
Aaron Brockett:

Hey Traders Point family, I hope your summer has gotten off to a great start. It's been amazing over the last several months to watch more and more people come back to in person worship services on the weekend. And I've also met a lot of people that had joined us online over the past year that were checking us out for the very first time. And we're just anticipating all that God is going to do and who he's going to bring in the fall season, and I want you to be a part of it.

So over the course of the summer, I'd like for you to be praying about ways that you can serve our church family on the weekends, because we want all of these people to have the absolute best experience and to come to know the love of Jesus and to feel the love of Jesus for themselves. For all the ways that you can serve, go to our website and get signed up. We would love to have you make a difference in that way.

Well, today I'm really excited to introduce our next guest as part of our summer message series. Kyle Idleman is a best selling author and he's the senior pastor at Southeast Christian Church just down the road from us in Louisville, Kentucky. He is widely known for his award winning book, *Not a Fan*, which has sold over a million copies. Kyle and his wife DesiRae have four great children. I think more importantly than all of that is that Kyle is one of my oldest and very best friends. We grew up in the same neighborhood together, we were college roommates, we were in each other's weddings. I love this guy like my very own brother, he is a phenomenal communicator and he is the real deal. You're going to love him. So at all of our campuses, would you please join me in giving a warm Traders Point welcome to our friend, Kyle Idleman.

Kyle Idleman:

Hey, it's great to be here. I love this church. And I pray for this church, because I love your pastor, I have prayed for him for almost as long as I can remember. We do go way back, like all the way back to kindergarten, four or five years old. I was scrolling through my phone this morning, my mom had sent me a bunch of these pictures for my growing up years during COVID, they decided that was going to be their project, was just to go through all the pics.

And so she starts texting me all these pictures. And I stumbled across a picture that she sent me that I want to show you here. So this is from, I'm going to say fifth or sixth grade, this is me. I was a early but awkward bloomer. To be clear, this doesn't scream athleticism, although the shorts. And if you can find your senior pastor in this picture, you see him? That's right here. So I was an early but awkward bloomer. He was a late bloomer. And these are our dads. This is my dad, this is Aaron's Dad.

And so I think this middle school, and we're somewhere around there. So we're pretty intimidating bunch. This is like the sandlot of basketball, is what you have here. And we've just had an opportunity to share a lot of life together. So we were roommates in seminary in Bible college. And I have great memories of that. We had different competitions with one another. So we would see who could go the longest, this is a true story, who could go the longest without washing their towel.

And I just remember taking my towel off the rack and it just stayed there. And I think I won that competition, pretty proud of that. Our beds were on opposite sides of the room. And we had this big fan, big metal fan that sat in the middle and we turned it on, no air conditioning in those dorm rooms. And so we turned this fan on high, and we just shoot the air straight up and circulate the air. And so one night, I don't remember which one of us did this, but one of us had some Cheetos and we threw it in the fan and it went up, and we just started doing this. We just eat Cheetos, we turn that fan and you just had the Cheeto dust fall on you gloriously. I mean, it sounds gross. But is it really or is it wonderful? I mean, it's hard to say. And so the Cheeto dust would just fly through the air, I don't think we ever vacuumed that dorm room one time.

And so through all these different seasons of life, Aaron has, I don't have a biological brother, he doesn't have a biological brother. So through these different seasons of life, we have been brothers for one another, we've challenged each other, we've encouraged each other. I can say for certain that neither of us had any idea of how God was going to use that relationship and to be at these churches. I'm in Louisville, he's here and just doing very similar types of things. I just have felt that God sovereignly worked to put us across the street from each other as kindergarteners, knowing what we would need from each other along the way.

So in the next few minutes, what we're going to do is we're going to study a passage of scripture from Numbers chapter 13. And we're going to see two friends, two brothers, Joshua and Caleb, who helped each other during difficult seasons, keep the right perspective and have a faith that would shape everything that was happening around them, especially when things were difficult. They never did it on their own, they always did it with someone.

And so I want to challenge you in that and I want you to know, before I get into this, that your senior pastor has been that for me. He's been a Joshua, he has been a Caleb for me, as we've kind of navigated the different seasons of life that we need that from each other. What we're talking about, how I'm going to challenge you in these next few minutes, is not meant to be an individual message just for you. If you hear it that way, it's going to be really difficult. You need someone. And the best way to have someone is to be that someone to someone else.

So how does faith shape what you see happening in our world right now? I think all of us would agree. In this season, we've noticed that especially that two people can look at the same thing, but just because they are looking at the same thing doesn't mean they see the same thing. Two people can witness the same event or the same circumstance or the same moment, and just because what they witnessed is the same doesn't mean what they see is the same.

A great example of this, I think, is a picture of a dress that got passed around the internet, you remember the dress? You remember the dress that got passed around the internet a few years ago, and people saw different colors. So let's look at this dress. Some people saw the dress and the colors they saw were white and gold and some saw blue and black. They're looking at

the same thing, but what they saw was different. Let's just find out what kind of division we have represented in this room and all of the campuses. Let's play this game.

How many of you by show of hands see white and gold? Raise your hands if you see white and gold. Okay, look around, see who's on your team. That's whose side you're on. Hope you feel good about your decision. Alright, how many of you see blue and black? How many of you are Christians? Raise your hand. Now you know, when the rapture happens, team blue and black.

So that is a blue and black dress in real life. Now some of you who see white and gold are like no, it's not. Yeah, it is. It is. But you're so sure of what you see, it's hard for you to accept the fact that you could be wrong. And in reality, it's blue and black. But interestingly enough, the majority of people saw white and gold. And what we realized during that experiment is that two people can look at the same thing but they don't see the same thing. And you could be best friends. And you could see things differently.

I remember on social media, two identical twins, which is how they come in twos, two identical twins, they look at the dress, and one saw a blue and black, one saw white and gold, very similar experiences, but their perspective was different. And really, that's the word that I want to talk to you a little bit about is the word perspective. Perspective is shaped by a lot of different subconscious factors. So when you're looking at that dress, there's some... I read a few scientific explanations of why we see it differently. And it's interesting, I don't quite understand it. So I know we can't explain it. But it comes down to perspective that there are assumptions that we make, there's lighting perspective that affects it, there are a number of different things that shape our perspective. And our perspective determines what we see.

And so here's how I want to challenge you, is that your faith should be the lens through which you see the world. That your faith should more than anything else, shape your perspective and determine what you see. And so in this season we're in and the time where we find ourselves. I would want to challenge you with this that those of you who are followers of Jesus, those of you who have a faith in God, that the way you see the world should be different than anyone else. And then the way people see you see the world should be different, should be noticeable.

And so how do you see what you're looking at? When you're looking at the headlines, what do you see? What do you see? Is it faith or fear that gives you perspective? When you're looking at the economy and your future financial challenges, what do you see? How is faith shaping that perspective? When you look at the political landscape, what do you see and how does faith give you perspective on politics?

Or let's be even more personal with this, like when you are experiencing some extra stress at home, some challenges in your marriage, some tension in your family, how is faith shaping how you see your spouse, how you see your kids? Or maybe during this season, you've gotten some difficult test results. Well, how does faith shape your perspective on those test results? I'm not so much asking what are you looking at, because we're all looking at some of the same things. I'm asking, what do you see? And how does faith shape it?

This is a big part of discipleship. And we see this throughout the gospels that Jesus was really always challenging his followers to see some things differently. And so we find them one day where there's a crowd of 1000s. And Jesus says, "I want to feed this crowd." And the disciples are looking at the situation. And what they see is a lack of resource. What they see is

insufficiency. But when Jesus looks at the crowd, when he sees this little boy's lunch, what he sees as an opportunity, faith. Faith changes the way we see challenges. And so I think of Jesus at the Tomb of Lazarus.

Other people see death and defeat. Jesus sees an opportunity for victory, for life. Faith changes the way we see things, at least, it should, but it can be challenging. So we're going to look at this in Numbers 13. I want to challenge you to have a perspective that is shaped by your faith, not in you, not in government, not in medical advances. The word belief is an interesting word, belief and faith, if we can think of those things synonymously.

The word belief literally defined would be what you put your weight on. So the word belief if you think in terms of like a walker for someone who is older or elderly, a walker, they put their weight on it, so they can move forward, they put their weight on it so they can move forward. So belief is whatever you put your weight on so you can move forward? And in this season, one of the things we've seen is that what people have put their weight on isn't working, right? What you might have put your weight on didn't hold up.

And so the question is, what are you going to put your weight on? What are you going to put your faith in? And in Numbers 13, we see Joshua and Caleb, let me catch you up to speed real quick on context here. Joshua and Caleb had a front row seat to watch God work, they saw the 10 plagues come up on Egypt. They watched just how far God goes to do what he says he's going to do. Their marching to the Red Sea. The Egyptian armies coming up behind them because Pharaoh changed his mind, he didn't want to see all that free labor walk out the door. So now he's coming to bring them back and they've got the Egyptian army behind them. They've got the Red Sea in front of them.

And God splits the wet Red Sea, Joshua and Caleb walk across on dry land. And now, where we catch up with them here, they are on the edge of the promised land, they are getting ready to go into the land of Canaan. So the edge of the promised land, the promised land, remember that. It's an important part of this. In verse two, here's what we read. The Lord says to Moses, since the men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites, I'm doing this. God is not in the decision making phase here, he's already decided this is what I'm going to do. This is, it is the the promised land, it's not that I'll think about it land, it's not the we'll see land. It's not the you let me know what you think and I'll take that into consideration and get back to you land. It's not the maybe land or the probably land, it's the promised land. God has already said, I'm giving this to you. It's the promised land.

And 12 spies are sent to explore the promised land. They're not sent in as consultants. God doesn't say, hey, I want you to pick one leader from each of the 12 tribes, send them in and let's have them do a SWOT analysis, if you don't mind, I think that would be helpful to me and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. If you could put together a pie chart of probability, so we could take that into consideration and make our decision. That's not how that goes. He doesn't send them in as consultants. He doesn't ask them for their opinion on whether or not they think it's a good idea. He sends them in to explore something that he has already said is theirs.

And so here's the challenge, I think, for us. When we look at the world around us, and we want our perspective to be shaped by faith is don't let, listen, don't let what you think is possible get in the way of what God has promised. Don't let what you think is possible get in the way of

what God has already promised. And so for us, that means as you're reading through the news, as you're scrolling through social media, you don't let that define what God has already said he's going to do and how he's going to work. 12 spies are sent in to explore, down in verse 20, Moses sends them in and he specifically tells them to look for the fruit. Take note of that, verse 25, it says at the end of 40 days, they returned from exploring the land. And when they returned, 12 of them come back, they see the same thing, but their takeaway is very different. They look at the same circumstances, but their perspective radically shapes their conclusion. So verse 27, 10 of the 12 spies come back and they give a negative report. We went into the land to which you sent us and it does flow with milk and honey. It does. Here's this fruit, you told us to look for fruit, here's the fruit. What is fruit? Fruit is evidence of what God has promised. Fruit is purposely looking for something that's good. Here's the fruit. We looked for it. We found it. Verse 20. Where are we at? It starts here.

This is all true. But, here's what we think. But here's my perspective. But they say the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are four to five and very large. And we even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in Negev, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites live in the Hill Country, and the Canaanites live near the sea. And along the Jordan, it's occupied. There are already people living there and Caleb silenced the people.

So there's Caleb and Joshua, two of the 12 spies. Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it." And so all of them look at the same thing, but they don't have the same perspective, like what they see is very different. And 10 of the 12 spies come back and they say, "Wait, we can't do it. People are too big and the walls are too fortified. It's too much." And two of them come back, two of them come back and say, "We can do it. Let's go." Verse 31, but the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people, they're stronger than we are." So the 10 are saying, "No, we can't do it. They're stronger than we are." And verse 32 says and they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored.

And they said the land we explored devours those living in it. That's not true, that's fake news. They're exaggerating it. The land we explore devours those living in it and all the people we saw there are great size. So question is what's shaping their perspective? Is it faith or is it fear? Verse 33, they say we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes. And we look the same to them. And now you hear them talking about how they see themselves in this circumstance. These are the chosen people of God who have seen the 10 plagues, who have gone through the Red Sea, and yet they still think of themselves as grasshoppers.

Don't do that. Don't be... Listen, if you are a follower of Jesus, if your faith is in God, then you don't ever get to play the victim card. You don't ever get to be, you're never the underdog, never. I don't care what happens culturally, I don't care what's going on around you, I don't care what you read in the news or how much of a decline you feel like we're on in this world, you are never the underdog. If God is with you, who can be against you? And they see themselves as grasshoppers, but that's not who they are.

Chapter 14, then the whole community begin weeping aloud and they cried all night. So here's what you find. A critical spirit is quite contagious. I don't know if you've noticed this, but pessimism can become its own pandemic. Right? You get a few people whining and

complaining, and it just, I mean, that thing just spreads. Verse two says their voices rose in a great chorus of protests against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness," they complained, and then they plotted amongst themselves, "Let's choose a new leader. Let's go back. Let's just go back to the way things were."

Don't do that. "Let's just go back to being slaves in Egypt." And so they criticized and they complained. But then we read Joshua and Caleb, the other two spies have much different perspective, that their perspective is shaped by their faith. They have courage, they have confidence, not because of who they are, but because of who God is. Verse seven, Joshua and Caleb said to all the people, they're together in this, not just one of them, there's two of them. "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land. And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey, do not rebel against the Lord. And don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us, they have no protection, but the Lord is with us. Don't be afraid of them."

And so what do you have here? You have 12 people, they all look the same thing. 10 of them come back and say, "We're like grasshoppers." Two of them come back and say, "They are like helpless prey to us." Completely different perspectives on the challenges that lie ahead for them. And one of the things you'll notice as you look at the two versus the 10, is that the two never really spoke of God. And they talked about themselves. And they talked about the challenges. And they talked about the size of the people. And they talked about the fortified walls. They talked a lot about their circumstances, but they never talked about God, not one time.

The two come back and they repeatedly talk about God, repeatedly talk about the Lord is with us. And if God is with us, and let's go, this is for us. And the point would be that their faith, their confidence is in themselves. Now, here's the thing. We live in a world where people talk a lot about confidence and inspiration. There's a lot of that in our world. The question is, that's not bad, question is where is that rooted? Where does that confidence, where does that courage come from? Because if it's in yourself, then I mean, that works until it doesn't, that works until it gets tested. And then when it gets tested, you find out that maybe there wasn't as much reason for confidence as everyone thought, and we've experienced that, right?

We've experienced that as a society, as a world, that maybe some things we've put our confidence in, now that they've been tested, maybe those aren't the right things, maybe those things can't hold our weight. I was reading about this survey that a dating website did where they asked its users a list of questions, so they could have this personal profile. And they found that one gender, one specific gender, when asked the question, are you a genius? Right at 50% of the specific gender said, "Yeah, since you asked." I mean, if it's just yes or no, am I a genius or no? Yes. I mean, I'd have to say I am a genius.

Do you want to guess, man? You'd be right. That's the men. That one out of two men on this dating website responded to, "Are you a genius?" With, "Yes, I am." Now scientifically, if you did the math on this, that number is really about one in on in 1000. So if you're just doing the math, like that means that one out of two men think they're one in 1000. That's how that plays out. Now, the question is, why do they think of that?

I would say it's because they've never been tested. Right? Maybe they only had two golf tees left at Cracker Barrel. But other than that, that would be the extent of it, I don't think they'd ever been tested, had they been tested, then maybe their conclusion would have been different. It's easy to have some confidence and that confidence to be misplaced until it gets tested. And this is what some of you have experienced in this past year. You were doing okay. And you felt confident in your foundation and the direction of your life and how things were going and you had your five year plan, and you knew where things were going to end up.

And now that confidence has been tested. And it turns out that maybe what you put your confidence in was misplaced. And so for Joshua to have this kind of strength and courage, it came, not from a self confidence, it came from a confidence in God and who God was. So there's this moment that happens in Joshua's life. His name has changed. It's very subtle. So when we first meet Joshua, his name is Yehoshua, which means salvation. It's kind of a cool name, right? Like so when people call him, they're calling, "Hey, the one who saves, can you come here?"

They're calling him salvation. So this is his name when we need him, Yehoshua, but Moses, before the first battle, gives Joshua a new name. It's a very subtle, he goes from being Yehoshua to being Yeshua. The Lord is my salvation. Yehoshua to Yeshua. Goes from being a man, who is a great warrior, confident, people called on him to save the day. Moses was like, "Hey, come here, we're going to change your name." "Okay, what do you got for me?" "We're going to change your name from the one who saves to the Lord is the one who saves. So now, when anyone ever calls you by name, they are putting their confidence in God."

And this is where we have the name Jesus. The Lord is the one who saves. And so the question is, how do we have that kind of confidence? How do we have that kind of perspective? How do we have that kind of faith? Because I think most of us want to be that way. I think most people I know, they want to look at the challenges and the circumstances and the struggles that surround them and lie ahead, and they want to be people of confidence and courage and victory. That's what they want.

But how do you grow in that? And so here's what I want to do is I want you to ask yourself three questions, because I think these three questions shape your perspective. And your perspective is what determines what you see. First question I want you to ask yourself is, what am I looking for? Not what am I looking at? What am I looking for? Big difference.

When you see what you see, what do you look for? If you go in and you look for fruit, that means you're looking for what's good. You're looking for evidence that God is faithful, and God will do what he said he would do. Do you look for fruit or do you look for frustrations? Because if you look for frustrations, you'll find them. Do you look for opportunities or do you look for obstacles? Do you look at a situation and say, this situation is so difficult, it's an incredible opportunity for God to demonstrate his strength and power or do you look at a situation and say it's so overwhelming, we are like grasshoppers. What you look for has a way of determining what you see. And so I'm not asking what you're looking at. I get that what you're looking at maybe giants and fortified walls. I'm asking what do you look for? What do you look for in that?

Leadership expert Simon Sinek, he talks about one day going for a run at the park with his buddy. And they woke up early, they went for this long run, he didn't have the chance to eat breakfast. But while they were running, he sees that somebody has set up a table in the park with free bagels. And so as they're running, he says to his friend, "Hey, look, they're giving away free bagels, let's stop here, let's get a free bagel." And his friend says to him, "I'm not going to do that. Look at the line. That line for those free bagels is too long." And Simon, the first time he'd really noticed the line. And he realized in that moment, that there are like two types of people in the world, there are those who see bagels and those who see the line, I would argue there's the third person who looks for the cream cheese as the determining factor.

But I understand like his point is, do you see the bagels or do you see the line? There are two types of people. It depends really what you're looking for. Are you looking for the opportunity or are you looking for the obstacle? And what I would say is that if God is with you, and God is with you, then you should always be looking for the opportunity. And so is your lens, is it a lens of faith or is it a lens of fear that you look at things through? If it's a lens of fear, that lens, it's like a close up lens. It only sees what's right in front. If it's the lens of faith. And that's like this broad lens, it's a wide angle. It gives you full perspective that lets you see things differently. So what do you look for? Now look, that takes some intentionality, you have to work at this.

My wife does this beautifully. And she has over this past year, even when it's been really difficult for a number of reasons. In the morning, she wakes up and she has the same routine, she gets her cup of coffee. And she sits in the same chair and she goes through her devotion. And then she pulls out this journal. And it's called her gratitude journal. And she just writes down three things. That's how she starts her day, here are three things that I'm thankful for.

And so as she begins her day, she's intentional to look for some things. Now she's not trying to do it. I don't think she'd see it. But she's intentional to stop and say, "What am I going to look for today?" Here are three things I'm going to look for that I know I can be thankful for, I've not read that journal, I don't know what's in there. I don't think she'd be thankful if I did, so I don't read it. So I'd like to think that it's like in middle school, girl's Trapper Keeper, it's just full of my name, just my name written again and again. I don't know what's in there. But I know that she takes time every day and say, here's how I'm going to look for.

And the Bible would teach us that this is how we intentionally shape our perspective with faith. And so we look around and we look for the fruit, we look for evidence of what God has promised, we look for the good, we look through the lens of gratitude. Philippians 4:8 says, fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right and pure and lovely and admirable. Think about these things, give your attention to these things, look for these things that are excellent and worthy of praise. When you do that, it begins to shape your perspective, it begins to allow you to look at the world through this lens of faith.

So, first question is, what am I looking for? Let me jump to the second question. Second question is, who do I listen to? Who do I listen to? We are all surrounded constantly by different voices. But the voice that you give your attention to has a way of shaping your perspective and determining what you see. The 12 spies are sent in, 10 of them come back, they give this negative report, they give a report of fear and defeat. Two of them come back and give a

positive report of faith and victory. The question for the three million Israelites would be, I'm not going to listen to the 10 or I'm not going to listen to the two? Who am I going to listen to? And it matters. It matters a lot because they end up listening to the 10. And as a result, they spend the next almost 40 years wandering in the wilderness while God waits for that unbelieving generation to die off. And then the only two from that generation who get to go into the promised land are Joshua and Caleb. If the people would have listened to the right voices in that moment, it would have changed the next 40 years. And this is the crossroads, I think that we are at. We're going to have to decide who are we going to listen to.

And I think the ratio is somewhere between 10 and two. You're going to have around 10 negative voices, and you're going to have around two faith filled voices. And you're going to have to determine, okay, who am I going to go with? Who am I going to listen to? Now what I love about Joshua and Caleb, is that they give their perspective and they don't say it's easy. They're not saying that it is going to be smooth and without challenge, they recognize, yeah, they're giants in the land, the walls are fortified, that's all true. But the way they look at it is through who God is.

So it all comes down to who we listen to. And sometimes we just want to listen to the people who are negative, or sometimes we will listen to people who are positive, but not very realistic. They just tell us what we want to hear. I'm not advocating for. A couple months, I went to get my hair cut. And after the lady finished cutting my hair, something happened that's never happened before. When she finished with it, she said, "Do you want me to do your eyebrows?" And I'm like, what? I don't even know what that means. What do you mean? I came in for a haircut, what do you mean?

And this is when I found out that there's a certain age in a man's life where they go in to get a haircut and other hair on their body gets cut as well. And so she wanted to know, "Do you want me to do your eyebrows?" First, in my mind, I'm like, no, no, I'm here for the hair cut, don't worry about the eyebrows, the eyebrows are fine. But then in the back of my mind, I hear this voice, maybe she's asking for a reason. And so I'm like, well, what do you think? And she said, "Oh, we don't ask unless it needs to happen." I'm like, okay, do the eyebrows, whatever needs to be done, you do that.

What I appreciated about it is that someone who's willing to say what's true, right? Someone who is offering a solution to it, she doesn't just say, "Man, your eyebrows are messed up, good luck with that." That's not it. But she's courageous enough to say, "Yes, this is hard. And yes, it's going to be difficult, but." And the voice we listened to has a way of shaping our perspective. So here's what you already know, but that I'm going to point out to you anyway, is that in this last year, we've developed, for many of us, this unhealthy obsession with watching the news.

Listening to the news, listening to podcasts about the news. And for many people, it's what they do when they wake up, it's what they do when they go to bed, just constantly listening to those voices. Now, you know this, but the news is all about stimulating a part of your brain called the amygdala, the amygdala is designed to give priority and attention to what's negative over what's positive as a means to survival. And this is why we click on it, because the

amygdala, part of our brain says you better click on that. You better be aware of that. Do you realize what's going wrong around you, and you don't know about it?

And we're just constantly surrounded by that. And so the ratio tends to be about two positives for every 10 negatives, whether that's on social media, whether that's the news, or whether that's the voices in your head. And so you got to decide, who am I going to listen to? Because those voices are framing up what's happening around you. I, as a person who speaks regularly, and I'm often asked the question, "Hey, are you nervous?"

I remember the first time I was asked that question, Aaron and I were in Bible college and I had the opportunity to talk to our student body. And I was backstage and I was really nervous. Like my heart was pounding, palms sweaty. And one of our professors came backstage and he's like, "Are you nervous?" Yeah, I'm really nervous. "Is your heart pounding?" My heart is pounding. "Palms sweating?" My palms are sweating. "Is your mouth dry." Now that you mentioned it, my mouth's dry too. He's like, "Okay, so you're nervous." I'm nervous. He's like, "I don't think you're nervous." He said, "I think you're excited." He said, "Yeah, that's it." He said, "You're not nervous, you're excited." He slapped me on the back and walked out.

And I thought about that. Is it possible I'm just really excited. I mean, the symptoms of nervousness and excitement are pretty much the same. Pounding heart, sweaty palms, shortness of breath. Maybe that's it. Maybe I'm just excited. So a few minutes ago before I got ready to come out here, you know what I'm selling myself. I'm so excited. I'm so excited. Over 20 plus years, that's what I say to myself. There's part of me that says, you're nervous, you're nervous. But there's part of me that says, you're excited. I think I'm going to go with that.

Now, the truth is, there's a combination of those things, right? But the truth is, I am really excited. I'm also nervous. The question for me is, what voice am I going to listen to that's going to shape and frame how I experience what's about ready to happen? One last question that I want to challenge you with before I'm done is what kind of words am I speaking? So the people listen to the 10 negative reports, then they start speaking and there's complaining and there's blaming and there's criticizing.

A few weeks ago, Aaron talked to you about the word, onomatopoeia, where the definition comes from its sound. And that's true with this blaming, and this whining, there's a tone to it. In other words, it's not just that they're saying something negative. It's that they're saying but they might even know... There's a tone to it, where they're whining. Sometimes we need to be honest and that can sound negative. But we are not whiners. People of faith don't whine. We don't whine.

We might acknowledge some things are difficult and challenging. We need to be honest about certain struggles, but we don't whine about it. We don't whine about it because we know who is with us, we know who's fighting for us. And when you start talking that way, somebody put it this way, your words create worlds. Your words have a way of shape. So listen, if you go around and you say to yourself enough, we're like grasshoppers. Then that's what you see. When you look in the mirror. That's what you see. So what words are you speaking? And all of these questions have a way of shaping your faith.

As a pastor, one of the great privileges for me, it's to see people whose incredibly difficult circumstances have been radically shaped by their faith in God. I love it so much. And so

humbled by it, I get a front row seat to see people respond to adversity and suffering and pain with a faith in who God is that gives them the strength that if I were going through it, I don't know how I would imagine. And I just can't imagine doing it.

So I often see this when something goes tragically wrong, and I am called to the hospital. We have some pastors on staff who regularly make hospital calls, I usually don't go unless it's a horrible tragedy. You don't want me to visit you the hospital. If you go in to get your tonsils out, and you come to and I'm at your bedside and you eat your tongue tonsillectomies gone horribly wrong. That's what that means. That's the type of the, if it goes really bad.

And so a couple years ago, I went to this hospital room. Because there was a young couple in our church that went in to have their first child, they had already named her, her name was going to be Lily. But when I got there, the doctor couldn't find her heartbeat. This young couple was told that they were going to have to give birth that she was going to have to deliver a stillborn child. Family had already gathered there to celebrate what should have been this victorious, wonderful, beautiful moment.

It's not what happened. And so when I got there, the family was gathered around. The moms been surrounding it. And I was appointed to the next room. So there was this little nursery room that was attached to that room. And the lights were out, but I walked in and I could see the dad was in there by himself. And he was in this rocking chair and he was holding the lifeless body of his baby girl saying goodbye, just wrapped up in this pink blanket that somebody made for her. I didn't really know what to say in that moment, what would you say? And so I knelt down beside him. I was just silent for a few moments. And then he said something to me. I want you to hear what he said, he said, "I guess this is where I find out if I really believe what I say I believe." I guess this is where I find out what lens I'm looking at.

And after a few moments, I began to pray for him. And as I prayed for him out loud, we started to hear just the strangest noise come from the room next to us. It was singing. I listened, I paused my prayer and listened. And they're singing the chorus to How Great is Our God. I don't think they knew the verses because they just kept singing the chorus. How great is our God, how great is our God, singing how great is our God.

I listened to it. And here's what I noticed is that it became defiant. They weren't just singing it, they were declaring it. They were standing on it. It was the lens through which they were looking at everything. And I stepped outside, I gave the family just their time and I stepped outside in the hallway. There were three nurses standing outside in the hallway and they just retreat, you could just see like they... Well, you know what, two of them were trying to process it. But one of them like, if you know you know, and she knew. Like she understood it.

And they just declared. Here's the faith that we have. The faith that gives us victory. In this world, we will have trouble, but take heart. Jesus says, "Because I have overcome the world." So ask yourself these questions. What are you looking for? Who do you listen to? What words are you speaking? Stand with me, let me pray for us.

God, I thank you for your power. I thank you for your strength that changes how we see everything that happens in the world around us. I pray that you would give us faith, we do believe but help our unbelief. I pray that you would help us be intentional when it comes to what we look for. I pray that you would help us listen to the right voices that we would fill our

minds with people who are speaking faith and confidence and strength into us. I pray that you would give us some brothers and sisters to do life with. I'm thankful that in the middle of this pandemic I'd said across the table from Aaron and with tears in both of our eyes. We just spoke courage and strength into each other and we all need that, I pray you would let us recognize how much we need that it doesn't work just to watch, that we need one another, we need to be a part of community.

I pray that you would help us be people who speak words of faith and victory. That even as we sing here in a moment about you God being the king who reigns forever, that we would sing that not just with the spirit of declaration but with the spirit of defiance that we believe that that's true no matter what. And I pray that you would give us deep faith as we stand together, as we declare victory in your name Jesus. Amen.