

S5-E5_Podcast_The Pope, Judgment, and Sacrifice

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jesus, god, sin, world, christianity, gospel, cross, die, good, give, humans, humanism, judgment, death, evil, life, culture, call, love, idea

SPEAKERS

Jeff Leake, Dave Leake

- D** Dave Leake 00:02
Everybody, welcome to the Allison Park leadership podcast where we have our culture creating conversations. I'm one of your hosts. My name is Dave.
- J** Jeff Leake 00:10
And my name is Jeff. And of course, we're both on staff at Allison Park church. I'm the lead pastor here. Dave is the campus pastor at the north side. We're father and son. So this is kind of a good, multi generational pastoral conversation about stuff that matters. And we love to talk about how our theology and our worldview and our philosophy about things impact who we are. And so we're glad the
- D** Dave Leake 00:36
culture we're building a culture we're building, we're creating, robbing culture, creating
- J** Jeff Leake 00:40
conversations to new it's a new tagline. I thought it needs explanation. Anyway, yeah. So shout outs Dave.
- D** Dave Leake 00:47
Yeah, quick couple of quick gratitudes. Thank you to Melvin 6913, and two, MIT CVL, Mitch vole, Mitchell unless you say your name. But thank you for your kind reviews. Again, we would love to give you a shout out as well. So you can leave us a five star review, especially if it's on Apple

podcasts, we can see your name Spotify is very helpful as well. So thank you for that, for those of you who have been kind enough to do that. But yeah, we just want to say thanks for being a part of the show and excited to get started today, as

J Jeff Leake 01:18

we are. So what we'll be talking about today, Dave?

D Dave Leake 01:23

So for us at time of recording Easter's next week, right, Necco. It's like a week and a half from today. It's Fashion Week is next week, Passion Week, next Palm Sunday. Isn't this coming Sunday? Right. And I guess in light of some of the recent interesting comments the Pope has made. Yeah. We wanted to talk about why it was necessary for Jesus to die. Yeah.

J Jeff Leake 01:46

Yeah. Because so this is a this is a really important conversation to have. Because of course, Good Friday is coming up, and we're going to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. And I think, in our world, especially over the last couple of years, there has been such an effort on so many different parts to try to redefine what Christianity is. I think you have that on both the political right, and the political left, trying to redefine Christianity, some people tried to deconstruct it into something else. And then the current Catholic Pope has taken some stances in different ways to have caused controversy within his own movement and, and around the world. And where he kind of comes out and hints at some things that it sounds like he believes but then doesn't totally go there. And almost wonder, Is he dancing towards a new version of Christianity that he's trying to slowly release to the world? Anyway?

D Dave Leake 02:52

Yeah. That was referring to Yeah, let's

J Jeff Leake 02:56

go ahead. Let's go right home. To the Pope. Yeah. So

D Dave Leake 02:59

So basically, there was a Doctrine of the Faith that was published by the Pope, I guess, this past December, if I understand correctly, December 18. And I guess so he put published, I guess, a pair of documents, both documents, the goal is to normalize, quote, unquote, divorce adultery, and homosexual pairs. And if I understand this correctly, what the Pope was saying was not so much this is we're talking about hinting, not so much that those things are now okay. Divorce, and adultery and homosexual parents not that's not not sin, but that those people should still

receive a special kind of blessing from their pastors and priests. And it caused a lot of controversy, because the document refers to specifically like homosexual couples, like Yeah, so it's sort of a couple blessing like you're, but he's saying we're not we're not blessing, the we're not actually blessed airing them,

J Jeff Leake 04:03

we're blessing them. And so So again, it's in this nebulous, middle ground

D Dave Leake 04:09

about these irregular situations like this, and which all three of those categories

J Jeff Leake 04:14

have been, you know, against Catholic teaching for a long time divorce against Christian teaching. Yeah. But especially, I mean, since he's the Catholic Pope, referring to that divorce, adultery and homosexual relationship. So it's feels like he's opening the door, but not really, totally opening the door. And that has caused a ripple effect of conversation around the world. But then this last one I just read about yesterday, which has to do with his view of hell,

D Dave Leake 04:44

right. Yeah. So essentially, again, I don't have great context. So I may be misunderstanding some of this. But if I understand correctly, part of it's like he talks and he's obviously speaking in Italian and stuff, but you If I understand correctly, he the Pope, as a response to these documents that were released about, you know, the special blessing for these different kinds of people in those situations. He talked about God's mercy and specifically used Judas as an example of God's mercy. And, you know, was implying that hell doesn't exist or that it's empty said things like, I like to think that that house is empty. You know, it's, it's difficult to actually imagine it. I like to think how is empty? I hope it is. And, you know, I guess going along, like, sort of that line, it's sort of the Pope is sort of presenting this idea that like, it's not that like, maybe sin is no big deal. But maybe there aren't really long lasting consequences or judgment for sin like, like, the just the way that God is, it seems like you know, he's overcome sin. So is there even really, is there even really a hell? And if there is, as hell more of a threat that God never follows through on but like, it's there, it's just empty, you know, or it's a figure of speech, as if this is what judgment would be without God, but because of God and His love, it supersedes that so is there. Is there a hell? I know? We've talked about that question before on this podcast, but it sort of all brings up this question that you and I were talking about earlier? If there isn't judgment? And if there isn't a hell, then why did Jesus have to die in the first place?

J Jeff Leake 06:28

So so this is what's so so crazy, is the whole concept of what Christianity is based upon is Jesus Christ coming into the world to deal with sin and evil by dying on the cross, paying for a sin, destroying the curse, demoliating demons held on this world, and then rising from the dead to

destroying the curse, demolishing demonic hold on this world, and then rising from the dead, to give us hope, of having life that is eternal? Because if he doesn't rise from the dead, we have no hope of life that is eternal. So if Christianity is based on that central historical event, but But everybody's okay, without it, like, there is no judgment, there is no hell, everyone goes to heaven, no matter what, because God is just going to eliminate the threat of judgment and hell and punishment, then none of Christianity makes any sense. It's like a totally different thing like, so why are we celebrating Good Friday have good Friday doesn't really mean anything to the, you know, the outcome of, of Judgment Day. If there is no judgment day, then why was Jesus experiencing judgment for our sin on the cross? And if everybody goes their headaches? Hmm, meaning

D Dave Leake 07:50

because there's no stakes? It'd be, it'd be the lowest stakes? Oh, yeah. It's like, well, I guess, I guess I'm glad he did that to demonstrate His love. But that was really only an act of love and not an act of Salvation. Yeah, because salvation, there is no judgment. So anyway, so let's do this. Why don't we talk through why

J Jeff Leake 08:08

that die. And that's just one of many, many different versions of people's attempt to redefine Christianity into something that feels more

D Dave Leake 08:22

what would you say? A little

J Jeff Leake 08:23

palatable to the culture that you're in? Yeah. Right. redefining it as a as a as a political force. Right? The socio which, okay, we would say that righteousness and justice is a part of the outcomes of the gospel, just like we believe that one of the byproducts of surrendering to God is living a life that is happy, alright. But, but but the primary purpose of the gospel is not to make you happy, or to make you wealthy, or even to accomplish social justice, or righteousness. And it's not

D Dave Leake 09:00

a platform for activism. And again, it's it doesn't I, but it's important to establish what it isn't, isn't it? You know, it's like the prayer as you know, your kingdom come on earth as in heaven. So there is this this inherent push for the gospel to make change in our world? Yes.

J Jeff Leake 09:17

So, but it is a byproduct of it. But it isn't the primary focus of it. Yeah, right. Right. Right. Right.

So, but it is a byproduct of it. But it isn't the primary focus of it. Yeah, right. Right. Right. Right. So here's another example of this. And you saw a lot of debate about this. If you were watching the Superbowl, they they rolled a commercial call, he gets us. Did we talk about this on? No, I don't think we have. Did you see that commercial? Yes. Okay. So what made the commercial controversial is it showed a number of different situations and scenarios where there was a person of faith. Christian, washing the feet of someone that is perceived to be an enemy, right, a person who's standing outside of an abortion clinic washing the feet of someone who's an abortion worker or going to get had an abortion or a priest Baptists washing the feet of a homosexual person or it was just like, you know, the idea that Christians are designed to be like Jesus, which is to serve everyone, even those that we disagree with. And so in some facets, there were people saying, that's awesome. I love that message, man, that was so, so great. And other people were like, Yeah, but Jesus washed the feet of his disciples technically didn't watch the feet of everyone in the world, while he did have a servant mindset. And, you know, he also was the Jesus who turned over the money to money changers tables, and, and told people to repent and right, so it's impossible in a 32nd commercial to capture the fullness of the gospel. But you can feel the tension that exists in the world, because the progressive side, and the conservative side of everything is pulling on the country pulling on the culture, and it's actually pulling on the fabric of Christianity. And there is many, many attempts to try to define or redefine, or make it, you know, controversial, every aspect of what it is to follow Christ. And so the these kinds of statements with the Pope just fit into that whole narrative of what is Christianity all about? And especially as we go into Passion Week, the question that we're asking today is, so why did Jesus really come to this earth? And why did he really die? Why did he have to die? Why was that necessary? And because I think we need to know, what is the crux and the foundation of our faith, as we celebrate the biggest holiday for us on the on the calendar. Right? So,

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Dave Leake 11:44

so yeah, where do you you were talking about when we were discussing this earlier, you were talking about a number of different aspects and reasons and sort of sort of the base of our theology, if you will.

J

Jeff Leake 11:59

So, okay. One of the scriptures that stands out to me, it's such a powerful, and it's such a such a profound way is what Paul says about his ministry strategy. In first Corinthians chapter two. He says this. And so it is with me, brothers and sisters, when I came to you, I didn't come with eloquence, or human wisdom is that proclaim to you the testimony about God? Verse two, for I resolved to know nothing while I was with you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. So Paul says, I kept myself to one central truth, like I don't think he was saying, I didn't teach anything else. I think it was using hyperbole. And that is, I resolved, that nothing would compete with the primary message that changes the world with a Jesus was just Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And then he says, verse three, and I came to you and weakness with great fear and trembling, my message and preaching were not with Wiseman per se persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power. So Paul says, the central solution to a broken world is Jesus Christ to Him crucified, like that message, right? There is the most transformative thing that we can ever tell people died on the cross. He was buried, He rose from the grave, he's alive today. That is the gospel message. And there are many, many things that we can do in the world to make

positive change. But Paul said, my primary strategy was to preach Jesus Christ who was crucified for us, and rose from the grave, and everything else is far secondary to that central message. So why is that the case? Why is Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Why is that so powerful? And so important for the world that we live in? That's kind of the question, why did he have to die? And why is that so practically true for us in our in our in our Christian faith? So So Does that strike you day that that statement? I think it's nothing but this right. Yeah,

D

Dave Leake 14:11

I think it's an I think it's an important statement. And I think, here's, here's what, here's where I'll come from for a second. I think. I think that for people that maybe are just started to dive a little bit more into the reason for your faith and in understanding what it means to follow Jesus, this is a really important question. But another thing that always strikes me about this sort of conversation, especially around this time of year, is it really feels easy to sometimes forget the basics of the gospel in terms of like, why we celebrate Easter and Good Friday, and, you know, Palm Sunday, Passion Week, that whole thing. It's like it's like a truth that exists in our mind, but like the impact and the emotion of it and the honor No, the profoundness of, of that part of Jesus Christ crucified, I feel like something that we need to review. So I guess I'll say to frame before we go any further, whether or not this is something that you're deeply familiar with or not, it's healthy for us to re examine this. Yeah, as a core doctrine, because it is it is the center. It's the center of everything. If

J

Jeff Leake 15:18

you take away the resurrection of Jesus, or the crucifixion of Jesus, what do you have left of Christianity? It's, it's nothing. It's it's how to be a good citizen and how to be kind. It's how to help people. But that's all part of it. I mean, yes, the following Jesus makes us kind and, and servant oriented and changes the world to be a better place. But that is actually not what just Jesus came preaching. He did come say, I came to bring the kingdom of God into this world, which brings about all of this transformative global change that we're looking for. But you can't detach that, from His death, burial and resurrection. So this is this is really essential. So let's, let's start with some basics. Yeah, please, there is something called sin. That's not. Not everybody agrees with that anymore.

D

Dave Leake 16:09

Yeah. So if you don't if you don't agree with that, it's not really it's not really Christianity. It

J

Jeff Leake 16:15

isn't. Right. So we believe that there is sin, sin is not just something I do negatively to you that impacts you negatively. Sin is something I do against God, right? God holds me guilty for not aligning with his character, and

D

Dave Leake 16:32

we can sin against others. But every sin is a sin against God as well. Yes.

J Jeff Leake 16:36

In fact, it's first of all a sin against God. Yeah. And so we live in a self worship society, right? That is heavy emphasis on self esteem, and therapy, which none of that's therapy is not bad. Self esteem is good. But there is almost this feeling like I'm okay, you're okay. And all of us are basically good.

D Dave Leake 17:02

And all of us are enough. And that'd be the phrase. Yeah, you're enough. I'm enough. And we should understand the deepest part of who you are. Because being comfortable with who you are, is a key for happiness and filming. Yeah. And

J Jeff Leake 17:16

so what's missing from your life is not that you're not right with God, what's missing with your life is that you're not right with yourself sort

D Dave Leake 17:24

of that Abraham Maslow self actualization at top of the pyramid Higher, higher. And

J Jeff Leake 17:28

so if you really were in touch with yourself, and you were true to yourself, that then you would be everything you're supposed to be, and God would be okay with you. In that condition. Christianity starts with this idea that you're not okay. Yeah. That you're damaged, that you're, that you're selfish, that you have an evil streak running in you. It's not that you're all bad. There's some good in you, absolutely. There's good in everybody. But there's also sin in everybody. And that sin separates you from your Creator. And you cannot get right with your Creator, unless you resolve this issue of guilt and sin before God. Now, your sin before God is still sin before God, even if it doesn't hurt anybody, because it is the revelation that you are not eligible to be in a relationship with the Holy Creator of the universe. And that creates emptiness in you and death in you. And it's why this operating system in you is selfish. And so one of the biggest reasons why people don't understand the cross is that many people in our culture have tried to get rid of the concept of sin against God. Yeah,

D Dave Leake 18:33

let's back up a little bit. I think there's more of a round definition of sin than just that. Okay. Because, as you said, even if it doesn't hurt anybody, it's a sign of the fact that there's a broken relationship. I guess. Yeah. But it's, it's more than just that, you know, like the Bible

broken relationship, I guess. Yeah. But it's, it's more than just that, you know, like, the Bible talks about how, like, every everybody has their own conscience to judge. And there is, so this is kind of the this is kind of, I think, what our culture disagrees with moral absolutes. Yes. So every time there's something that happens in culture, people, you know, people will be like, people are inciting a moral panic about kids with these demon bears. I mean, like, it's like moral panic, because it's this idea, like everything is really shades of gray. There is no black and white. There are no moral absolutes, but the Bible is a book of moral absolutes. Yeah. And the way it paints God to be is there are absolutely, that, honestly, it's like pretty much everything is a shade of black and white somewhere. It's like because,

J Jeff Leake 19:34

because and this is what's so crazy about our culture. Let me try to articulate this. Well, God's character is the absolute moral good. Yeah. Okay. And the reason why we even have an understanding that there is good and bad in the world, is because there is a good God. Yeah. And there is an alternative to His goodness, which is selfishness and sin, and all kinds of other things that don't align with his good care. character. Yeah. So when you when you see something and you say that's good, or you see something and you say that's evil, or hateful, what you're really testifying to is that there was a good God who created the world. And we can see goodness in action. So God is good. We are not, we have some good, but we have a lot of things that don't do not align with his, his holy, righteous, good character. Yeah. And he cannot have relationship with something that is twisted morally, that is broken, that is damaged, that is not good. And so so therefore, this Holy God can have a relationship with those of us who have a moral flaw.

D Dave Leake 20:41

So quickly, just to clarify, because I think this is important to mention from what it means to what I just said, I think, in terms of morality and sin, there aren't really Gray's it's just black and white ethics, and how we handle situations sometimes are muddy. Yes. And the

J Jeff Leake 20:58

application of his moral goodness is sometimes gray. Yeah,

D Dave Leake 21:02

where it's like, how, what should we do? What's the best option? What's the most loving thing? But in terms of the morality of things, there

J Jeff Leake 21:10

is righteousness and unrighteous? Exactly, yeah. And there is sin, and there is goodness, and there is good and evil. Okay, so let's start there, there is sin. Number two, there is a judgment day. One day, we will all stand before God and have to give an account for our life. When we

die, we will stand before a holy, righteous God, and be judged as to whether or not we are fit to be in the place where God dwells. Or we have to remain separated from Him for all eternity.

D Dave Leake 21:48

Basically, is there any sin in your life or not?

J Jeff Leake 21:51

Yeah, because the only thing that exists where God lives, is that which has been cleansed of its impurity and made holy and righteous. So if you have not been cleansed of your impurity made holy and righteous, and you've said, I want to do things my way, God allows you to go your way. And there is this separation between you and him.

D Dave Leake 22:13

Can I Can I also elaborate on this? We did this whole episode on how Yeah, we did. Maybe nine months ago, or something like that. We did one on

J Jeff Leake 22:21

heaven and one on how and if you want to go back and catch those, we went into depth about why we would disagree with Pope Francis. Yeah, he

D Dave Leake 22:31

didn't even set it at the time. I don't know yet. Right. I think some of the some of the things to highlight to remember from this is that, you know, I think it was CS Lewis, who said, you know, those who are in heaven are those who say to God, thy will be done. But you know, the other other side, hell is where God says to those people, thy will be done, right. Like, it's like, hell is the full completion of our own choices, to define good and evil for ourselves and to push away from God. And you know, I love how Tim Mackey was sort of talking about this. But it's like, if if we're full of sin, it's I think, sometimes people are like, Well, why couldn't God be around imperfection? I think it's just that imperfect people couldn't be around God. Like it would obliterate us

J Jeff Leake 23:14

and perfect. People would destroy heaven. Yeah, it'd be heaven anymore if it was infected with with evil,

D Dave Leake 23:22

D Dave Leake 23:22

I think. Yeah, I think so. I think it's not just that God's like, you know, wimpy and doesn't want to have to be around something dirty, like he's a germaphobe. But it's more just like, Yeah, I think being around God, when you've chosen to reject and rebel, his goodness would be agonizing. And it would be a state of existence as literally impossible. And so, you know, and I've heard some theologians talk about the separation where God gives somebody over to their desires allows them to make that choice as a mercy in a sense, because rather than having to be around this presents that you can't stand, there's at least a separation element to

J Jeff Leake 23:58

it. Which then evidence evidence is itself with the fact that not only is there sin, and not only there is there a judgement day, we would say also that you see the evidence of this brokenness that comes from sin in the world around us today. Yeah. So it's almost like people want to have a utopian view. Everything in the world is perfect, except for a few evil people that are making things bad. But the reality of it is, because we're all bent towards sin and selfishness, we live in a world that's a mess. It's a mess. You see, you see, you see abuse, and you see dishonesty, and you see corruption and you see people who make self centered decisions and you see people stabbing each other in the back and breaking their commitments and, and you see rape and murder and you see oh man just decide on genocide and, and war and greed. I mean, it's everywhere. It's rampant. We, we we know this, we look around the world and we see human suffering. that is not just the result of natural disasters, it's the result of other human evils scandals and corruption. And so a world that's under a curse Yeah. Because of, of the the virus of sin that's entered the world, not just moms sinful and your sinful, it's that the world is cursed and dominated by evil. And that if we die in that condition, it's just that that becomes a permanent situation, yet without any of the presence of God remaining, because in eternity, God flees from it and creates a reality where it's still where heaven is not affected by this other garbage mess that we can see around us all the time. And so the reason why Paul says, I preach Christ and Him crucified. And that's the main thing is because Jesus death on the cross deals with all three of those factors, my personal sin, my eventual standing before God on Judgment Day, and the curse that hangs on the world. So when Jesus dies on the cross, He does not just observe that my sin into Himself on the Cross as my substitute in death, but he absorbs the curse of the whole world upon himself. He, he so loves the world, that he's wanting to deal with the brokenness of the world by absorbing the curse on the world, on his in his body, and he takes that into himself, and he dies on the cross, and He says, It is finished, and he comes down from the cross, and he's buried in the ground, so that by His resurrection, he can introduce a whole new reality into a broken world, or into my sinful life, that can give me a chance to start over and live with his goodness being birthed in my life. Yes. And so so he it is the crux of the matter, not to us, I guess a punk is Crux means cross, right? It is the play intersection between God's plan for redemption, not just for me, but for the whole world is the cross of Jesus Christ.

D Dave Leake 27:02

Yeah. So let me let me let me contrast something, I think if you if you're, maybe you're a pastor, or you're you've been a Christian, for a long time, all this might just be reviewed. But if somebody's a little bit newer to this, I think one of the things that you might be hearing this, like, oh, I guess that makes sense. But it feels a little strange. It's that the actual pure gospel as

such a contrast with what we would call humanism, yeah, just sort of the default way of thinking of our culture, which has a sort of a few ideas. One is that, like, we're progressively getting better generation by generation as humans. So everybody starts out being, you know, uncorrupted. People that get corrupted by society, we want to try to free them from that, and hopefully, generations from now will be less and less bigoted, and less and less evil, and more and more together, and then maybe, eventually will fuse into some kind of a superorganism, where, you know, we all share thoughts together,

J Jeff Leake 27:59

we all share everything, because we're one race. And I don't know, that's sort of like that vision is like that we evolve and evolve and evolve, and that we're on this content utopian, of moral Association view that the world is going to become better and better. Yeah. Through our advancement in information technology. And, and, you know, good leadership.

D Dave Leake 28:18

Yeah. Whereas, whereas what the Gospel says is, people are born to the world. Hopeless, irreparably broken. And yeah, and yeah, exactly fallen and twist and how

J Jeff Leake 28:29

we can think when we look at the world, that we are evolving into something better, I just can't imagine, like that myth is you have to hang on to that with such faith. Well, you think everything is evidencing the other direction, but

D Dave Leake 28:44

it's like people think like, well look at where I am compared to my parents or to this other generation. And I know some people are still like that, but you can see more and like, it's honestly a pretty arrogant view.

J Jeff Leake 28:57

It's also because I'm not what I look back. I'm not exactly sure, like some things we've improved on. Maybe, maybe maybe our view of certain things that we would have been bigoted on in the past. We have now improved on but then there's a whole slew of things that former generations got, right, and that we're not getting right at all, like people staying married or, you know, you know, being willing to die for causes or, you know, being selfless and duty, duty oriented. Like there's, we are all messed up. We're all messed up. And I think when we look in the mirror, we realize that Yeah, we were fooling ourselves to think that we are approaching utopianism, except for a few bad apples. Yeah,

D Dave Leake 29:27

Dave Leake 29:37

well, so the one side would be that, like, if humanism that contrasts would be the idea that we're evolving and improving that we started out basically good, and we're gonna get better. The other side is the view of humans as sort of the center on the stage. Yeah. So I think sometimes the gospel is so offensive because it sort of makes humans not that important. Yes, like you they are. But the really big important piece is God. And so if a God makes a judgment that we feel like is unfair? Well, that's his prerogative, because the center of the stage of the gospel was God. And not only has God not made unfair decisions, he's gone so far above and beyond to show His goodness and mercy and grace to people that didn't deserve it that he has been. I mean, it gives him more glory. But he's not only unfair, I mean, he's unfair, the opposite direction. But the center of the stage for the gospel is that here's who Jesus says, here's who God is, and you and I are nothing without that were lost and miserable. And now, you know, we're not we're not just individually saved, we are in this community of people that have sort of a group identity as the church. So it's the church and Jesus, it's not just like me, and Jesus, you know, so anti humanism, humanism is individualistic. It's what's my personality type? What are my preferences? What are my desires? What what's my future look like? And how do I maybe want to fit spirituality and or God into that picture? Christianity and the Gospel, Christ, Christ crucified? Is God at the center of it and His goodness and amazing mercy and all the stuff he's done for us, and then us as redeemed people in a community. Yeah. With a community like that communal identity as the church responding to his love and mercy and grace to us. Yeah, well

J

Jeff Leake 31:26

juxtapose the chapter before the verses I just read. First Corinthians chapter one, we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, because they didn't see Jesus as their Messiah coming to to fulfill all of this that they had been waiting for, and foolishness to Gentiles. Yeah, that's what you're saying that this humanistic view of the world looks at the cross. And Ian says, it's, it's foolishness. But to those whom God has called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, for the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom. And the weakness of God is stronger. Yeah, than human strength. So, so the cross is the center of human history. Yeah. It's the center of God's plan to redeem a broken world. And when you when you realize I'm a sinner, I'm irredeemable, apart from God's mercy, I'm one day going to stand before God and have to give an account for my life. And I'm going to be found one thing, because my own moral imperfection, keeps me from being able to be in a place called heaven, or be in a relationship with the Holy God. And I'm living in a cursed world. And if I really look at it, I have to admit that the world is Christmas sin and selfishness. And I want a solution for me, and I want a solution for the world. Jesus is that answer? Yeah. And he died on the cross to absorb my sin, and to give me a fresh start, and to absorb the curse on the world. And then when I receive Him into my life, I entered this revolutionary movement called the church, which then seeks to build His kingdom on earth, to replace the kingdoms of this world which are infected with this virus of selfishness, and to superimpose on it the kingdom of God, so that we can begin to live the kind of lives and treat each other in the ways that will make the world a better place. Yeah. But you can't build the kingdom of God. Apart from the transformation of the cross. Yeah, like, you can't just say, well, let's just skip the cross part, and go ahead and try to make the world right without getting ourselves right with God first. Yeah. And without accepting his pathway for transformation to occur.

D

Dave Leake 33:38

I think I think also, the other thing is, that I think you only get to a place like where Pope Francis got to, when humans are centerstage? It's like, Well, how could like how could somebody be so cruel? Because the if the purpose of life is people's happiness and enjoyment of life, how could God shut down how somebody wants to find love? Or how could God then for that person finding love in a way that makes sense to them? How could God then judge that person? That sounds like a cruel and not loving God, but that puts, that's putting people and our logic and our preferences, and ultimately, our happiness as the purpose of life and the center of life? And part of the reason why I love the gospel, is it make sense of the story of the world? Like, if the story is all about me? We're here for just a quick second, really, nothing matters that much, as long as I'm kind of doing what I want to do. And I'm not too bad. And I have a sense of self satisfaction. But how much am I contributing to the race of humanity? Most people are just a blink, you know? And it's just like, if that's all life is it's sad, and we are a random chance and accident. So just enjoy it while it's here because it doesn't have any purpose anyway. But when God becomes the center of the stage, then the whole context of human history fits together and I have a significant place

J

Jeff Leake 34:56

in it. Yeah, because my is my life is meaningful because it's meaningful to him? Yes. And I'm here with a purpose because he designed me with that purpose. Yeah. And my life is broken. And I'm headed in a direction that I think is right when I'm defining what is good and evil. But I'm actually wrong. Yeah. Like, so God, if he really loves me, is he going to let me pursue my own idea of good and evil, even though and he and his holiness knows that my pathway of defining it for myself is going to lead me into death? Yeah. Is he compassionate by just letting me walk into death? Or would he be more compassionate, to say to me, knock it off, come over here at let me fix your brokenness. In fact, I'll, I'll die for you. Yeah, I'll absorb all of your evil into myself, so that you don't have to walk towards death, living life on your own terms and going your own way. But you can come back to me and I can give you life that is truly life, and I can give you purpose and meaning for not just for today, but for all eternity. And people are saying, If God won't let me do life on my terms, and give me eternal bliss, as the consequence of me choosing my own way, then he must be a cruel and evil god like that is so self centered. Well, it's

D

Dave Leake 36:17

a humanistic perspective or humans. Can I just even give, I have more to say, I actually think that the way the gospel treats people, in terms of the view of humans is actually it elevates people way more than humans are. Okay. So I think when you when you look like, initially, the idea of people inherently being bad, there's evil to us, we're miserable without God, you know, we're falling or twisted. So it's like, well, that's a low view of humanity. But actually, what the gospel does is it elevates humanity, because now people can truly be noble, you know, people can really have dignity, because otherwise, it's just based on our own personal interpretations of things. We're, again, if we're in a random accident world, based on products of evolution, where we should get as much enjoyment as possible, there is no objective moral good, there is no dignity or inability except to what you interpret it to be. But like, based on this, we are chosen, as, you know, a chosen, oh, my goodness, a special a special possession. You know, the royal priesthood were chosen vessels, masterpieces of God's handiwork. So it's like it elevates the role of humans as like, we have significance in the world. And we have a purpose in the grand scheme of eternity.

J Jeff Leake 37:36

And you can know, a holy, creative, all powerful, good God. Like you don't have to live into the emptiness of life experiences that are here for a moment and then dissipate, and then you you're left feeling empty, and purposeless and meaningless, and you're searching for that next experience, or that next person that's going to give you something that's going to make you feel complete, when you could have an unbroken relationship with pure goodness, with holiness, with a God of all creation, he wants to call you up to himself, and he wants to flood you with his presence. And he wants to use you for His purpose. And he wants to give you a sense of, of why you're here in the first place. Like there's something about that, to me, that just blows my mind that God would, uh, would look at me and say, I want you in my life. And, and so you can't live life on your terms. And get the goodness and the and the and the outcome of God's kingdom, your way. Yeah, you have to go his way. And Jesus said, I'm the way in the truth and life No one comes to the Father, except through me. So I think the Pope's humanism is unraveling the whole concept of Christianity, I think it's logically it doesn't make any sense to continue to put a crucifix with Jesus hanging on the cross as the center of your faith and then say there is no judgment for sin. Those two things are incompatible with each other not unless

D Dave Leake 39:20

all the churches is a relief organization, or an activist organization. If that's all it is.

J Jeff Leake 39:25

Well, if it is a relief slash activist organization, then why Jesus on the cross Yeah,

D Dave Leake 39:31

yeah, that doesn't that doesn't make any just get rid

J Jeff Leake 39:34

of that symbolism. Like our founder died, we're not sure why. But he said a lot of nice stuff that will help us be inspired because

D Dave Leake 39:43

a good teacher who happened to have a bad death, but that is that is the total distortion of everything that gospel stand is

J Jeff Leake 39:51

J JEFF LEAKE 39:31

and in fact, as you read the New Testament were the followers of Jesus that were selected by him as disciples slash apostles. They went around preaching one message, Jesus Christ died, he rose from the grave he's alive today. If you call it your his name, he'll enter your life and transform you to become an agent for the kingdom of God to be established on earth. It is the outcome that we end up as relief organizations and activists for good and where we start to build healthy families and raise noble children and where we begin to build a just society. But But the purpose of it, or the crux of it, where it changes is when we when we have the experience of the gospel message was his Jesus death, burial resurrection. And, you know, I know for me on Good Friday, I stand there. And I think to myself, thank you, Jesus, that my sins, which I are too many to even name, have been cleansed from my life, and then I can stand before you and have righteousness on my life, thank you that not only Have you forgiven me, but you've flooded my life with your presence, so that I don't have to be dominated by bitterness, or lust, or, or whatever other things used to be the dominating force in my life, thank you, that gave me a chance to understand my calling and purpose, and I get a chance to serve you in this world. And thank you that I know without any shadow of a doubt that when I die, I'm going to continue to live that I have a promise of eternal life. Like, oh, Jesus, I owe you so much. How, how can I ever thank you for everything that you've done for me and to know that I can call upon your name, and and you are alive, and you know, me, and you're interceding for me and you're working in my life, like the center of my whole world is the person of Jesus Christ and what he's done for me. So to somehow now take that away, as was so greed is to be how can anyone want to reduce the cross and its impact into some kind of just, I mean, I love nonprofit organizations that work for the good of humanity. But it's nothing in comparison to what I have come to understand about my relationship with God through Christ.

D DAVE LEAKE 42:16

So I guess, you know, if someone for for someone who maybe is listening to this, that is, I don't know if on the fence is the right word. But like, whether you're newer, or this is sort of something you're actually having, you're wrestling through this, I guess what I'm saying, for somebody who's wrestling through this, and the difficulty of this and the challenge, and it's, it's, you're being real coming to grips with what the Gospel says, but you're making a decision as to whether or not you want to do this. Jesus has these two parables that he gives these two fictional stories in Matthew 13, that I think are where the value that you were just talking about is found in Matthew 1344, Jesus says, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, when a man found it, hid it again, then enjoy. And as joy he went, sold all he had and bought that field. The idea of that as like this, this, everything I'm going to have, you know, maybe you might be worth \$200,000. But I found a, you know, \$1 billion piece of property, that if I do this, it's incomparable, in terms of so it's the best deal I could possibly have. But there still is that, that sale that that choice to give up all that I have my preferences, you know, my whatever. And to give that to trade, have the life Jesus gives to be cleansed of sin, to stand before God someday, with being able to be a part of the inheritance that he has. For us. It's the best possible decision that I've ever made and that you could ever make. Yeah, and that's what the gospel is really.

J JEFF LEAKE 43:53

And let me just say, I want to I'm feeling strong conviction about this. I'm gonna I'm gonna say

some bold stuff. I'm so tired of this humanism, worship of self. Yeah. I almost think in some ways, if you're going to be a follower of Christ, you need to renounce that. Absolutely, yeah. Do you need to say, I am not going to be on the throne. In my own life. I want Jesus to be my Lord. And I want to get down off of the throne and stop worshiping Me. Yeah. Because we live in a culture that has just elevated itself to the center. And we have this this mushy view of humanity. As if we're all good, and we're all progressing to something better. And if I just hold the right opinions on things, that I have the virtue that I need to reach this self actualization point, and God and Jesus are just there to serve my spiritual journey. No, that is not Christianity. You need to renounce that get down off the throne. Stop trying to be God. Yeah, the world is not progressing to be better. We do want it to be better. We're working to be better. But we can see sin and selfish is rampant. The only solution for a broken world or the only solution for your broken life is to receive the transformation that comes through the death, burial resurrection of Jesus Christ. And for our preaching as a radical Christian, I believe I am not a humanistic Christian. I am a radical Jesus follower, I believe he is the centerpiece of everything. And I refuse to allow anyone to pull it the strings of the cross and unravel it by saying, there is no sin, there is no judgment day. There is no eternal consequence. Jesus death was just a gesture. No, no, no, no, no. It's the centerpiece for what changes the world and what changes my life.

D Dave Leake 45:49

Yeah. And it's the beginning of freedom. And it's the beginning of purpose. And so, so all all of this to say, you know, if you're maybe if you're maybe not sure that you're on that side of I am 100% committed my life to Jesus, and I'm off the throne. If maybe you were going to go into Easter a little bit worshiping yourself, in addition to Jesus, as both of us were both sort of there. You know what I mean? He's making him more He's making me more like him. But it's good. Because I'm already enough. It's like, Well, I do think it's time to reevaluate, and it is the most worth it. You know, the guy had to sell everything he had to gain that treasure in the field. But everything you have is such a low cost. Yeah. You

J Jeff Leake 46:35

cannot keep yourself and get Christ. Yeah, you have to let go of yourself. It does

D Dave Leake 46:43

get price you pay for it. You don't get everything you have. And for free. Without, like

J Jeff Leake 46:49

cream on the top? It No, no, no, you have to it's an exchange.

D Dave Leake 46:55

I think I might have said this on a podcast. If I did. I apologize. We started one. And then I think this is maybe where I said it when we didn't finish. So if I said it, all right. But there's just

this is maybe where I said it when we didn't finish. So if I said it, all right. But there's just hearing this, I heard the song. And it's a great song. And I'm not saying we shouldn't sing the song. I don't remember the name of that word, the team that sung it, but I heard it like when I was browsing Spotify, and they were talking about like, just respond G's in this moment, like, you know, no strings attached, like he's here for you. And I was like, that's kind of not true. No lecture at all. There are a lot of strings attached. But it's good to understand that and I think we there

J Jeff Leake 47:29

is no one in the world who asked for more from you. And there is no one in the world who will give more to you than Jesus. Absolutely. But he is not. He is not coming with open hands. And, and he's not going to make any demand on you. He's gonna demand everything from you. Yeah. Because you are damaged, you're broken, you're sinful, you're selfish, you got to give that up. And you've got to receive his life in exchange for yours, so that he plants, by the power of the Holy Spirit has character and nature in you, so that you can be what he is, you at the end of the day, Christians are supposed to become like Christ in every way, which means you have to lose not necessarily your personality, or your distinctiveness, but the core of who you are has to become Christ. If you're a follower of Christ, your identity and, and so, like, we have to almost radically reject the humanistic progressivism that says everything's going to be fine. You're okay. I'm okay without Jesus, because that is not Christianity. And okay, if Yeah, like, you know, how Joshua says at the end of his book, Dave, Joshua 24, choose this choose choose Yeah, like be that. If you're going to be the sort of humanistic self on the throne, God's here to serve you person, be that? Sure. But if you're going to follow Jesus, follow, follow Jesus and do it through the cross and through His resurrection, because Christianity, like I feel a sort of a holy resistance to this dumbing down of Christianity into something that it isn't. Yeah. I'm not here to make it a political thing. No, in any way, shape, or form, because I think that's one of the distortions that has happened where it's become leftist or rightist. But I think we have to stay true to the Gospel Jesus presented and what we read in the New Testament is the core. And we believe there is sin. We believe there is judgment day we believe their world is under a curse. We believe you're not the center of the universe. We believe you need Jesus, you need a savior. We believe that when he died on the cross, He provided an answer for all of this. And through his resurrection. He gives transformational power and authority that changes you and changes the world. So

D Dave Leake 49:52

I mean, we've been, I guess, this is a weird way to conclude this, but I'll just bring this up. We've been having this discussion recently about the way that in the American church in general, we tend to give altar calls, which is their accurate representations of sort of the Romans road and you know, you're a sinner that needs Jesus and, you know, respond to him now confess our sin, all that stuff. But sometimes I wonder if we've done a disservice, actually, we're talking about this. And then I'm starting to read this book by John Mark Comer, following the way I think it's what it's called, where he was, was like, I was just thinking about this. But I wonder if we've maybe sometimes done a disservice by not always contrasting the gospel with humanism, in the sense of like, not only are we are you a center, you're making an exchange, like, if you're going to respond to the gospel, you're making an exchange, you're making a purchase right now. This is you selling your rights, everything, for the chance to follow Jesus, like, if you want to make that choice, please do. It's

J Jeff Leake 50:56

down. I'm gonna go in and put Jesus on there. Right? surrender everything that you are to him and receive everything that he wants to give you. And

D Dave Leake 51:03

so and so it just, I, sometimes I get on the soapbox, and I apologize if I shouldn't, but I just it's on my heart. It's so doesn't mean like, I slowly will choose if or when I'm going to follow Jesus and these areas that I don't want to, like, ah, yeah, although

J Jeff Leake 51:19

ultimately, we all surrender on a percentage Jesus, when we get saved, and then struggle to make that a reality in everyday life, yes, where we are every day having to submit things to Jesus, out of initial decision that we've already made, but there always at least, is the yes, on the front end, I want to surrender to the best of my ability, everything I am to you, then the Holy Spirit enters us. And he begins to be a partner with us to make those decisions on a daily basis. So we get better and better. But it's not. It's you got to start with the full surrender. Well, that doesn't come later. Like Hold on.

D Dave Leake 51:57

Let me let me try to explain what I'm saying though. Because it's not that we have to at the moment of salvation and repentance. Now, nothing bad happens in our life. And now we look just like Jesus, of course, there's going to be the struggle to become more like Him. And there will be things that we didn't realize were sinful, that we have to give up. And it's hard. And sometimes it's a struggle of the will like, oh, man, this is gonna suck to give this up. But sometimes I think there's this, there's this thought of like, I have the option to delay whether or not I'm going to obey this. Like, yeah, I might get around to that at some point

J Jeff Leake 52:32

where I have the ultimate authority to decide whether or not it's really good or not. Yeah, even though even though I feel convicted, even though I know the Scripture says, it's wrong, I have the option to disagree with God on this particular matter for this particular time, because God allows me to have that right to do so.

D Dave Leake 52:51

Because of the cross, we have the opportunity to be in an apprenticeship, or a followership of Jesus, where we orient our lives that way. It's not just theologically saying, Yes, I believe these things, it's giving our life in exchange for his. And that's what the cross is at the center. And

that's why the stuff that that is coming out is hard to swallow, because it just is. So it flies in the face. It's sort of this idea of like, well bless you, regardless, if you kind of are basically the same status, there's not really any judgment Anyway, do what you want, which is totally counter to everything. And Gospel says, which is that it's a trade, and that the sacrifice was a serious sacrifice. But it was made for the cost of our salvation.

J Jeff Leake 53:36

All of our church services and prayers that we pray are just artistically beautiful, that connect with an ancient culture that allow us to all participate in being sort of a relief agency in a in a you know, to kind of affect the world in a pause. I don't want to belong to that. That's not That's not what what Christianity is to me. It's, it's Jesus's the center. I don't want to, I don't want to know anything among you except Christ and Him crucified. Yes, there's things that we will add to, to make to make the kingdom of God a reality in the world. But Jesus is the center. Yeah. So there is sin, guys. And if you haven't recognized that in your life, you're flawed. You're not You're not God, you're not like God. on your own. If you keep trying to define good and evil, you're going to end up in a place where it's going to be way worse. Yeah, there is a judgement day, one day you're gonna stand before God you have to give an account for your life doesn't matter who you are, or what opinions you hold. And the world is cursed. And we all can see that and we all want it to change. And the answer to that is you got to get off the throne, you got to lay down your life because

D Dave Leake 54:43

God is merciful in spite of all those things. You just said, God was so merciful and gracious that he came down out of heaven to live as a man with you know, as Jesus for, for his, you know, 33 years to eventually be tortured died across that we can now have the opportunity to make right with God. So

J Jeff Leake 55:02

it was necessary that he would go to the cross to pay for your sin. The cross was cruel, because that's how horrible sin is. Yeah. And he absorbed it. In the end, he absorbed the curse of sin on the world. Yeah. And he suffered a brutal death. On the cross crown of thorns on his head. He was, you know, stabbed in the side, he's nailed his hands and feet, he suffered an excruciating death. Because sin is horrible. your sin and my sin is horrible, had to be punished and paid for. But he was punished in my place so that I can be forgiven of my sin. Yeah, he rose from the grave. So I could have a second channel, man. And that is the gospel.

D Dave Leake 55:41

Amen. So right now if you need to respond, yeah, you know, you can pray

J Jeff Leake 55:45

right where you are. Yeah. And say, Jesus, I give my life. I want to receive yours. Turn from my

right where you are. Yeah. And say, Jesus, I give my life. I want to receive yours. Turn from my old ways, and I, I want you to be on the throne of my life, and he will come into your life by the power of the Holy Spirit, even right now. Yeah. And transformation will Yeah, for you.

D Dave Leake 56:00

You can say, you know, I believe you died and rose again, I believe you're the Son of God, I repent of my sin, you can be king in my heart, I give you myself. And that's, that's as simple as that really, you know, at least as a starting point. And then as the next step, get involved in healthy church, you know, get somebody to, you know, help disciple you, whether that's in a life group or you talk to a pastor, but this is kind of what we're here for as well. We want to help you take those steps. And and

J Jeff Leake 56:27

then celebrate Easter for what it really means. Amen. Yeah. Yeah.

D Dave Leake 56:31

That's great. Well, this was a lot, sort of a soapbox episode for us. But hopefully, you know, hopefully, it wasn't boring. And yeah, hopefully it's clarifying, because this is a confusing time we live in where a religious leader as significant as the Pope is muddying the waters for millions people across the world billions early. But yeah, we're glad you guys joined us again, for this. As always, we would love to just ask for your help, because we want to spread the word about this podcast. And so there's a number of things that you can do. You know, if you would like to do this, you can share this episode with some friends. You can send it through texts, you know, you could post on social media. Follow subscribe on YouTube, excuse me. Or again, like we mentioned earlier, leave us a five star review. If you listen to this on Spotify or Apple podcasts, that would be so, so helpful. And

J Jeff Leake 57:22

we always love to hear from you if you have topics for future episodes that you'd love to see us. Absolutely.

D Dave Leake 57:27

So thanks again for joining us. See you guys again next time.