Right? So this idea of, no, no, no, there's no independencia. We are made to be dependent. And what's interesting from a Christian perspective is that's part of the goodness of how God made the world.

It's not. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the early 20th century, you may know him as someone who strongly opposed Hitler and ended up losing his life. But Bonhoeffer reflected on this very thing, said, yes. He said, dependence is not part of the fall or sin.

But what sin and the fall does is it twists our dependencies. So now we view the other as one who is a threat to us. And so now the other, whether it's your spouse, your roommate, someone else at school, that other is one we either want to dominate, manipulate, or ignore.

[36 : 34] Rather than this mutual enrichment of caring for and expanding the garden of God. Humility.

Think about it in terms of, what if I told you I could help you grow in humility? It sounds arrogant, doesn't it? You're like, who do you think you are? Which often betrays the fact that we actually, deep down, we kind of think either you're born humble or you're not.

And you can't really. But from a Christian perspective, one of the things, yes, like there are times to evaluate like sin in your life. But here, let me just, you know one thing you can do to grow in humility from a Christian perspective?

Learn to celebrate God's good creation and that includes delighting in other people. By learning to recognize good gifts, because all good gifts are from above, good gifts that God has given even in an imperfect world, and celebrating other people rather than viewing everyone as competition, we start to really honor God.

And we grow in humility because we're recognizing we need those other people. So when the missionaries come to our church and they feel bad that they have to ask for money, we should be like, no, thank you.

[37 : 49] We get, you know, we're part of this together. When someone else can, I remember when I became a Christian, I so wanted to be up here playing a guitar. And I got a guitar and I practiced long enough that I grew calluses.

And I'd play a song and then I'd go to the next song and it sounded exactly the same. Apparently I'm, whatever I have is bad. I got no rhythm, I got nothing.

And I had a friend who barely practiced and within the same amount of time he was playing a 12 string. I hated him for it. But you know from a, it's so wonderful to actually stop competing and start delighting in each other.

Like, oh, you have the gift of hospitality. Oh, you have the gift of encouragement. And we need to encourage each other to use those gifts rather than hide them. I'm grateful in our day that we've finally started to recognize one of the things about diversity in all of its forms.

One of the things about diversity that's really wonderful is it helps us see our blind spots. I'm not going to argue for that. I assume you believe that. What I think we're less aware of, one of the things of diversity in all of its forms, is it also helps us see our strengths, not just our blind spots.

[39 : 06] Right? Some of you are gifted. You are great working with children. Right? I remember at our church, I was an elder at this church, and the only thing is like, we should all take turns helping the kids and doing this kind of thing.

So one Sunday morning, they put me in, I don't know, they were like preschool, they were like five-year-olds, whatever it was, and there were like 19,000 of them. I don't know. There were probably 11.

But it felt like, and I, this is not an exaggeration, I'm in there by myself, and within five minutes, there was a bottle of water and little cups, and I'm supposed to pour water, and I'm supposed, you know, I'm drenched, I'm sweating.

I spilled water everywhere. There were these two, you know, teenager girls. They clearly didn't want to go to church. Like, they could see, like, do you need some help? I'm like, yes, I need some help. Right?

So they help, and then I was just support team the rest of the time. And the woman who was in charge, who kind of would walk by, but I didn't even notice because I was just in panic mode the whole time. And so afterwards, later, I go up to her, and I said, that was hard.

[40 : 08] Maybe we should wait a while before I do it again. And she just looked at me and said, oh, you're never doing it again. Right? You're never getting it. Just, you know, I can do my kids.

But what's fun, I just want for that clarification. But honestly, if you're good at that, you just think everyone is. It doesn't mean that gifts don't require a lot of work at it.

But it does mean when you have a gift, you assume everyone does. And sometimes it takes someone who doesn't have that gift to see it in you and say, you know what? I don't know if you realize, but when you write notes, when you tell people things about them, your words carry so much power as an encouragement.

And by someone telling you that, because if you don't hear it, you might think, am I being annoying? Am I being arrogant speaking? But someone telling you, no, I think you have a gift of encouragement.

Keep using it because we are impoverished if you don't. You have the gift of music. It is not arrogant for you to play. Our community is impoverished if you don't.

[41 : 16] You see how different that feels? Otherwise, we're all like, I don't know, am I drawing attention to myself? Look, Corey, who's the pastor here, we need him to use his gifts. We are impoverished if he doesn't.

It's not about arrogance. It's not about pride. It takes the church. I got to end, but I'm going to tell you one other story. And then I'll, one other illustration, because I want you to think through this. So Matthew 25. Matthew 25 is about, it's all red, so you got to pay attention to it. I just want to see if any of you figure that joke out.

You can explain it to others later. So it's all red. It's Jesus talking. And in Matthew 25, one of what we call a pericope, is one of the short things in there, is Jesus talking. And he talks, tells a story about the sheep and the goats.

You ever heard this? The sheep and the goats. And it's a very sobering passage. It's an end-time judgment scene. This is not like happy-clappy. This is end-time judgment thing. And the idea is sheep go to heaven and goats go to hell.

[42 : 19] It's a very serious text. And if you, you know, as a theologian, obviously we want to draw from the Bible to interpret it. But in this case, just, just, it's always what you need to do first, though, before you draw from the rest of the Bible, is you need to understand the episode itself, the verses themselves.

You can't just draw. And if all you have is that story that Jesus tells, what is it? Someone here knows. What's the thing that separates the sheep and the goats? What you do what? To the least of these. Remember? And he starts, he tells a story. And someone, he went, and he clothed the naked, and he fed the hungry, and he visited prisoners. And he's, and Jesus says, what you did to the least of those, you did it unto me. Remember that? And they were sheep. And then the others, Jesus says, what you didn't do to the least of these, you didn't do unto me.

And so I had a former student, very thoughtful guy, who went on, he went to seminary, he had good theological training. He now works full-time as a single guy, he's in his 40s, single guy at a university, pouring into university students with the gospel.

[43 : 30] And he calls me one day, and he says, Kelly, I can't shake Matthew 25. And he's very sensitive, he's very sweet. He said, I can't shake Matthew 25, because he's taking Jesus seriously.

And he's like, I don't have very much money, I'm so exhausted by the ministry, maybe every other week I could help out at the homeless shelter. And he said, am I a goat?

And what's interesting is, if you're like me, you hear that, and your instinct is to say, dude, chill out. Don't worry about it.

Which always makes me nervous when I and others do that, because you're like, why is it when Jesus says radical stuff, we're like, nah, he didn't mean it. He starts talking about cutting off hands and pulling out eyes.

The first thing we say when we finish reading the passage is don't worry, he didn't mean it. And I always want to say, unless there's someone in the front row with a knife on their hand, don't say that. You and I don't have permission to say he didn't mean it.

[44 : 30] He meant it. And just so you know, the only reason you and I are not cutting off hands and plucking out eyes is because he was cut and plucked for us. It's not that he's not taking these things seriously.

And in Matthew 25, the answer can't be to not take it seriously. I work at a university, and I praise God that a lot of evangelicals in the last 20 years I don't know how it is here in the last 20, 30 years in America, evangelicals have not had a great history and I don't even know what the word evangelical means anymore.

But anyways, have not had a great history about caring for poverty or caring about justice issues. And all of a sudden, people are like reading the Bible like, oh my goodness, can you imagine? Minor prophets really care about these things, right? And it's all over the Bible. And so working with 20-year-olds, all of a sudden, they read the Bible and they see that God cares about justice, injustice, and all these things.

And some of them go all in. And they will join non-profits, and they'll be very involved in activism. Unfortunately, what I've found, given some of the work I do in travel and stuff, is I'll discover those people in their early 30s are some of the most bitter people you'll ever meet.

[45 : 41] Because they went all in, and now they're worn out and exhausted, and they're mad at the rest of the church because the church doesn't seem to care. And they're struggling because they feel very self-righteous and bitter.

That's a small group. The much larger group is a lot of us who are like, oh, nothing but the blood. We don't need to do anything. In fact, if you do anything, that must be works righteousness. You must think you're trying to earn God's favor.

So we have some who are trying to do it all, and others saying, oh, because of Jesus, I don't need to do anything. But isn't that interesting, where Jesus doesn't seem to go for either of those options. Yeah, we are forgiven in Christ, but this idea that, anyways, so let me make sure you get the, here's the punchline for this I want to make sure you get. Because we have to take Matthew 25 seriously. But it is an example of how our cultures in the West are distorting how we read the Bible, where we read Matthew 25 in a radical, individualistic way. So I personally must do all of these things.

[46 : 46] So here's the line. It takes the entire church to be the one body of Christ. It takes the entire church to be the one body of Christ.

You and I can be sheep, even if I don't personally visit prisons. You could be a sheep, even if you don't personally clothe a naked person.

But don't think that means that the body of Christ doesn't. And if our churches are not doing these things, then we definitely have a problem. But you see, that allows us to not compete with each

other, but to delight.

I'm like, thank you for doing that. Thank you for being an engineer in the working place where I can't be, and you are bringing the light of the gospel there. That is not a threat to me, and I'm not a threat to you.

But together, we as the body of Christ can be his presence and his faithfulness. So let me close this. And then I'll pray. I think there'll be an announcement about books, and you'll get a break for a second session.

[47 : 48] But let me make sure you don't miss this. Do you know what the goal of the Christian life is? The goal of the Christian life is not that you will become superhuman.

Sometimes we think, once you become a Christian, you'll be smarter, faster, better, like that. No, no, no. The goal of the Christian life is simply that you'll be truly and fully human. Because from a biblical perspective, to be fully human is to be a lover of God, to be a lover of neighbor, and to rightly love and relate to the rest of his creation.

Love God, neighbor, and rightly relate to his creation. That's to be fully human. And what we are trying to do as disciples is to bring people back into that communion, into that love.

We're not trying to... We don't have all the answers, but we are bringing you to the goodness of being a creature who's dependent on God, others, and the earth. And that is a good and flourishing life.

That... And in a world that's increasingly inhumane, I think that's a powerful message. Let me pray. Jesus, thank you for loving us.

[48 : 57] Thank you for the power of your humanity as we try and understand what it means to be followers of you. Would you give us fresh imaginations about faithfulness in our day and moving forward?

In Christ's name, amen.