

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

DETOURS, DEAD ENDS AND DEFINING MOMENTS | FATHER'S DAY 2023

DARON EARLEWINE | JUNE 18, 2023

Aaron

I am so excited to welcome my good friend Daron Earlewine to the stage today. Daron is a local pastor, author, and speaker and his podcasts, live seminars, and online course all aim at helping people discover their unique, God given calling. He's also recently written a book entitled The Death of a Dream so be sure to pick that up today.

Daron and his wife, Julie, have three boys, Cole, Kai, and Knox and a dog named Theo. Man, we are really honored to have Daron with us. I consider him to be a good, good friend. So would you please join me in giving him a big, Traders Point welcome as he comes to teach today?

Daron

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Good morning Traders Point. It is such an honor to be with you this morning. I couldn't believe it when, about six months ago, Aaron texted me and said, "Hey, what are you doing Father's Day?" I thought we were going to have a barbecue or something. I was like, "Maybe ribs at your house?" And then he asked me if I could be a part of this Sunday.

I'm just so honored to be here. The team has been so amazing. I got here. They took me back to the green room, and I sat down and there were pictures on the coffee table. And I was like, "Oh, pictures. Whatever." And I started to look at the pictures and I was like, "That's my family!" Right? They actually printed out pictures of my family for the green room. It was like I was at home. I was like, "That's next level." Alright? So the team here at Traders Point has been amazing.

They gave me a little gift bag and I opened the gift bag and it was awesome because it was this really cool, Ball State Cardinals blanket. Which you may be like, "Why did they give you a Ball State blanket?" Right? Because this morning, I'm here, obviously, right now. You can see me. I was here first service too.



And while I'm here right now, my oldest son, Cole, is actually moving in to Ball State. He's going to play football. And so I missed this kind of like cool dad moment. Right? Missing that this morning. But it was so cool. I got here and they gave me the blanket. So it's good days. Right? First service was so fun. I'm so glad to be here this morning.

The thing that I love about what my son is doing this morning is that he's chasing a dream, with zero guarantee of how it is going to work out. And we're going to talk about that this morning, about how we chase dreams and how fragile, and sometimes how dangerous they can be.

We're going to talk a little bit about what happens when we find ourselves on a detour we don't want to be on in our lives. What do we do when that detour finds itself in a dead end? And how do we actually learn to become dependent on a God who actually has the ability to resurrect great purpose in our lives? So that's where we are going.

I just want to take a minute before we do. This is Father's Day and you've been welcomed and wished happy Father's Day multiple times. But you know what I know is that days like Mother's Day, days like Father's Day, they can be days of great joy.

They can be days to celebrate your dad who was maybe the greatest person ever and he should get a statue somewhere. But then there are other folks, a lot of us. Right? Where it's like, "Well, maybe dad wasn't the greatest." And this day is frustrating to you.

For some of you this could be a painful day because maybe one of your dreams is to be a dad and it just hasn't quite worked out yet.

As we get older, it can be tough because maybe this is one of your first Father's Day without your dad.

So I just want to take a minute and pray for all of that. For people who are like, "This is so great. I love celebrating my dad." For folks who would say, "It's a difficult day." So let's just take a minute and let's pray to our heavenly Father about that situation.

God, I thank You for today. Thanks for waking us up today, God. You've given us breath in our lungs. You've given us another day to be loved by You and to love others. So we thank You for that.



And, God, today we take some time to celebrate fathers. And I just want to thank You for being the ultimate example of a Father. That even if we didn't have that example on earth, Father, we have it in You.

And so I pray, God, wherever this day meets us, that You would meet us where we really are and that we would receive Your love. Thank you for the Dad that You are and we thank you for the dads in our lives. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

So we're going to talk about dreams. One thing that I think is interesting is that we all have dreams. I don't think I've met anybody who was like, "I never had a dream for my life." And sometimes we think they are dumb. Sometimes we think that they are unrealistic. But we all have something that we thought our life would be. Right? "I wanted to be this." "I thought I could do this."

Sometimes it's delusional. I mean remember some of the early... Remember those American Idol try outs early on where they made fun of people? When you could still do that in our culture. And it would be like, "Hey, the dream to sing is good, but there is no talent here whatsoever." Right?

But we have these dreams and sometimes it's stuff that we are actually good at. Like, "I want to. I feel like I have an entrepreneurial gift. I dream. I want to start a company." "I want to start a family." "I want to," fill in the blank. You had some kind of dream in your life.

And most of the time, once I talk to somebody that is anywhere around 17, 18 years old, I begin to find what happens more often is, "I had a dream and then it died." Right? "I had the way that I thought my life was going to work out, I had my life the way I thought it should work. And now I have the life I'm currently living."

So for all of us, we are in some kind of place, in that position where, "I have the life I'm living. I have the life that I thought that I was going to live. And somewhere in the midst of this I still have this belief that God has a calling and a purpose for my life." And, "How do I live in the tension between that?" So that's the journey that we're going to take today.

I'm going to tell you a little bit of my story that I put into a book that came out last year called *The Death of a Dream*. We're going to look through the story of Joseph in the Old

Testament. Okay? And in that I hope that you find your own story and realize that God has created you on purpose and for a purpose. He is unbelievably near you in your life. And guess what? He's actually for you. I pray as we get into this, you have an amazing moment with God this morning.

Dream detours

Let's start with Joseph and the detours that our dreams take us on. We're back in the Old Testament here, Genesis, chapter 37. And we check in with Joseph and the detour that he's about to take on this dream. The story goes like this. Joseph had a dream. Okay? So we're in good company with our bro, Joe, here. Okay?

... and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more."

So we know that he's got a great family dynamic already going on here. Right? It's not like they started to hate him. There was some pretty strong hate. And this just went next level. Right? Now we have ultra hate for the little brother, which hurts me because I was a little brother.

We got any little brothers in the mix, brothers, sisters, younger siblings? Good. Good. Alright? For a minute I thought you weren't going to participate. I was going to be like, "Hey, this is going to get awkward. I'm going to ask you some questions." You spared me. It's going to be a long day. What about older siblings? Got older siblings? I knew they would be quicker, quicker to do it. Right? They are in charge of the family. Right?

Joseph tells his brothers his dream, "Hey:"

"Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." Genesis 37:5-7 (NIV)

Bowed down to me.

"His brothers said to him, 'Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?' And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said."

Now, here's a part that may have set up the detour in your life. And this is where it gets painful. Many times in your life, when you were in Junior High, High School, College, or something you began to vocalize things that you were dreaming about. And when you have a family system around you that says, "We believe in you. We love you. You can do it," those things gain momentum.

But the truth is that some of us live in real families. Right? And part of the pain and some of the detours in your life that we're about to take a look at unfortunately started by people close enough to you not actually believing what you could do or what you could become.

And these detours are difficult, especially when we begin to feel, potentially, that the dream that we have is from God. Right? Which I think is a little bit where Joseph was, "I'm having these divine types of dreams. I feel like maybe this is actually from God."

I'm going to tell you my story in a minute, but that's kind of how I felt. I think the more dangerous one sometimes if we have a dream and we feel like it's not from Him, but it's for Him, "God, why wouldn't You make this dream happen? It's obviously for You."

Joseph had another dream:

"...and he told it to his brothers. 'Listen,' he said, 'I had another dream,'"

If you didn't like the first one, you're going to love the sequel. Okay? "I had another one." This time there are no reeds involved:

"...this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

This is cosmic now. Alright. It's universal. "It's getting bigger bro, It's getting bigger."

"When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?' His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind." Genesis 37:8-11 (NIV)

If you don't know the whole story. We'll get to it throughout the day. But if you do know the whole story here, isn't it interesting that Joseph was actually seeing exactly what

God had created him to do. Now he didn't get it and at this point it's coming off as a side helping of arrogance. Right? Self-focus. But it's from God.

And I want to tell you this. Very potentially, very possibly, I would say almost probably there are some dreams you have felt in your soul since you were little that didn't get there because of you. God has actually created you on purpose for a purpose and He's been weaving together, planting seeds in your soul, to call you toward His macro purpose for your life. But sometimes to get there we have to find ourselves on a detour.

Let's define a detour really quick.

Detour = a long or roundabout route that is taken to avoid something or to visit somewhere along the way.

A detour is a long or roundabout route that is taken to avoid something or to visit somewhere along the way. It's a roundabout route taken. Not the direct route. And I don't know about you guys, but I just wish dreams and life came with a GPS for the detours. Wouldn't that be great? But they don't, do they? Life is like driving back in the day without a GPS when you get to the detour sign. Is there anything worse than that? You know, even with GPS...

Guys, well ladies too, it's a Father's Day deal maybe. Ladies don't be offended by it. But let me just talk to the guys for a minute. Anybody else when the GPS tells you your approximate time of arrival, you begin to immediately argue with that? Anyone else? It's like, "Oh, 5:02. Ha, ha. Well, not this guy. I don't know about GPS, but you see me drive and my ability behind the wheel, we will probably be closer to like 4:52. Alright?"

And then from that point on, you're not enjoyable to be around, "What's wrong with dad?" "We've got a time to beat. We're going for it." And the worst part—you're going and it's like, "Rerouting your route." And you're like, "No! There's no rerouting. We have a time to beat. We have a thing we're doing." Right?

And at least with GPS it will let you know, "Okay. Fine. We'll add five minutes. We're just going to go over. Take a left. Go through the corn field. We'll get back on 75 later. It's going to be fine."



And in life sometimes that doesn't happen. You just find yourself on a detour and you go, "Wait a second. I had a dream. And I had a plan. And this is the way it was going to work. It was going to be step one, step two, step three. And I don't know what step this is but it is no where near what I had planned for my life. And how long does this last? A week? Or is this like a year thing?"

My first detour wasn't quite as dramatic as Joseph's. We'll talk about his in a minute. So for me, I grew up in Arizona. And I love Arizona. And I was in the third grade when my brother and I went to this Christian bookstore to find a tape. Anyone remember what tapes were? Alright. Praise God. Praise God. Alright.

We went to find a tape and we found this tape by this band that we'd never heard of. They were called Stryper. Anybody know about Stryper? See, I knew it. I knew my rock and roll people were in the second service. I asked the first service and they were like, "We don't listen to that type of music."

Anyway so we went and we tried to get my parents to find a tape called To Hell with the Devil. And my brother and I came up to my parents and we were like, "Can we go home with To Hell with the Devil? And my mom was like, "Hell no to the devil. It's not coming home with us. That ain't happening." Right?

And I don't know how my brother and I convinced my parents over the next week or so that we could get the Stryper tape because there wasn't the Internet. Right? So we weren't researching. Mom, google this. Christians really? They are fine for Christians. Somehow I think we just wore them down. Like, "Just shut up. Go get the tape."

But from the first time I listened to Stryper I got pencils out in my bedroom and I started on stuff and I was like, "I think I can be a drummer." Right? And I was actually good at it from the beginning. And I was like, "I think something about me being put on earth is to drum." This is third grade.

And from that point on my whole life was focused around drumming. I wanted to be Robert Sweet from Stryper he was my idol. I wanted to be him. Then I got a little older and I started to find other bands. So these guys were my heroes after Stryper—Mötley Crüe. Yeah it was a different time. It was a different time. But Tommy Lee, I wanted to be Tommy Lee so bad. I wanted to be Tommy Lee so bad because it was just weird.

Anybody trying to follow Jesus and you had this issue where you were like you really did want to follow Jesus?

But for me I was a pastor's kid. My dad... You're going to see a picture of my parents in just a minute. But my dad was a local church planter. Let's just go to that picture really quick. Here's the problem. Here's me, "Mom, why do I have a sweater vest on? What's happening?"

I guarantee that that is a clip-on tie—100 percent. What is my hair doing? Right? It is sticking up like it is fake because this is just what it does. My hair just sticks up. And then the bangs—I don't even know.

I guarantee my dad gave me that haircut. And I don't know about that mustache. Was he a state trouper or was he a pastor? Hard to say. It's hard to say.

So I'm this guy dreaming about being Tommy Lee and the tough part was like, "Wait a second. Here's what I'm noticing. If I want to do the drum stuff and be a rock star, there are lots of girls and there is money and you have this drum set that comes out..." Remember when Tommy Lee's drum set spun around and it did 360s all over the place? It was amazing.

And then I watched my dad's life and I'm like, "Seems like when you follow Jesus you don't have any money. Our cars are crap. And it seems to be in the rule book here, there is one girlfriend. My mom." Right? I glad my dad... Honor him to this day.

But I'm feeling, as a kid, maybe you've been there. It's like, "I want to do the Jesus thing. I think. Maybe? Not sure? What are we doing here?" And I struggled with that.

So here's what happened. I was like, "Alright, God. I'm in. Whatever You want me to do." And then God was like, "How about move to Indiana?" "God, I don't know if You know about midwestern winters. The nature of this situation." But I did it. I didn't know about detour but this detour took me from Arizona all the way to Indiana.

And here's what I found in my life and we'll see with Joseph here:

The detour is not the desired or final destination, but it is often the divine plan.



Most of the time the detour is not the route you want to take and it is often actually way around the bend from where you want to go. But I have found that in my life, and Joseph's and in hundreds of other people, is often the divine plan is where there are things He needs to actually root out of you and actually begin to seed into who you are. It can only happen in the detour.

But Joseph's gets pretty aggressive:

"So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him."

Like, if things got a little rowdy on the ride to church today and your kids were throwing things at each other in the back seat, listen you are so much farther ahead than these biblical proportions to family. Right?

"'Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. 'Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.' So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt." Genesis 37:17b-28 (NIV)

Detour

"I had this dream and like my family is going to bow down to me or something. I think I was going to be in leadership. And now, I'm a slave and they are taking me to Egypt? This is a detour."

Some of you are on a detour right now. And here's what begins to happen to us as we find ourselves in a detour from our dream. We begin to believe that we are alone on the journey. Like, "If God was paying attention and I was loved, we wouldn't be on the detour. Because, obviously, God's will for my life is up and to the right, it's all success. There is no faith really involved. It all always works out."

Which means we are probably not reading the Bible all that often. Because most of the stories in the Bible didn't really all work out that well for a while. There was a lot of walking through deserts and around corners and detours.

Life is NOT FAIR...AND...YOU are NOT alone!

And here's what people found over and over again. It's this. Life isn't fair. My dad would say this to me all of the time, "Son, life is not fair. But guess what? You are not alone. Ever."

If you are in a detour right now and you're saying, "Daron, I don't know where I'm going. I don't know how long I'm going to be where I'm at." I get it. I know it's not easy. I know it's challenging your faith. And I know you wouldn't have ordered this off of the menu of life, but I promise you this. You are not alone. There is a God who loves you, created you on purpose for a purpose and He is near you, not far away.

So Joseph is taken down to Egypt:

"Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there." Listen to verse 2. Here we go, "The Lord was with Joseph so he prospered."

"The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned." Genesis 39:1-4 (NIV)

God was with him. God is with you. Don't doubt it.

Tough thing for Joseph though. He was like, "Alright. Detour. But this is working out. God is with me. I'm in charge." He's starting to feel his leadership gifts are maybe working out, "I'm in charge of everything. Wasn't what I planned but it is cool."

And maybe you've had that too. You had that detour and things leveled off for a little bit and you thought, "Not exactly how I saw my life working out, but this is good. God is blessing. Praise-a-lujah, let's do it."

Dreams at a dead end



And then before you know it you take a left turn in life and find yourself at a dead end of your dream. These are tough days. Joseph goes to Egypt. God is at work. Joseph's doing it right. He's put in charge of everything and everybody starts to notice how well Joseph is taking care of the house, including Potiphar's wife.

She notices not just his ability to lead but she says, "Oh, Joseph, you're not a bad looking guy. Maybe you and me." And Joseph says, "No, no. See I'm a man of character. I'm following God. So, no." He resists her advance. In fact he flees from the temptation, "I'm doing it right, God. I'm following the rules. I'm going to do it right. I'm going to fast. I'm going to tithe. I'm going to volunteer.

"I saw the videos this morning and Traders Point. I'm going to volunteer with those junior high kids. I'm going to do it. Alright? I'm going to volunteer. I'm going to be there every week. It's going to be good, God. I'm going to follow all of the rules.

"And when I follow all of the rules, God, what happens is You make sure that it always works out for me. That's the rule. Right? I do it the way You want and then my life is perfect."

"Joseph says, "No, no, no. That's not how it's going to be." He flees from temptation and she accuses him of sexual assault and is believed. And it says:

"Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined." Genesis 39:20 (NIV)

We're no longer on a detour friends. We are at a dead end. And he stayed in that prison for years.

"Wait a second, God. I thought you loved me and you loved us and if that was the case no dead ends to the dreams. It's supposed to always work." And it doesn't. And you find yourself at a place where you're wondering, "Is this dead end actually a death sentence for my life, my career, my hope, for my marriage?"

I want to tell you this. If you feel like your dream for your life right now is at a dead end, it is not a death sentence. What God does in and through us in these dead end seasons is actually crucial to us learning things like humility, courage, gratitude, faithfulness, and dependency on Him. Amen?



Because what we're going to find for Joseph, what we're going to find for Joseph is that he had a dream but it was micro sized and it was personal. That's usually where our dreams are in their first iteration. You kind of want it to be good for other people, but really our dreams are about us. And what God is trying to do in and through us is He is trying to invite us out of our micro sized dream and into His macro sized purpose for our life, that actually seeks His kingdom first and the coming of His kingdom before our success.

And be honest. I'll be honest. I'm usually too selfish to sign up for that first. Right? We just are. If we weren't too selfish to sign up for that first, there would be no orphans or widows or foster kids. And people would all have food and water all over the globe. Right? But we don't because most of us are dreaming a micro sized dream that is mostly about us.

And then we get to these dead end moments and God says, "Hey, listen. What do you say we start solving some of the world's greatest problems." That's when life gets really interesting.

So Joseph goes to jail. He's there for two years. I didn't go to jail but my dream died. I did go to Indiana. And I put together a band with some friends. And guess what? It worked. Indiana is not jail, but the winter, come on.

And we started traveling all over the Midwest and all over the country. We put a CD together. We were talking to record companies. We actually got to play the Sunset Strip and the Whisky A Go Go where all of my heroes had played. We played it. It was awesome. There's a story in the book about it.

And we were opening for Delirious and all of these big Christian bands back in the day. And I'm like, "This is it! Followed Jesus, it all worked out. Praise God." Right? "I knew it God. You put me on earth to be a drummer since the third grade. I did it Your way and now I'm going to move to Nashville or maybe L. A. I'm going to live my dream." And it was like right, like right there.

Then we went to Baltimore, Maryland. And after the show one of the guys in our band came up and said, "Hey, somebody robbed us in the dressing room." We went back to



the dressing room, it wasn't actually a dressing room, it was the youth room where we changed clothes, but anyway. It sounded cooler to say it was a dressing room.

So we go back to the youth room and all of our suitcases are poured out but nothing is gone, "This is weird." So we search around and we find that the only thing missing is \$350 from our cash box, "That's weird."

We go to New York City the next day for a day off and some sight seeing around the Big Apple. And two guys in our band go, "Man, something doesn't seem right about that whole situation." Before anybody wakes up the next day they go through one of our band mate's suit case. And wadded up in a sock is \$350.

So we confronted him. We talked about it. He's like, "Hey, it's Christmas coming up and things are tough and I'm really sorry." So we forgave him. He said he went to get some counseling over Christmas break. Comes back. Second semester of our senior year, "You know what? God's at work. It's going to be great. Praise God. That will never happen again." Awesome.

Two days later we're back home. I wake up at six a.m. to a knock on the door with two police officers letting me know that there has been a break in across the street and I needed to come in to be questioned. Walked next door and stuff was turned over, a TV laying on the carpet. There was a lamp and a VCR in the front of the room. Nothing is gone. Nothing is broken—except \$200 was gone from the purse of a girl we let sleep there that night because she couldn't get into her dorm.

And the cops come to us and go, "Hey, guys. We think one of you did this." And we looked back at the police officer and said, "We do too." He did it again and at that point we had zero trust in who he was and what was happening. This dream that was right there was gone and it was done by betrayal from one of my best friends.

He's like, "Daron, what's the big deal. It's a stupid college band." Right? It probably sucked anyway."

I mean, it's like... You know like, "It's not that big of a deal. I had a band in college. I'm not crying about it. Talking a sermon. Wrote a whole book about it." Right? "Go get some cookies and milk and shut up, dude."

But see, I could say the same thing about whatever yours was, “It was just a start up company. What’s the big deal. Start another one.” “It’s just your first marriage. Who would call it a marriage anyway?” Right?

“So how do you say something so heartless about my dream?” I’m not, what I’m saying to you is, I don’t care what the situation is, when we have something that has become a dream that we pursue it becomes a part of who we are. It starts to become our identity. And when it dies, most of the time we’re not sure what’s left to live.

But I promise you this. If you are in a dead end season right now, it is not a death sentence. What God wants to do is teach dependency upon Him and then begin to transform you by the renewing of your mind to invite you into something so much bigger than whatever dream you once had, that your life would begin to be formed and shaped by the purposes of God.

Joseph had no idea what was happening behind the scenes here. Okay? We have to remember that. He’s in prison for two years thinking, “What is the deal?” There were even moments when the cup bearer was there and he like interpreted his dream. And he’s like, “Bro, when you get back tell them I’m down here. Remember me.”

“I’ve got you bro.” Two years. Forgets him.

“What are you doing? Two years. I know the dream I had when I was a kid. I know they were from you.”

And it would be great if God would have been like, “Joseph, you are in the right place. And know there is a famine coming and it’s going to kill a lot of people. And I need a leader whose character I can trust to run all of Egypt and actually save my people. Because I’m doing this thing with My people and the covenant, and then Jesus is coming. I’ll fill you in later. But I need someone that I can trust with that level of power and authority. So what I’m doing in you is I’m preparing you to handle the weight of the calling that is coming.

“So as you’re sitting there in this dead end season, what you are learning is stuff called humility and dependence and faithfulness and gratitude. And you’re learning to lead in every situation possible. And I know you don’t see that. And I can’t tell you that. I’m just going to tell you this. I am with you. Trust Me.”

And right now that might be exactly where you're at. You are like, "Yeah. That's what I need. I need that email that tells me exactly what is happening." You're not going to get it. What you are going to get is God showing up in the every day spaces and places of your life through the Word of God, through written songs, through poems, through friends, through situations where He continues to draw you closer in dependency and to say, "Hey, I love you. And I'm walking with you. I'm near you. I am not far away."

You see, we know that He was with Joseph because Joseph leads and he continues to be blessed in the prison. But I think what we know is that Joseph went through the process that we all have to go through.

I need to pick up the pace. You don't get out of dead ends unless you let them do their work in you. And here's one of the first steps, and probably one of the biggest steps to get out of a dead end. It's forgiveness.

You say, "Daron, can we choose a different word? Could there be another first step? Like, maybe ice cream." Wouldn't that be great. You're in a dead end right now. Life looks bad. So what do you do? DQ. Blizzards will change your life.

In the death of a dream, there is usually one of three people who needs to be forgiven:

The person who hurt you

Yourself

God

Forgiveness. And usually when we have the death of a dream there is one of three people who have to be forgiven: the person who hurt you, you, or God. However you got there, somebody betrayed you like they did me, or how Joseph's brothers did.

Here's the tough thing about this. We have to remember that forgiveness is a one-way street. Reconciliation is a two-way street. So many of us are holding on to the pain that someone else caused because we think, "If I forgive them, I've got to reconcile." And that's not true. Biblically that's not what we are told. We're told to forgive. We don't always have to reconcile.



You see, when you let go of the debt someone owes you because God let go of the debt that you owed Him, what happens is you are free from that. And then bitterness doesn't ruin your soul.

Sometimes though, at least in my life... I forgave him when it happened, but you know what I had to do for about the next decade, if I'm honest, keep reminding myself, "Oh, yeah. I forgave him. He's forgiven still. You're still forgiven. You're still forgiven. You're still forgiven." You are now in forgiveness number 160,224. That's okay. You still forgave them, but you are in process.

The more difficult piece is forgiving yourself though, isn't it? We when self-sabotage our dreams. That one is tough. And one on one I want to encourage you to be curiously compassionate about yourself. You see, most of us spend a life time trying to fix our whats—the whats we did wrong. Most of us never have the courage to actually spend time figuring out why we did what we did. Compassionate curiosity transformed my life and it can transform yours as well.

And then this last one is a doozy. God. You say, "I don't know if that is theologically correct. You have to forgive God? God didn't sin against you. He's God." We're not talking theology here. I'm talking emotional and mental realities. And I know that some of you are here and you are mad at God. And I want you to know that He understands that. And He's not offended by it.

He's actually slow to get angry. He's rich in compassion and mercy. And where your heart is broken, His heart breaks for where it is broken. He's not mad at you for being mad at Him. But He would like the opportunity to be invited maybe one more step closer in so that He can let you know that He was there all of the time and that He loves you and that He specializes in redemption and resurrection.

If you have a dead dream this morning I want to tell you what God's will for your life is. I promise you this. I don't know the details, but I promise you God's will for your life is redemption and resurrection. That's who He is. Your hope is in the future and that future is redemption and reconciliation. It's tough stuff.

LET IT DIE.



Let me give you a little tip I forgot to give first service. And I've got to go. Here it is. If you're in a funeral season right now or you're in a death of a dream season, I want to encourage you to have a funeral. I mean it. The dream is dead. I want you to gather with people you love and I want you to celebrate everything that it was, everything they were, everything it was—celebrate. Right? And then mourn it. Empty out a couple of boxes of Kleenex. Cry it out. Hug it out. Talk it out. Mourn it. And here's what you've got to do. Then you have to let it die.

I kept my dream on life support for about 10 years. It was embarrassing. Okay? Anybody remember The Weekend at Bernies? Remember? Bernie died and they keep Bernie alive all weekend. He was like dead. Right? That was me for about a decade. It was like, "Hey, I'm still kind of rock star." Bernie was over here. You know what I mean? People were like, "Stop. Stop. Stop dying your hair that many colors, take out your ear rings. It's embarrassing for all of us." Okay?

But no one was kind and loving enough to tell me that so I kept my dream alive for 10 years. At some point you've just got to let it die because it's only things you allow to die that God is actually able to resurrect. Right?

Joseph is there in prison:

"...the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Genesis 29:20b-23 (NIV)

Oh, so good. And then he's there for two years, and:

"Pharaoh had a dream." Genesis 41:1a (NIV)

Here's the deal. As we go through these dead end moments, they will set us up for a:

Defining moment

And here comes Joseph' defining moment. Pharaoh has this dream and it says:



“So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.’”

So here’s this moment where Joseph is being brought back and he’s like, “Man, this is my moment to shine. I’m going to step into it.” And here’s the thing. I think the way this plays out is this 17-year-old technicolored dream coat, I had a dream and the wheat and stuff, Joseph, he steps into that moment and he goes, “You’re right. You’ve got the right guy. What is it? I’m here to save the day. You want to bow down too, Pharaoh? Because my brothers are going to be coming soon. Everybody is bowing down. Been down there—needed a shave and a shower in the prison but someone is about to be put in charge.”

That’s what young Joseph would have done. But see, something happened in that dead end that transformed who he was. And he says, “I tell you what, Pharaoh. I can’t. I can’t do it. But I know a guy who can. This life used to be a lot about me, but it’s not any more. It’s about this God who has been with me on the detour and He’s been with me in the dead end. And if He would He’ll give me the ability and I’ll do this.

Joseph does and he’s put in charge of Egypt and he saves all of Egypt and he saves all of God’s people from a seven-year famine. And then, eventually, guess what happens? The brothers come and the dream is fulfilled.

Don’t tap out!

You have a defining moment coming in your life if you don’t tap out. Maybe it’s because I have three boys, maybe it’s just because I have... I don’t know. I love UFC fighting. I love the grit. I love the art form of it. And tapping out, if you don’t know UFC fights, if you get put in some kind of submission hold, right before somebody chokes the life out of you or breaks your leg or something you just have to tap and the fight is over.

Some of the most exciting fights is when someone is right at the verge of tapping out and somehow they manage to stay on until the horn sounds and they reverse, something happens and they don’t tap out. And then the unimaginable happens and they come back and they win the fight. Those are some of the most exciting fights.

Let me tell you something. If you're in a dead end season right now, please, please, please don't tap out. Don't tap out on the people around you and don't tap out on yourself. But most of all, don't tap out on God because He's not tapping out on you.

So, I'm walking across the parking lot. My dream is dead. I'm in a dead end season and it's January in Indiana. And I'm like, "Jesus has jokes." Okay? I'm walking home from an early morning class and it starts to sleet. It starts to sleet.

Now sleet, I don't know if you guys know this, I'm not a meteorologist, but I did get some pieces of sleet and I put them under a microscope. And I thought it would just be ice. Wrong. Okay? There are actually small, little particles. They are shaped like the devil's pitchfork. It's actually sleet. So when sleet is coming, it's actually spiritual warfare. But they are small, ice tridents being thrown by demons trying to slowly kill you. So when that happens in February, just be like, "I rebuke you."

So I'm walking across and I'm in the dead end moment and God brings me to a defining moment. As I'm walking across the parking lot, in the sleet and all of the ice, I hear in the back of my head, which I know is the voice of the Holy Spirit; He asked me this question, "Do you want to leave too?" "Do I want to leave too? Do you mean the ice storm? Yes! If there is a portal out of this ice storm beam me up."

But, see. I'd been reading my Bible the night before because I hadn't given up on God and I read the story in John, chapter 6. I think it's John, 6. I'm preaching it. I should know it. Yeah, John, 6. John, 6 is where the disciples found themselves in a dead end moment.

They are following Jesus and it's working out great. All of the dreams are coming. He's feeding people. He's walking on water. It's going to be great. Pretty soon He's going to kick the Romans out. We're probably going to be in charge. Power. Authority. Popularity. Hello, love Jesus. Right?

And then Jesus is like, "Hey, I've got a new stunner for you guys. Try this one out. Eat My flesh. Drink My blood."

"Peter, did you hear what He just said?"

“Guys, we have more fish and loaves for everybody. Eat the fish and loaves it’s what it...
“Jesus, what are You talking about?” “No, no. Seriously, you’re going to eat my flesh and drink my blood.” And droves of followers start leaving Jesus because they are like,
“Whoa. We were here for a free meal, but if this is a cannibalism thing, we’re out.”

And the disciples go from following Jesus immediately to, “Wait a second. My identity was in, “I’m the Jesus guy and it’s going to be great. I didn’t want my identity tied to, ‘I follow Jesus and stuff like this happens?’”

So I read that passage the night before and what happens is all of these people are leaving Jesus because of what it takes to follow. And then Jesus looks to the 12 and He says this, “You don’t want to leave too do you?”

Here I am walking in the sleet with a dead dream. No idea what my life’s going to be. And Jesus is asking, “Do you want to leave too?”

Here’s what I’ve found and I want to encourage you this morning. That was more of an invitation than it was a question. An invitation to follow Him where possibly only dead men and women can go. Follow Him to where He created me to be.

So I’m walking and crying and I repeat back to Jesus, the words of Simon Peter. I go:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Every day since that day I’ve tried to wake up and keep following Jesus and not tap out. And I can’t believe the life that I get to live. It’s not always perfect. But I know at this age that it was a pretty micro sized dream I had at age 19 when I was in college. And, man, it’s been good to learn to trust Jesus.

In that parking lot I forgot to read and I hadn’t memorized the words of Jesus. But I’m going to leave them with you. Peter said that and then Jesus turned around and looks at Peter and he says to the twelve:

“Have I not chosen you...?”

You are chosen. "I'm in a dead end right now." You are chosen by God. That's why Paul says, "I beg you to lead a life a life worthy of your calling because you have been called by God."

You have a calling. I don't care where the detour has taken you, He's with you. I don't care if you are in a dead end moment right now. He's going to resurrect that because you are chosen, loved, redeemed. And he wants to resurrect purpose in you.

WOVEN, NOT WASTED.

I've kind of coined this phrase. I talk about it a lot. And I'll leave you with this. I believe that whatever you are going through right now that nothing is being wasted. I believe you are woven together into the tapestry of God's call on your life.

And you look back and you go, "Daron, there are a lot of loose ends going on in my life right now." I know that, but God is genius. Don't tap out. Keep following Him. And what you'll see as you walk with Him is day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year nothing in your life is going to be wasted. It's all being woven into who you were created to be.

Jesus, thank You for who You are. Thank You for the invitation to follow You. And I pray for anyone today who was considering tapping out. I pray that they wouldn't leave. They would run to You because only You can redeem and resurrect. In Your name. Amen.

