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# Our Faithful God and His Enduring Word

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Nothing stays constant. Change is inevitable. We raise our children to be independent, but still our hearts ache when they light out on their own. We happily accept a new job or a new position, but still find that there are parts of our old job that we really miss. Today on *Groundwork*, we mark a pretty significant change as we bid farewell to one of *Groundwork's* founding co-hosts, Dave Bast; and as we welcome *Groundwork's* new co-host, Darrell Delaney. The Bible also knows about transitions like this, and we will dig into scripture to glean its wisdom. Stay tuned.

**DAVE BAST**

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

And I am Scott Hoezee. Well, as we just mentioned, this is a special episode of *Groundwork*. After ten years of co-hosting *Groundwork* conversations, Dave Bast is retiring as co-host of our program. So, Dave, you are retiring...you are moving on.

**DAVE BAST**

Yes, I am retiring from *Groundwork*. I felt like the time was right to do that. I hope I am not completely retiring from either ministry or life, at this point.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

But, you are moving on the program, and we will be welcoming a new co-host on this program; but Dave, as you think about radio ministry, and over the years you have been involved even before *Groundwork*. Maybe talk a little bit about what has changed in all of that.

**DAVE BAST**

Yes; well actually, Scott, it has been for me over 25 years that I have been doing broadcasting, because I did 15 years or so, or more than that, prior to *Groundwork*. So, there have been huge changes, because when we started...when I started this...it was preaching a sermon on the radio...

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Right.

**DAVE BAST**

Almost like a church service...

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Right.

**DAVE BAST**

Now, in one sense, the big change has been the delivery system. Now it is the Internet primarily; and the other change is a podcast is really about conversation, not about a single voice proclaiming. So, I found that to be very engaging in these last years as we do more of a discussion as opposed to straight-forward

proclamation.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Well, and I think that *Groundwork* was originally co-produced by Words of Hope, kind of anchored in the Reformed Church in America, and Back to God, now ReFrame Ministries, anchored in the Christian Reformed Church; and both programs, I think, decided to end those preaching programs about the same time. So, you got together with the head of Back to God Ministries at that time, Bob Heerspink, to a more of a Bible study and conversational program. So, you know, as you think about that, what parts of that have you enjoyed the most, and benefited from the most yourself as a radio host?

**DAVE BAST**

Yes, I think it was a beautiful thing that we are very similar denominationally and organizationally. We both have essentially the same mission as ministries—Words of Hope and Back to God, or ReFrame Ministries—and Bob and I...Bob Heerspink, as you mentioned, of blessed memory...found just a wonderful coming together of minds and of gifts; and we both said simultaneously: You know, let's try this new thing, and try to draw people in a little bit more, perhaps, into the conversation; and so, from the very beginning, we have been very intentional about that; and now, you know, with social media and the kinds of things that are being done there, we are engaging listeners and readers in a much broader way with the scriptures, really. That has been the one constant. We really do want to dig into scripture. It is not topical, it is not about necessarily current events per se, it is really about trying to open up the message of the scriptures, and do that comprehensively.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Yes.

**DAVE BAST**

And in a way, that applies to real life.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Sure; so, you actually retired from being president of Words of Hope several years ago, but you wanted to stay with *Groundwork*, and you have; but now you are fully retiring now also from this. So, you and your wife are retired. What kinds of things are you going to be doing?

**DAVE BAST**

Well, we've got seven grandchildren, and they are scattered somewhat across the country; so, we love visiting with children and grandchildren. I guess that is a pretty usual thing. We love travel. I hope I will still do some preaching and some writing. I just felt like it was a good time for me to move away from this sort of regular...a bit of a grind, really...*Groundwork* is. There are deadlines and there are scripts to be written, even though, when we come to record these programs, as we are doing now, it is more of a conversation. I kind of compare it to jazz in a sense. We are improvising...

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Right, yes.

**DAVE BAST**

On a theme that we have already sort of set for ourselves, but then it becomes more free flowing. So, it just seemed like the right time, you know. You could quote Ecclesiastes: For everything there is a season and time for every purpose under heaven. Or you could quote Kenny Rogers in *The Gambler*: You gotta know when to hold em and when to fold em...

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

That's right.

## **DAVE BAST**

So, this seemed like the right time.

## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Yes; it reminds me of a pastor friend of mine who retired. He said that the sweet spot for retirement was when you could still read your sermons, but were not drooling on them yet. So, I think that is some wisdom there.

Well, as we thought about this program, we did want to think about transitions in the Bible without overplaying it...not to make this sound like this is some transition of literally biblical proportions, but the Bible does talk about transitions; and a very famous passage from 2 Kings 2 is the transition from Elijah to Elisha—Elijah's mantle over Elisha cast—it often gets sung and spoken at ordination and installation services for pastors, because it is one example in the Bible of God providing that transition of leadership, and we read about from 2 Kings 2.

<sup>7</sup>Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and the left, and the two of them crossed on dry ground. <sup>9</sup>When they crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha said. <sup>10</sup>"You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet of you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not."

## **DAVE BAST**

And as you know the story perhaps, he did see Elijah being carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire, and then we pick it up and read that: <sup>13</sup>Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. <sup>14</sup>He took the cloak and asked, "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And he was able, then, to divide the waters as Elijah had done; and thus, we understand, there is the succession. Elijah passes away. Nobody like him, maybe; but Elisha will do God's work in his own way.

## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

And this is a fulfilment of something Moses promised in a very significant chapter. We have looked at it before on *Groundwork*. Deuteronomy 18, where Moses, near the end of his ministry, before he dies tells the people of Israel:

<sup>15</sup>The Lord your God with raise up [for you] a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. (18 paraphrased) God will put his words in his mouth. He will tell everything that I command him.

So, there is the promise that there will always be a prophet in Israel, and we see that fulfilled over and over in the Old Testament, all the way up until the arrival of the ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ himself; and so, we are thankful for God's provision of new leadership; and on this program, and on this occasion, Dave, we are thankful for Darrell Delaney. He is a pastor here in Grand Rapids. He is going to become the new co-host, along with me. So, Darrell, welcome and why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and your ministry, and your family, and whatnot?

## **DARRELL DELANEY**

Thank you, Scott. It is a pleasure to be here on *Groundwork*. I look forward to working together with you, Scott. I am a pastor here at Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am also a father and a husband. I've been married for 16 years to my lovely wife, Kia. We have three little people who share our name and claim on taxes. That will be Christopher, he is a teenager, Tristan is 10, and Acacia is 7. And so, there is never a dull moment in the Delaney household, and we are excited to be able to be part of the *Groundwork* show.

## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Yes; and so, as we went through the process of searching for a new co-host, we were enthused to connect with you. What excites you, Darrell, about moving forward with *Groundwork* now?

**DARRELL DELANEY**

As a believer, I just love breaking open God's Word, and this is an opportunity to help people in their discipleship. People listen because they want to know more about the Lord; they want to grow and they want to improve in their relationship; and this is something that I get to do more regularly. I do this every Sunday, but when you are able to discuss it over the table with a couple of friends...

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Yes.

**DARRELL DELANEY**

It is really powerful to break open and have fun with.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Yes; well, that is what we have been doing here on *Groundwork* for quite a long time; and looking forward to have you join the team.

Coming up next, we want to do what we do best and regularly on *Groundwork*. Let's dig into scripture to talk a little bit about God's steadfast presence in our lives, even when we face seasons of change and transition.

So, stay tuned.

*Segment 2*

**DAVE BAST**

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

**DARRELL DELANEY**

And I am Darrell Delaney.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

And I am Scott Hoezee; and we are talking about transitions on this program: the inevitable changes that come to us across the various seasons of our lives; and as we said, we are doing that on this *Groundwork* program because Dave Bast is retiring from the program, and Darrell Delaney is coming on board as our new co-host; but more broadly, Darrell and Dave, in this part of the program, we want to talk about the changes in all of our lives; and you know, change, we said at the opening of the program, is inevitable, and yet, change can also bring uncertainty.

**DARRELL DELANEY**

I was thinking about how many different transitions happen in many peoples' lives. You know, when you think about people who are graduating from school, or you think about empty nesters when they have these situations where their children are now leaving, so they have to be reacquainted as married couples, or different changes that bring these things to attention. I cannot compare my sermons to the pastor who was before me. I have to make sure that the transition goes smoothly for my season, and then we look at these different things across the country and far away from our friends and family, and how we will support people. Changes are inevitable.

**DAVE BAST**

Yes, absolutely; and you know, one of the things we love to do on *Groundwork* is quote from Christian classics like C. S. Lewis and others like that. We like to quote Neal Plantinga; and I have always loved John Bunyan and his *Pilgrim's Progress*...

**DARRELL DELANEY**

*Pilgrim's Progress*...

**DAVE BAST**

It is a progress—it is a pilgrimage—and that means you are always leaving one place and heading out to another, and saying farewell and leaving things behind. It can be difficult, but we just keep moving forward. You cannot avoid...I think now about the end of my life. I mean, I just turned 70, and I know that there is a lot more behind me in terms of years on earth than there are ahead of me, and you know, that has kind of got me thinking; and the one constant in the midst of change for us is the promises that God will be with us...

**DARRELL DELANEY**

Yes.

**DAVE BAST**

That the Lord will not forsake us.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Indeed. The Bible knows this fact of life. The Bible knows that we need reassurance now and then as we face those changes. Darrell, maybe you can read a few words for us from the book of Hebrews, the final chapter of Hebrews, Chapter 13.

**DARRELL DELANEY**

It says: <sup>5b</sup> “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” <sup>6</sup>So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” <sup>7</sup>Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup>Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

Such a great promise, you know, Dave and Darrell. We would like to be able to say that about the significant people in our lives, that they are the same yesterday, today, and forever; but unfortunately, people aren't God...they aren't Jesus. People can let us down, or you know, age diminishes them. That is also one of the changes. So, if it is constancy we are looking for, we have to look to Christ.

**DAVE BAST**

Yes, and maybe about this time, if you are a regular church goer who is listening to this, you might be thinking of that classic old hymn: *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. God changeth not; his compassions they fail not; as thou hast been thou forever shalt be; great is thy faithfulness. That is the one thing I think that we can all hang onto, whatever transitions we may be experiencing, or whatever may lie ahead in our lives.

**DARRELL DELANEY**

What has been encouraging to me as you talk about that, Dave, is to understand that change is definitely something that will be inevitable, but one thing that isn't changing is our God. So, we can always rely on him and we are reminded that he will be there in the midst of constant changes, and so that can kind of calm us down; and when I feel nervous about these things, it calms me down to know that our God is with us.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

You know, in the history of theology this was often called the immutability of God...

**DARRELL DELANEY**

Yes.

**SCOTT HOEZEE**

And some people criticized it as being sort of an import from Greek religion and Greek world views and philosophy, and some fretted for a while that, well, if God cannot change, then can God really feel? Can God really love? Did God experience anything when, for instance, Jesus died on the cross? Well, we don't mean that God is just above it all in the sense of being uncaring or aloof; but we mean the core characteristics of

God...his love and compassion...right; they don't change. And in fact, the hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness* ...some of our listeners probably know that comes from one of the darkest books in the Bible. Lamentations 3:

<sup>22</sup>Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup>They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him."

And you know, Darrell and Dave, the fact that that great line comes from a book of lament...I think that speaks a lot about how God is with us through difficult times in our lives.

### **DARRELL DELANEY**

Exactly; I was thinking about this, Scott, because in the pit of what could be a devastating moment, the character of God shines through; and it is actually the rope that helps to pull us out of the depression and pull us out of those difficult and tragic moments is the fact that we hold onto God's character to pull us out, to help us cope through these difficult situations; and the fact that Christ can be with us in those situations should give us hope.

### **DAVE BAST**

Yes; that is a great point, Darrell. It is his character that is the bedrock. Those attributes, Scott, that you mentioned a moment ago...they are always the same...but we also can remember that his purposes don't change. His intentions, what he is about; and what he is about is saving us, first of all, as individuals, but that is not enough; he is saving our whole world—he is saving the creation.

### **DARRELL DELANEY**

Yes.

### **DAVE BAST**

He is about creating a just society. He is about building the Church, which is supposed to demonstrate his purposes to the world so that all would be drawn to him; and that ongoing, constant mission of God in the world...which is a great phrase; I love that. I think it was Chris Wright who wrote a book with that title: *The Mission of God*; about the Old Testament. We see it there; we see it through the New Testament. So, we need to get onboard with that, too.

### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Dave, in the past here on *Groundwork*, we talked about the Gospel of Matthew and how Matthew has a theme. In Matthew, the theme of the whole book...the whole gospel...is Immanuel...God with us. It starts with Joseph having that dream, and God tells him that, yes, the human baby Mary will have is going to be named Jesus, but his real name is Immanuel, the with-us God. That is Matthew 1; flash-forward to the last chapter and the last verse, Matthew 28, the great commission. Jesus says: <sup>20b</sup> "Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age." So, the idea that God with us, but also Dave, when you talk about God's purposes, the idea of God *for* us, right? That doesn't change, even though our lives are constantly changing, God goes with us through those changes, and is faithful to us every day.

Well, in just a moment, we are going to wrap up this special *Groundwork* program with a few final reflections. So, stay tuned.

*Segment 3*

### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

I am Scott Hoezee, with Dave Bast and Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, where we have been talking about a recurring theme we see in scripture that God's ministry remains even when the people doing the ministry change; and so, even as we say thank you and good bye to Dave Bast, and welcome Darrell Delaney, we can be confident that God will be faithful, and that the ministry of *Groundwork* will continue in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, as we close out this program, which marks an ending—but Darrell, with you and me, it marks a new beginning—we want to give thanks for the past and offer a vision for the future. So, just let me say right

now, Dave, that we want to thank you for the vision you talked about earlier in the program; but we want to thank you for the vision that you and the late Bob Heerspink had for *Groundwork* when you created this program some years ago. We thank you for your wisdom, your deep knowledge of scripture, your ability off the top of your head to recall an astonishing amount of quotes—quotes that always nailed the point that we were making when we recorded those shows. On a personal note, it has been a pleasure Dave. I think you and I have recorded about 350 or so programs together, which is astonishing to me when I think about it, but it has been a pleasure working with you; and again, our thanks to you.

### **DAVE BAST**

Well, thank you...thank you for those kind words, Scott, and thank you, Darrell, for agreeing to join the team. I am excited about where *Groundwork* can go. It has been astonishing to me, in a way, to see the growth that we have had. It is maybe not apparent to very many people because so much of it is caught up in the web and statistics and things like that. You know, I am a little uncomfortable about even doing this, about drawing too much attention to myself. I don't want to be compared to Elijah or Elisha. I think we need a disclaimer there. We already put that in; and I certainly don't want to be compared to the Apostle Paul, but I love...there is a little detail...I have probably mentioned this before on a previous program...I love the way the book of Acts ends; and it ends with Paul in prison in Rome, or at least under house arrest...

### **DARRELL DELANEY**

House arrest, yes.

### **DAVE BAST**

And the last verse of the book of Acts says that (verses 30, 31) he continued there for two years at his own expense, preaching and teaching Jesus and the kingdom with all boldness and without hinderance. Literally the last words in Acts [are] *without hinderance*. I think there is a reason why Luke doesn't tell us what happened to Paul...why he just leaves him there. That is the last we see of Paul, and the reason is, it is not about Paul. It is about the Word of God that continues to go out boldly and without hindrance. You cannot chain God's Word. You can chain the Apostle, but you cannot chain the message...the Gospel; and that is what is going to happen with *Groundwork*. Ministers come and go. That is fine, but welcome the new generation because the Word is going to go on and the work is going to go on and the Gospel is going to go out.

### **DARRELL DELANEY**

Amen.

### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

I remember, Dave, when we did a series on the book of Acts a while back, and we said, you know, you get to that last verse in Acts and you turn to page expecting there to be another chapter, and it is done! And so, you say: Well, come on! What happened next? Well, Luke is saying to us: You know what happened next. The Spirit rolled on...

### **DAVE BAST**

Yes.

### **SCOTT HOEZEE**

And it still rolling on; and Darrell, you and I are going to roll on together; and you know, just sort of remind our listeners *Groundwork* isn't going to change. We are going to dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. It is a Bible study program. You and I are going to have conversations like we are sitting around the kitchen table and just talking about theology; and Darrell, maybe just say a few things as we close out the program of things again you are looking forward to, or why studying scripture and talking about it and having conversations with someone like me...why that kind of entuses you and made you interested in the program.

## **DARRELL DELANEY**

Well, Scott, I just want to say what is important to me is that I am passionate about discipleship. If someone comes up to me and says: Hey, I would like to grow in my walk with Jesus, but I don't know how. I am so excited to hear that; and what I am excited about with *Groundwork* is that that is exactly what we are doing. We are helping to fan the flame of peoples' hearts. We are helping to allow them to grow deeper in their walk with Jesus, and we just happen to be conversing about scripture to help people do that; and that is one of the reasons why I said yes to being co-host with you, friend.

## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

Indeed, that is exactly what we want. We want to lay that foundation for our lives, but then we want to help people build on that foundation as disciples, and as they grow, and as you and I have gotten to know each other a little bit, Darrell, and we are going to get to know each other a lot better, we both said that we are kind of theology geeks. We love the Bible...

## **DARRELL DELANEY**

That's true.

## **SCOTT HOEZEE**

We love talking about it. We love digging into it and finding these interesting little nuggets; and of course, *Groundwork* is supported by a wonderful staff with ReFrame Ministries; and we provide Bible study materials. There are transcripts of our programs now. There is a wealth of resources out there, and Darrell, you and I are the lucky ones to be on air to let all of that good content go out into the world and build people as disciples. But as we close, Dave, we will give you a parting word and blessing.

## **DAVE BAST**

Well, you know, at the bottom of his musical scores, Johann Sebastian Bach would write the letters: S.D.G., which stood for *solī deo gloria*...to God alone be the glory; and I cannot think of a better verse than the opening verse of Psalm 115: Not unto us...not unto us, O Lord, but your name be the praise...now and forever may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you, my brothers, and with all of you.

## **DARRELL DELANEY**

Amen, amen; and thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. Connect with us at [groundworkonline.com](https://groundworkonline.com) to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

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