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# Living Our Faith Legacy

## DARRELL DELANEY

I still remember sitting at my grandmother's kitchen table, listening as she told stories of how God had carried her through her hard times. She never preached a sermon, but those words sank deep into me. That is the thing about legacy. It is not just history; it is fuel for today. In this episode of *Groundwork*, we are going to explore how the faith handed down to us shapes the way we live right now, fuels our mission in the world, and gives us the responsibility and the joy of passing it on to the next generation. We will find out how the Lord wants us to commend his words and share our faith, next on *Groundwork*.

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And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we have a short, two-part series on the legacy of faith. The first episode was reflecting on what God has done throughout families and communities. We talked about the history of how *Groundwork* came into being. We have been here for fifteen years now, with the combination of the *Back to God Hour* and the *Words of Hope*, and how it merged into *Groundwork*; and now today, Scott and I are your cohosts who are sharing the traditions of what God has done and speaking the gospel over podcast and various media ways.

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So, we looked a lot in the first episode in this two-part series...it doesn't get any shorter than that...we talked a lot about parents with their children, remembering baptisms and so forth. So, in this episode, we are going to go forward a little bit and say: Okay, now we have been handed that legacy, what do we do going forward into the world?

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What we know in any given moment, Darrell, is what we read in Hebrews 12:1, 2. It is such a vivid picture: What we know in any given moment, Darrell, is what we read in Hebrews 12:1, 2. It is such a vivid picture: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,<sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus...

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You know, there is a big church in Grand Rapids called LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church. Years ago, when I first preached there, I noticed that all the stained-glass windows on the side of the church are all the stories of Jesus; but then, on the biggest stained-glass window behind the pulpit, it is kind of interesting, because they've got like Stanley Livingston up there; they've got Martin Luther and John Calvin, and all these other people; and I thought: Well, that is kind of odd for a stained-glass window. Shouldn't it be Jesus? Then I realized: No; that is the great cloud of witnesses. They are reminding us of all these theologians and pastors and missionaries who went before, that surround us today and encourage us.

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I think it is an encouraging picture if we can picture this, having the heroes of the faith and the people in the tradition of Christianity looking in and cheering us on and praying for us as we run this race; and knowing that Jesus has run before us, we don't run to strive, we don't run to prove, we don't run to validate ourselves, but out of gratitude, we get to live the way God has called us to live; and our tradition is we receive the stories of God and his character and faithfulness and pass it to the next generation. This is exactly what he does with Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1, 2 when he says: You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup>And the things you have heard *me* say, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

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You know, it is a chain reaction there. Paul receives it, gives it to Timothy, Timothy gives it to the reliable people, and they give it to others still; that is legacy in motion, Scott.

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**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Exactly; again, for fifteen years now, *Groundwork* has been trying to do that, since 2010...creating conversations about scripture that we hope are meeting people where they are every day. Our listeners include fairly new believers, seasoned Christians, seekers who are kind of trying to understand the faith, you know; I mean, we are thankful for this radio, and now digital technology and podcasting that allows us to do this, not only in North America, but we know we have listeners all over the world: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America. I think a lot of our listeners are in North America, but this goes far and wide, and we are just so thankful to be a part of that, and that legacy of passing on the faith. Sort of that...what you just said...a legacy of faith is a chain reaction. It was Paul to Timothy to reliable others, wherever they were, and then on to others. Now, it is you and me talking. Our words go out on the air. We don't even know where they all go; but it keeps it going with a chain reaction.

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That is what we are after, Scott. We want to shine like stars in the dark world and in the dark places—in our workplaces, in our communities, in our homes and our families; and *Groundwork* itself is not trying to be that light, but we are trying to fuel the light and empower the light in everyone who listens.

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So, what does that kind of look like in practice? Well, does that kind of look like in practice? Well, it is parents reading scripture to their children before bed; it is a young professional listening to *Groundwork* on the commute and finding strength to act with integrity once they get to work; it is a retired believer gathering a group of neighborhood folks to pray for one another and to study the Word and to pray for younger people. That is not all glamorous stuff, but it is faithful stuff. It is living out the legacy, not doing headline-grabbing things necessarily...sometimes it involves that...but most of the time it is just small acts of faithfulness, everyday witness, consistent witness; and that is what we shoot for in the Church, to equip people all over the world to do exactly that.

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It is a consistent witness each and every day, step by step; and Scott, you and I have said on this program that discipleship is not just this one mountaintop experience, but it is daily obedience and small steps that add up over time; and that is what legacy looks like here in this year, 2025. I mean, ordinary believers in every corner of the globe, taking a baton and running their leg of the race quite faithfully...as faithfully as they can.

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### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Exactly; and you know, you might say: Well, I am not a preacher, I am not a missionary, and I don't really have a platform; but you do. We all have spheres where we exist; people we know...coworkers, family members, neighbors. We all are in a position to tell the story, and to let people know of what we believe. Of course, Darrell, from the good news department is: None of us do this alone. None of us are Lone Rangers...no Lone Ranger Christians...because it is the Holy Spirit at work in you. I mean, that was promised to the disciples before Jesus ascended into heaven: The Holy Spirit is going to come upon you and he is going to empower you. That continues to happen today. Pentecost was not a one-and-done deal. That Spirit continues to get poured out on us today, and that is why we can do *Groundwork*; that is why we can witness to our children; that is why we can witness to our neighbors; because the Holy Spirit is in us.

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*Segment 2*

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Abundantly clear. In Matthew 28:18-20, what we often call the Great Commission, Jesus tells the disciples...again, this is right after the resurrection...<sup>18b</sup>“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

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So, as you just said, Darrell, legacy is not nostalgia; it is not just a plaque on the wall to admire. It is a calling. The disciples couldn't simply sit around and remember the old times that they spent with Jesus. No; they had to go! They had to pass on what had been entrusted to them. So, I like it that Jesus said: All authority has been given to me; therefore, *you* go... So, he is going to imbue them by that Holy Spirit at Pentecost that we talked about earlier. He is going to put that in them, and that is going to be the fuel and the fire in the belly that will take these disciples turned apostles...*apostle* means a sent one...

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That is what the word apostle means...to be sent; and that is what is going to happen with them.

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And it happens every Sunday when we have the blessing at the end of the service...the commission and the benediction...we send them in the name of the Lord to do that missional work; and when Jesus says go...actually, the Greek word is a present continuous one. It means: as you are going...

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**DARRELL DELANEY**

Continue to make disciples and baptize and teach everything that he has commanded. So, you also alluded to this in the first segment, Scott. You mentioned the power in the book of Acts, and we will read that here, where Jesus promises them in Acts 1:8: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

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In the community of the believers; and that is exactly how this mission expands. It starts in concentric circles; it starts at home; but then it expands out. Even social media is part of the ends of the earth now today that God is using and still working in the midst of. It is really powerful to see.

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I like your saying that it really means: As you continue to go. We did on *Groundwork* here not too long ago a series on the missionary journeys of Paul as we read about them in the book of Acts. That was just a great example. Paul just goes all over the place. He is the Johnny Appleseed of the early Church, planting churches the way Johnny Appleseed planted apple trees. As he goes, he goes into the synagogues and every place and talks about the kingdom of God. So, Paul just went and went and went like an Energizer Bunny, you know; and everywhere he went, the gospel spread. Everywhere he went, new churches were planted. Although Paul was a unique apostle of God, called to do that, it really is no different for us today. As we go, we keep talking about the kingdom of God and the good news of Jesus.

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## **DARRELL DELANEY**

And that is how the mission expands, Scott. If you think about that, it multiplies because of the power of the Spirit, and the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is present and active in every believer who shares their faith with a coworker; who shares their faith with a family member or even a stranger. The Holy Spirit is actually helping us today to do that. And that means that we don't just sit back and be grateful for what happened with our parents and grandparents; but, even though gratitude is important, we want to continue to move into action when it comes to serving and sharing the stories.

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And we know what to do, right? Micah, the prophet Micah in the Old Testament reminds us: <sup>6:8</sup>He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

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So again, our mission is not just about the words we speak, but the lives—the transformed lives—that we lead, showing justice, mercy, humility. These are not optional add-ons, Darrell, to the faith. They are for the everyday outworking of the gospel; and it shows how legacy turns into visible mission. I like how somebody said, you know, about the Micah text that I just read: This isn't rocket science. This isn't that difficult to know. Just love God, act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God. It is that profound, and yet, it is that simple, too.

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It definitely is; and *Groundwork* has played a role in this because we do this every week; we talk about scripture; we dig into scripture; we equip listeners with the Word of God so that they can actually live differently in light of what they have; and usually at the end of episodes, we will have some sort of takeaway

or some applications so that you see that it hits your everyday life and you see that you can use it and walk it out. That is where legacy becomes mission because the word isn't just heard over these radio waves or these podcasts, but we do our best to live it out.

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Exactly; and again, a worldwide mission that we are so grateful for. You know, we have people who listen in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, and in all kinds of different places; and hopefully, as our radio and podcast signal goes, it continues to spread the good news of the gospel.

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As we said earlier, you don't have to be a professional missionary or a professional preacher to do this. You can do it right where you are, no matter where you are. But of course, that does take some measure of courage, too, doesn't it Darrell?

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### **DARRELL DELANEY**

It does, and the good news is, it doesn't rely just on our strength and courage. We have the power of the Holy Spirit, who gives us the boldness to break the ice, to cross over and talk to the person that will be working with us, or you know, in school with us, in class with us. I mean, you know, some people are called to cross the ocean. We are called to cross the street; we are called to cross the aisle; we are called to cross the room; and we can start even in our own homes, and we can start with conversations over coffee. So, we really thank God that he has given us the ability to be present in people's lives just like he has been present in ours every day.

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### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

And again, if we have that legacy...if we have had parents who have raised us in the faith, and if we are trying to raise our children in the faith...again, we talked about, I think, in the previous episode, just this good momentum. You know, we are supposed to have this good momentum generation to generation. Again, we read the Great Commission a minute ago, and you have to love the way Jesus framed that, you know. He begins with: All authority has been given to me; and he ends with: Surely I will be with you until the end of the age.

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Of course, in Matthew, Emmanuel is the key theme. In Matthew Chapter 1, Joseph is told he (Jesus) is going to be Emmanuel—God with us. That is how Matthew begins, and then it concludes the same way...it is kind of a bookend: I will be with you. I am still Emmanuel with you. So, the whole thing is infused with Jesus, from first to last. That is the one who goes with us; that is the one who has given us that Spirit we read about in Acts 1:8, so that the mission belongs to God, and he just generously and graciously lets us join in on the action.

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## **DARRELL DELANEY**

Yes; and it is beautiful that he allows us to join in on the action, Scott. So, it is not really about whether you have inherited a legacy, but the question is: will you move into mission with what you have now? And how will you respond to what the authority of Jesus promised that he would give you to do? And that is where legacy comes alive. So, in the next segment, we want to talk about how to do that in practical ways. So, stay tuned.

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*Segment 3*

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## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this sort of our fifteenth anniversary episode, which is leading us to think about how we pass on the legacy of faith. And again, when we talk about legacy, it can never stop with us. The point of receiving and living the faith is to pass it on; and you know, Darrell, we read about this a lot in the Psalms. A number of the 150 psalms say something similar to what we get here in Psalm 78:4, where this is speaking in the voice of the Israelites: We will not hide them (God's mighty deeds) from their descendant; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

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### **DARRELL DELANEY**

Yes; I remember picking up on that from Psalm 145:4, where God tells them: One generation will commend God's works to another, and tell of God's mighty acts. It even shows up in the prophets. I mean, God's original plan in Isaiah 49:6 was that he would make the Israelites as a light to the nations that his salvation would reach the ends of the earth; and so, it has always been about a responsibility to tell them.

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### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

In the previous episode of this very short, two-part series, we looked at the *Shema*, which is from Deuteronomy 6: <sup>4</sup>Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one; (and again, we picked up there): <sup>6</sup>These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

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And we said that that is how we do it in our households, and that ties in with Psalm 78: We will not hide it from our children; we will tell them. That is the good momentum that we want to see.

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### **DARRELL DELANEY**

So, over the pandemic, I started cutting my sons' hair. Not only was it economical, but it also created a time where they had to sit. So, it was an intentional time that the Lord made it clear: You can actually pour into

your sons and teach them some things that you have learned about me, God, while you are cutting their hair. This happened just a couple of days ago because they are getting ready for school and everything, and I am cutting their hair. So, we had a very rich and robust conversation that these young men who are teens now are able to have because we are sitting there in that moment and it is impressing upon them what God has done in moments like that: Daily rhythms or things that are happening normally; you washing the dishes; you sitting at the dinner table; you actually driving your way to work and school. These are the times when you can actually be intentional to share those legacy stories that God has done.

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### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

You know, they used to say about soup kitchens and stuff that were run by Christians that when you go there, you get the sermon and the lunch; you want the lunch, you gotta hear the sermon. You are the sermon and the haircut. If you want a haircut, you get the sermon. But that is, indeed, what we want. You know, the Apostle John shows us how much joy can come from this. So, from 3 John...the third, very short letter of John, verse 4:

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I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Now, he wasn't just talking about biological children, but spiritual children; but it is indeed the joy of pastors, teachers, mentors, parents, who see the legacy going on, and then they see the children walking in the faith; which is also why, unfortunately, Darrell, for some people there is nothing sadder than seeing their children be wayward from the faith; and how many times as pastors don't we get asked by a grandparent: Please pray for Joey; please pray for Cheryl; my little grandchildren. They are not going to church anymore and it bothers me....it bothers me...it bothers me.

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Yes; we have heard listeners who have tuned in with their comments after they have listened to a podcast from the show, saying these kinds of things that you are mentioning. So, we don't always get to see the fruit, but when we do get to see the fruit, it is the fulfillment of our joy, because the purpose is to bring God glory; and when we see that happening, that is our hearts' desire—that is what we want to see.

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So, how do we live this out, Scott? I think one of the first things we need to do is tell the stories. We were told in Joshua 3 and 4 how they told the stories. We were told the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6, how the people of God were telling the stories. We have stories in our own lives that we need to be sharing with our younger people and with the community around us, because people are looking and listening for hope; and if we can share the stories of God, maybe they can have hope as well.

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## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Exactly; we tell the Bible stories, but we know that our stories are caught up in that one grand story of God as well. So, we tell stories. Second, we build rhythms. Faith is passed on in the ordinary. The rhythms of nightly bedtime prayers: Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Mealtimes conversations; devotions at the table; reading scripture after the evening meal. Going to Sunday worship is a rhythm. You go to church every week: We read scripture, we hear sermons, we sing, we give offerings. So, we tell stories first; second, we build in these rhythms of regular spiritual activity and disciplines.

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## **DARRELL DELANEY**

Everyone knows that if you put all the sounds together in a song, it is noise; but the definition of music is a combination of sound and silence composed over time. So, there is a rhythm there; and our lives have a rhythm as well; so I am glad you brought that up. So, thirdly, we also invest in relationships. Passing on the faith is not just the job of only parents, but there are church communities that create these intergenerational spaces, where you have these people with gray hairs and these young people who are babes, and they are all in the same space, and you get to hear these stories shared. If you are intentional, and if people are willing, you get to share different angles of the aspects of God, and it is a beautiful thing.

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### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Once we could mass produce something, we started doing Bibles. So, the Church has always taken advantage of the latest technology; and today, it is social media, it is streaming, it is the digital world, it is what we do here on *Groundwork* by sending out these radio and podcasts into the wider world. God gives us these things to use as tools to keep the legacy of faith alive. The thread that holds together all of these things, Darrell, is the faithfulness of God.

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God has been faithful, and he continues to be faithful; and as we close this two-part series, we want to remember where we have been. Because in the first episode, we talked about the biblical and historical foundations of legacy and how faith has always been passed, and how God's people have been called to carry it forward. In this episode, we moved to application and what it means to live legacy today, and how it fuels mission in the present; and then carry it into the future.

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## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Well, let's run that race with perseverance, as we heard from scripture. Let's shine like stars in the universe, as we also heard from Philippians. Let's pass on that faith, not just as a memory, but as mission, joy, responsibility, so the next generation will come to know and love the Lord, thanks be to God.

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