



GOSPEL *for* LIFE

Faithfully Present with Adam Ramsey **Season 5, Episode 1 Transcript**

[00:00:01.020] - Announcer

Welcome to the Gospel for Life Podcast. We help churches make disciples. Now, here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:09.140] - Darryl Dash

Welcome back to the Gospel for Life Podcast.

I had a really strange experience last week. I was visiting a place, and we were there together, my wife and I. At the end of the week, I felt myself feeling sad to leave. The strange thing is I didn't even care about the place. I was looking forward to being home. Yet, as I was leaving and I remember going up the stairs and I felt a sense of regret that my time there was over. Even though I was actually glad to be headed home. I didn't want to stay, but I didn't want to leave either. I've had this before.

We seem to be in a funny relationship with our limitations. We want to be everywhere all the time, and it's hard to leave one place and to be another place. We can't transcend our limitations, but we want to. We have a really hard time being present in a particular place at a particular time. We have a hard time being faithfully present.

That's why I am so glad that Adam Ramsey has written a book called *Faithfully Present: Embracing the Limits of Where and When God has You*.

[00:01:25.360] - Darryl Dash

I'm a fan of Adam's writing. I know a lot of people who really appreciate his ministry and speak incredibly highly of him. This latest book helps us learn how to live each day fully and faithfully present with God in others, content in every season of life. I need to learn about that. I'm glad to talk to Adam.

Adam's also written a number of other books, including a book called *Truth on Fire: Gazing at God Until Your Heart Sings*. Adam leads Liberti Church on the Gold Coast of Australia, and he also serves as the network director for Acts 29, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. He loves Jesus, is serious about joy, and is married to Christina, has five kids, loves reading old books, exploring new places, preaching good

news, equipping church planters, and he loves a sound of laughter over a good meal. Adam, so glad to have you on the podcast today.

[00:02:25.160] - Adam Ramsey

It is so great to be with you, Darryl. Thanks for having me.

[00:02:28.440] - Darryl Dash

Ma'am, my first question is, you live on the Gold Coast of Australia. I've seen pictures there. Why does God love you more than he loves me?

[00:02:36.310] - Adam Ramsey

Oh, man, that's not fair. You shouldn't have Googled that. That's not going to help with the contentment and the faithful presence that we're about to talk about.

[00:02:44.290] - Darryl Dash

It is such a beautiful place. It is.

[00:02:48.340] - Adam Ramsey

Stunningly beautiful in our part of the world. Listen, I think some of us are just going to get more of our reward here in this life. There might be just elements of the new creation that I'm going to have to slog it out in glory somehow because it's pretty nice here. Wow, that's great. But we love the Gold Coast. This is home. It's a beautiful city. For those listening in from the Northern Hemisphere, think South Beach Miami meets San Diego, but without any good Mexican food, that's our city, the Gold Coast. Google it.

[00:03:24.940] - Darryl Dash

You've suffered in North America, too. You lived in colder climate, Seattle, Denver for a while too? Is that right?

[00:03:31.650] - Adam Ramsey

Yeah, we did about... I lived for about 10 years in the US, and so a lot of that in Denver did most of middle school and high school in Denver, Colorado. Our family moved there in the 90s and helped. I didn't help anything. I was a kid, but I was there and we were part of planting a church. Then I was there a second time helping in that church plant team, and then a third time up in Seattle. I actually prefer, and this is just the discontented heart, right? I prefer cold weather, mountains, altitude, and I live by the beach, and the heart just always seems to want where it isn't and what it doesn't have.

[00:04:12.400] - Darryl Dash

Well, mountains are beautiful, I've got to admit. But yeah, and the temperature is so cold here. I would gladly take the beach right now. Well, Adam, I would love to talk to you about a lot of things, church

planting, your previous book. But I want to zero in on the book that you just wrote because I think it really has a, I mean, no pun intended, a timely message for us today. Most authors tend to write books on topics that maybe they struggle with or they're wrestling with. What was it that led you to start thinking about the idea of being faithfully present?

[00:04:45.180] - Adam Ramsey

It was two things. It started with a curiosity, and then it continued with a struggle. I don't know if that can make sense at all. The curiosity was, I wanted to reflect on time and place and think biblically about these two limits of where and when that really do haunt us. They remind us about humanity. I wanted to have a biblical, devotional, even playful reflection on these two things.

As I pitched that idea to my publisher a couple of years ago, I thought this is going to be a fun project. Then shortly after that, my wife had a really significant injury, vaccine injury to the Pfizer vaccine. Still to this day, is incredibly sick. It's been a long two years for her and for us just walking out what that pathway looks like with no real, barring a miracle, no real known cure, just hopefulness from all the different kinds of doctors that she has been seeing the last couple of years. We've been living in this season of life that's been an incredibly difficult season. That was the season for me where the book was being written through. Over and over, as I was writing about time and I was writing about place, we kept coming back to this line in one of Wendell Berry's books and one of his poems, actually.

[00:06:20.500] - Adam Ramsey

Wendell Berry said, "We live the given life, not the planned." It really is a line that circles back to Paul's whole idea of contentment in Philippians 4. I've learned the secret of contentment. We live the given life. I know how to abound and I know how to be brought low. We live the given life, not necessarily the planned life. We all have an idea in our minds of how we think life should go, and then real life happens. It's often very different to the way we think life should go. As I was writing on time and place, Darryl, I kept coming back to the answer in each chapter was, faithful presence. Faithful presence. Learning to trust God where I am and when I am, and that is a good life.

[00:07:08.270] - Darryl Dash

Man, it's hard to go through a period of suffering like that, and yet it's amazing what God teaches us in the middle of that suffering.

[00:07:15.250] - Adam Ramsey

Amen.

[00:07:16.230] - Darryl Dash

I wanted to ask you, in the book you talk about how this temptation goes right back to the garden. It's not a new temptation. We want to transcend our limits. Zach Swine talks about that so well in his book, *The Imperfect Pastor*. I think every pastor, if there's a pastor listening who hasn't read that book, that is a book that is certainly one of the must-reads. Absolutely. There's something unique about our day.

I want to tee it up by talking about I was visiting a place in Northern Ontario, and I was in a home. The person in the home there said, This is where I live. Two doors down is where I was born. Basically, it turned out they'd never moved off that street. Their whole life had been on that little street in this little community. It got me thinking, actually, for a lot of years, that was the way people lived in one community. We don't live that way anymore. There's part of us that I can hop on a plane and be to you in hardly any time at all. Do you think there's something unique about our age that actually makes it harder for us to be content being in one place and one time?

[00:08:30.210] - Darryl Dash

Or is this just Garden of Eden, common to every age, not any different now?

[00:08:36.880] - Adam Ramsey

I think there is absolutely something unique about the age that we live in. The human heart is still the same, and we still have that in common with the Garden of Eden and that desire to transcend our humanity that broke the world in Genesis 3, the desire to not simply trust God under God, but to come alongside God and be like God, that was the original lie. What we have now, Darryl, is just better technology to dilute us into a sense of God-likeness, omnipresence, even global mobility, like you said there. Technology, mobility, great gifts. I'm going to be getting on a plane this week to the US and catching up with friends from all over the world then. I'm thankful for where we are, but also we need to be realistic about the reality of we have never had better tools to pretend like we are more than what we actually are, to play at on-many presence through our phones, in our pockets, through our global mobility, being able to get on a plane. Really, what we're trying to do is when our hearts are restless, and that's the common thread throughout humanity, when our hearts are restless with our present where, of place or our present when of time or season or whatever there, what we try to do often is rid ourselves of our humanity.

[00:10:13.720] - Adam Ramsey

We try to transcend it. When we try to transcend our humanity, we actually ruin ourselves for the present time and place that we're living in right now. We're actually trying to push away the very thing that Jesus took on Himself, which was humanity. We think of John 1:14, The word became flesh and dwelt among us. The book really is trying to speak into, Hey, your humanity is not something to be rid of. It's not an obstacle to overcome. It is what Jesus gladly took on and embraced, clothing the divine with human flesh. When we learn to embrace the limits that come with our humanity, I think that's when we find the longevity, the joy, the contentment that says, I'm not God, and that's a good thing that leads to a fruitfulness in our lives. That's where that faithful presence concept is looking to speak into.

[00:11:17.350] - Darryl Dash

I was reading your book, and it really seemed like you were tapping into the issues that we all struggle with. For instance, with time. I think everybody I talk to is feeling pressed for time and feeling like there's not enough time. In the book, you make the argument we don't need more time. That's not the issue at all. We need to basically embrace the limits of our time and live faithfully within it. Then you talk about something that I'm really struggling with. We have adult kids, and we're at the stage where we realize,

Man, all the mistakes we made, all the regrets we have. Then also, I'm 56, and it's a weird stage where you're beginning to count down instead of counting up. You talk about that whole sense of like, Man, it's easy to wish for an earlier season. So talk to us about some of those things, our struggle with time, both in terms of not having enough of it, maybe regretting stuff from the past, or wishing we could hit the rewind button, not being content with the season that we're in, how can we learn to be faithfully present with the time that we have and not live in the past or the future or in regret?

[00:12:26.670] - Adam Ramsey

Absolutely. There's so many big concepts that you just spoke to there. I think every one of us, we feel the sense of time reminding us how not in charge we are as we move through it or as it flows past us, whichever argument you want to make of how time works in this reality of things. But whatever it is, it's we're not in charge of it. The clock is going to tick on, the years are going to tick on. That's where we need to have a Biblical worldview when it comes to our time. We need to remember first and foremost, when we're feeling frustrated with time, when we're feeling that sense of, Man, I wish I was in a time that I'm not. This is what every kid has, right? Every kid is like, Oh, I wish I was a teenager. Every teenager is like, I wish I was an adult, a grown-up. I wish I was 21. I wish I had more freedom, more independence. Then everyone in their 20s, Oh, I wish I had my parents' money and stability and vocational, whatever. Then 30s and 40s, we're like, Man, I wish I was a kid.

[00:13:33.050] - Adam Ramsey

On and on we go through life wishing we were in a time that we weren't. I think the first thing we need to remember is that our time belongs to God. I love the way the Psalmist puts it in Psalm 31. The Psalmist writes, "But I trust in you, O Lord. I say, 'You are my God. My times are in your hand.'" I think if we're going to have that same confession in our own lives, and that was Psalm 31, 14 and 15 for those listening, if we're going to have that same confession in our lives, we need to begin with the acknowledgment of our time belongs to God. He is the King of Ages, as Paul writes to Timothy, and our times are in his hands. That means he has numbered our days, and we need to learn to do the same. He has given us a birthday. He has numbered our days before there were yet any. That means he has given us a death day. We know the first, we don't know the second. It's a good thing we don't know the second. It's where we learn to trust. When I'm feeling frustrated by time or the season of time that I'm in, I need to preach the gospel to my heart of who's on the throne over time, who is in charge of my time, who does my time belong to?

[00:14:52.470] - Adam Ramsey

My time belongs to Jesus. He's the one who has numbered those days. Then when I think of Jesus, I think, Oh, yes, there I see the fullness of the image of God revealed to us in the Son, and I know I can trust Jesus as the King of the Ages. He's good. He's sovereign. He's patient. Jesus throughout the Gospels, not once was he in a hurry. He existed in time fruitfully and faithfully present to what was happening around him at any given moment in time. I think we have a model in Jesus as well. We had this reminder of God's on the throne. We have a model in Jesus. I try to think of being unhurried through our lives there. But then when we hit these seasons and you talked about regret just then, Darryl, we need to be able to go back in time well. I've got a whole chapter in the book about memories. Memories is

a way that I would say, past times break into the present. That can be really beautiful or really difficult. It's beautiful when we have positive memories and we think back to special moments or special places or some of the high points along the way, and we reflect.

[00:16:09.200] - Adam Ramsey

As followers of Jesus, we give thanks to God for such moments, and it's wonderful. But the danger can be we want to live in those past times. We want to go back to the good old days of the nostalgia in our minds rather than living in the present days of whatever they are. But then there's also past times where we really do feel a sense of, Man, I wish I did that different. I wish I had given more attention to these things. And usually, here's what it is, it's usually not vocational ambitions. It's usually people. In fact, I think I would argue it's almost always people. I wish I had been more attentive to my kids. I wish I'd been more present to my wife, to my friend who I don't see very much anymore. I wish I had. And that's where we can go back into some of those past times there, and it can haunt us a little. Again, the way that we preach the gospel to our hearts when it comes to a sense of mislived time or misremembered time when it comes to nostalgia, is we need to take our regrets further back than just that moment in time and bring them all the way back 2,000 years ago to the cross.

[00:17:27.000] - Adam Ramsey

Remember that Jesus died for not only our sins, but the shame of our sins and even the shame of mislived time and life. That was all included in his work for us at the cross. Then for our desires for fullness of life, we go not back in time, we go forward in time. We remember that there is still a not yet. We've only tasted in the already, we've only tasted the entree, the hors d'oeuvres of the fullness of life in God. We have the fullness of that life yet to come as the Kingdom of God breaks into this world, as the new creation becomes a new permanent reality. The other thing I tried to do through the book, Darryl, was to write with a view of the hope we have in the resurrection. All these frustrations we have in time, remember, there's coming a day where time, as we know it, is going to be unlimited, un punctuated by death forever. Places we know it is going to become uncursed, and the world as we see its most beautiful forms is going to be liberated to be what it truly is and desires to be as the curse is lifted.

[00:18:38.210] - Adam Ramsey

That day is still in our future. We answer the frustrations of time with God on the throne, with going back to the cross, and with the future resurrection that we and the world we know will one day walk in together.

[00:18:53.670] - Darryl Dash

Man, that was worth the whole podcast right there. Your answer there was amazing. Thank you for reaching the gospel.

[00:18:59.900] - Adam Ramsey

I started preaching a little bit there. Sorry, I'm a preacher.

[00:19:02.320] - Darryl Dash

I can get preach sometimes. No, it's amazing, man. Yeah, keep going. That's amazing. You know, your book, I don't know if you read Ray Dalio's *Principles*, but in there, he talks about the size of the universe. He really shows us how minuscule we are in the universe, which is the second part of your book, which is we're small. We occupy a very small place in the universe. Then he also has this... He does the same thing you do in terms of time. When you consider the billions of years, he would say that, I'm not going to debate the age of the Earth or whatever, but he would just say, Billions of years, we would understand. In the light of eternity, man, we occupy just a minuscule... Our lives are just this minuscule part. For him and for you, in your book, you say it's actually very humbling. You point out that our lives are very small that will soon be forgotten. It won't be very long before our descendants will have no idea who we are. Yet you argue, This is actually very good news for us. Why is it good news?

[00:20:03.050] - Adam Ramsey

It's good news because, again, it helps us embrace our humanity that we're not the center of the world, and that's a burden that we can't carry. When we try to live functionally as if we are the center of the world, and let's even make that smaller. Even when we try to become the center of our own story within the world, it's still too heavy of a weight to bear because we're not the center of the story. We're not the narrator. We don't have that power over our own hearts, let alone the time and place and how that all interacts within the life that we have. I think we've got a tendency in our egos to think we're a bigger deal than what we are. We all do it. That's why, right at the beginning of the book, I have a little section in there. I think it's called something like, You're not a big deal and you're going to die soon. Just super encouraging, right out of the gate, and just trying to help us see like, Hey, you're loved. Absolutely, you're loved. You're valuable. You're made in the image of God. Absolutely. But on the scale of human history and some of the players in that scale, we don't know most of their names.

[00:21:22.310] - Adam Ramsey

We know a handful of key players that shaped the world as we know it. Let's be honest, it's probably not going to be us. And that's okay because we have a life to live that's a good life that glorifies God, whether anyone remembers us around us or not. Again, when our ego perks up and goes, Hey, don't say that. Don't say I'm not a big deal. Don't say I'm going to die soon. Don't say I'm going to be unremembered. It's like, Well, okay, my immediate challenge to you is name all of your great grandparents, full names. Just full names. Just first name, middle name, last name. The truth is, I don't think many of us could do that without going on ancestry.com, family trees. That's just a couple of generations up, let alone the grand scheme of history. We're so much smaller than we think, and embracing that is such a liberating key to going, Oh, okay. The gospel means that the center of the story is Jesus and not me. Okay, so now I'm actually free from the burden of having to prove that I'm awesome. Now I'm free from having to be impressive.

[00:22:38.830] - Adam Ramsey

Now, the goal of my life is to look at Jesus who is awesome and who is impressive. I'm not awesome. I'm loved, and that's awesome. That's one of the little mantras that we have around our family. Hey, you're not awesome. You're loved, and that's awesome. Jesus is awesome. You are loved. We are loved. That's

actually what we most want, is not to be this big, famous, well-remembered whatever, but to be known, to be loved, to belong, to have a sense of home and acceptance. That's what really the human heart longs to find peace in. When we first find that in God as he is, and we find that in his work for us in Jesus Christ, and we remember that what we have in front of us, the life we have, he has ordained glory and goodness in that life regardless of the journey and the shape that it takes. It actually just frees us to start paying attention to the life we have.

[00:23:48.420] - Darryl Dash

I want to ask you, and this has all been practical, I love it, but I want to ask you some personal questions about what are some practices that you found or you found helpful in your own life in terms of cultivating this faithful presence in how you live as a pastor, as a father in your neighborhood, that thing?

[00:24:09.830] - Adam Ramsey

Yeah. For me, there's a couple I do, and I think it depends on the person that you are. These practices, I think, will be helpful to people that are maybe high productivity types of people. I like to work. I like to get things done. I don't think faithful presence means we become lazy and we sit on our hands and are fruitless by no means. But people like me, if you're the person who's like, Okay, I want to accomplish things. I have dreams, I have goals, I have a desire and a vision I want to walk into. We need to make war on urgency and hurry. I think the best way that we can do that, and that I try to do that, is by weaving in pauses in my life. There's a chapter in the book about pauses around what it looks like to work and to do from a place of rest and abiding, and letting it come out of the space of a rested heart in God? There's a few different ways we can do that, but I think this is in the fast-paced world we live in, in the hyper-connected world that we live in.

[00:25:26.000] - Adam Ramsey

I don't know if I know anyone right now who is too rested. I think everyone's tired, everyone's feeling it, everyone's pinched at some level of life there. Again, another line that Wendell Berry said, that's just a powerful line. He said, It's easy to imagine that the next great division of the world will be between people who wish to live as creatures and people who wish to live as machines. That's such a profound insight to the way our digital age is trending. Will we live as creatures and creatures sleep, creatures nap, creatures eat, creatures rest, creatures are not machine-like in that they can just keep going and going and going and going and going and going without stopping. You asked practically. A couple of things I do that help me slow down. One is I weave into my day, and this is just a little thing. It's a microhabit that I think leads to bigger fruit, is I'll just have a little reminder come up in my phone three times a day, and it just says Selah, S-E-L-A-H, Selah, Selah, however you want to pronounce it. That little Hebrew word that's in the Psalms over and over that just basically means pause and reflect.

[00:26:42.440] - Adam Ramsey

I weave in Selah moments through my day, each day, and just at the end of the morning, at the end of the work day, before I go to bed, it'll pop up on my phone. I don't pay attention to it every time. Oftentimes, I'll forget, ignore it, whatever. But it's there to remind me, Stop what you're doing. Pause, reflect, and give thanks. What it does is it helps me to worship my way through the day. Instead of just produce, to pause,

reflect, to confess sin. God, help me. I'm so sorry. To confess need. Lord, I need wisdom right now. I was just running on my own steam there in my own cleverness. Help me to be attentive to your Spirit. Pause, request, seek God, and even just commune. Lord, thank you. Thank you for what you're doing today. Thank you for this morning. Thank you for... I'll try and think of just a little evidence of grace where I've seen him or experienced his goodness in that. When that becomes a habit, for me at least. It changed my life from just doing my days with a sense of God and I'm belonging to him to now me communing with God through my days.

[00:28:00.490] - Adam Ramsey

If I'm doing sermon prep, I'm not writing a sermon just by itself. I'm communing with God as I write that sermon. If I've got a day full of people catch-ups and meetings as a pastor, then I'm going through those things, but I have more of an awareness of God with me in those moments, and I'm communing with him, and I'm seeking to listen to, Okay, what is the Spirit laying on my heart for this person? How might I encourage them? How might I point them to Jesus? How might I put some wind in their sails? Those little sailor moments, they really have been helpful for me of just slowing down, pausing, and reflecting. Another practice is what I believe all Christians should give themselves to rigorously is that of Sabbath rest and carving out a 24-hour period in the week where the point is not to produce, but to simply receive, and to worship, and to play, and to pray, and to enjoy the life you have. I think we can sometimes treat the Sabbath as a duty that, Oh, you have to. God required it. You have to. We forget that the way Jesus speaks of the Sabbath is this is a gift to you.

[00:29:16.770] - Adam Ramsey

This is God's gift to you for your flourishing that actually reminds you of your humanity that you can't just keep going and going and going. For me, that's typically, unless I'm traveling, but that's typically a Thursday night to a Friday night is where I'll Sabbath. During that time there, the point is to stop all work, to rest, to play, to pray, to eat really good food and just enjoy the life I have to enjoy my family, enjoy my wife and my kids. Even on that day, here's what I'll do. If I'm driving somewhere, I'll do little things that help me slow down, like, I will drive in the slow lane on the highway, which is, I'm not going to lie, it's painful, but I'll do it because it's a physical way of helping me remember you don't have to go fast. You can go slow and it's going to be okay. That's just a little Sabbath rhythm. I will drive slow and just enjoy the life I have. Then another one that's more of a bigger rhythm just briefly is strategic withdrawals. I always have to do with pauses. So, say, our moments, they're daily.

[00:30:34.080] - Adam Ramsey

Sabbath, that's weekly. Then I'll have strategic withdrawals where a few times through the year, I'll practice the disciplines of solitude, of silence, of prayer, and I'll get away for maybe a night or two or three, depending on what part of the year it is, and just be alone with God. I do the same for my wife. We have throughout the year, we'll send her away, and I'll go into just single-dad mode with our five kids, and we'll eat really bad food and pray that everyone survives until mom gets home. But I'll send her away as well with the same goal of just go and be alone with the Lord because that is what our starved souls so often need, is extended, unhurried time to simply be with God and to receive the life He's given us. That can look different in different seasons of life. I know when you have young kids, newborns, it's different to

when you have... Our kids are all teenagers now down to eight-year-olds. It depends on the season of life what you can do. But I think the principle is work out ways that you can build in rhythms of rest and pausing to combat the spirit of the age, which is keep producing, keep running, live distracted, be where you're not.

[00:31:58.570] - Adam Ramsey

Be everywhere through your phone other than where your feet presently are. We got to find the ways to combat that because it is going bad at the cultural level for those that don't know how to rest.

[00:32:15.720] - Darryl Dash

Corporately, what you've been talking about, I think, would produce a different pastor. Hopefully, the pastor who's living that way would begin to infect in a healthy way to congregation. But as you're leading a church, what are some ways that we can help our people, help the church to live as faithfully present people, as a faithfully present church, even?

[00:32:38.980] - Adam Ramsey

Well, it's nothing spectacular. It's the ordinary rhythms of grace that God has woven. Honestly, Darryl, God has woven so much joy for our lives into the ordinary bits of life.

I'm thankful for the mountaintop moments. Listen, I'm a reformed, charismatic, so I have a category for huge emotional, supernatural times with the Lord. I'm there. Amen. They're wonderful moments in life, but they're moments. We don't live on the mountaintop. We live down in reality. While we should absolutely pray for and enjoy such mountaintop experiences with God, we need to, as pastors, we need to teach our people of the glory of the ordinary, the glory of plodding, the joy of simply being attentive to the life, the relationships, the geographic spaces that we inhabit, and to go, What does it look like to glorify God here in this space?

I'm trying to help people in our church see all the time that real life isn't out there. Out there with that guy or girl who's not your husband or wife, out there in that country or that beautiful scenery that you saw on Instagram that's not your home. Out there in that vocation, that season of life, that financial level, that that's man, that's when I would be satisfied and to help them see that real life is right here.

[00:34:21.840] - Adam Ramsey

It doesn't mean you can't pray. It doesn't mean you can't change jobs. It doesn't mean you can't move to a new city by all means. But if you do, you have to remember you will still be you in that new place, in that new job, in that new whatever. You will still have to navigate the restlessness of your own heart, seeking to fill an infinite void within of what will satisfy me with finite things that will never fill it up because God alone is what will satisfy us at that existential level. Here's the irony. When we believe that, we can actually now live anywhere and in any when because God is with me. If there was one truth that I am trying to press into the hearts of our people at Liberti Church on the Gold Coast, I want them to be convinced more than anything else in the world that in light of the gospel, in light of what Jesus has done

through his life, death, and resurrection for us, in light of His promises, He is now the abiding, unchanging, forever reality that you inhabit. God is with you. Just that union with Christ, He's with you.

[00:35:42.980] - Adam Ramsey

You are in Him. In this time, this time that you hate right now, He's with you in that. He's with you in the green pastures and beside, still waters. He's with you in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He's with you in both. That's actually the way that we live, unafraid of the future and satisfied in the present is by communing with the God who is near, the God who is not distant, the God who promised, I will be with you always, even to the end of age. Even think about that, like time itself, when time finishes as we understand it and the new creation breaks in the end of age. Jesus says, I will be with you. We know his promises include, And then forever beyond that, I am with you. It's what we long for. It's the answer to so much of our restlessness. It's the answer to so many of our fears, all of our fears. I've read something that Charles de Foucauld said once. He was a Jesuit priest who was martyr in Northern Africa at the beginning of the 20th century. He said, In light of all that, that God's with us.

[00:36:56.060] - Adam Ramsey

He said, The one thing that we owe absolutely to God is never to be afraid of anything. The only way we can actually do that is to know God himself is with me. That's what frees me to now be fully attentive and alive to the time and place I live in.

[00:37:16.000] - Darryl Dash

I hope that this conversation is giving listeners a sense of the book. I was encouraged by reading the book. I've been also encouraged by hearing you talk tonight. It feels like you're speaking right to our hearts. I really appreciate this. Adam, I want to ask you a couple of personal questions. I try to ask this of every podcast guest. Not so much to do with the book, but more just your life lately. Two questions for you. First, what has God been teaching you lately?

[00:37:47.170] - Adam Ramsey

Good question. What has He been teaching me lately? I'm continuing to learn the lesson that we've been talking about here. I'm by no means, yoga level or having graduated from the School of Faithful Presence, I am learning it, each day still, of my own life, to live the given life, not the planned, and to be attentive to the life I have, not the life that I think I should have. I'm still learning that. But what has he been teaching me lately? I have been struck lately. We've been studying as a church through the Book of Revelation, which was a very trepidatious adventure to begin with. Oh, my goodness. What's this going to be like? The probably the most divisive book of the Bible. And yet also one of the most, just to be clear, I think one of the most encouraging books of the Bible, when you see that over and over and over again, this reminder of God is on the throne. There is a throne at the center of the universe. For me, I've just been sitting in that space. We're up to Revelation 14 this coming Sunday. For the last few months now, it's been just staring in the text and teaching this to our church of God is on his throne.

[00:39:07.400] - Adam Ramsey

Through all the drama, through all the crazy, through all the things breaking into this world right now that we hate and that we long to see ended, he is on the throne. That's where I can find rest, is in the fact that I don't have to be on the throne. He is on the throne. That's been a big one for me, Darryl, thinking through that and then teaching that both to my own heart before I then teach it to our church. What else has God been teaching me? I think he's been teaching me as well that I still have a long way to go when it comes to the attentiveness that I want to have as a friend and as a dad, in particular, to the people around me. My wife and I got a wonderful relationship. We're very, very close. But I think I've been struck there in the realm of being attentive as dad through the teenage years. It struck me just recently of just how short this season actually is. You shared at the start of the podcast there, Your kids are grown now, and our eldest daughter is 15. We got to sit down last night and we had some long chats about everything from technology to some of this faithful presence stuff.

[00:40:34.610] - Adam Ramsey

We watched that. I don't know if you remember the Netflix documentary, The Social Dilemma, just looking at the way that technology is the attention economy. Just having some conversations with her and going, I'm still not where I want to be yet when it comes to the engaged, attentive, shepherding of our kid's hearts. It's there, but I want to be more faithful in that space. That's, I think, a prayer point for me of I want to grow as an attentive dad to my own kids and then to my friends and to people that I just enjoy in life. I'm an introvert. I'm happy in this room surrounded by books, and solitude is an easy space for me. I want to be a better friend to the friends that God has given me. That's another space that God's been teaching me. When I look at the friendship of Jesus to me, what would it look like for me to be more of that friend to my friends? That's my two areas of growth that I think God's still working on me in. That's good.

[00:41:43.240] - Darryl Dash

That's really good. What's been encouraging you lately? You mentioned Revelation. Maybe that's your answer. But yeah, what's been encouraging you lately? What has.

[00:41:52.000] - Adam Ramsey

Been encouraging me lately? You know what? We have had so many so many wild twists and turns these last few years globally, with everything from the pandemic, from lockdowns to wars, you had this real sense of instability in the world. I am so encouraged right now at the ways in which God is working through the instability of our times to draw people to himself with a sense of, There is only one location of permanence in all the universe, and it's me. That's what the Lord is saying to us through these things. Even in some family members that I love very much, and I've been praying for for a very long time, I've been really encouraged. Even just seeing in one of my brothers in particular, my physical brothers, family brothers, blood brothers, sorry, Christian lingo. Is that my brother in Christ? Like, my actual brother is what I'm trying to say. One of my brothers there, just a hunger to know God as he is, and that hasn't been there for decades. Some of the conversations that we've been able to have, and he's been coming along to church every week through this revelation series that hasn't attended to church in again, maybe a decade and a half, and sitting around our fire pit the other day and talking about Jesus for a couple of hours and watching the Lord doing his work in his heart and drawing him.

[00:43:33.410] - Adam Ramsey

Man, I've been... And so much of that has been from him saying like, Man, this world really is broken. This is a messed up world. There is actual evil that exists in this world. If there's actual evil, then the opposite is true. There is actual good and beautiful and glory. It came from just beholding how evil the world is. He's like, Man, there has to be a God. There has to be. Because there's no way that there can't be a Satan at work in this world right now. Through that and some just, again, prayer and conversations, I'm so encouraged. That'd be a big one for me right now is watching the Lord work in his life and in others like him who are part of our church going, Man, I want to know Jesus because this world is messed up and he seems amazing. We're like, That's the gist of the gospel right there. The world is messed up. We did it. He's amazing. He loves us. Let's go.

[00:44:31.460] - Darryl Dash

It's been amazing to see. I just left a church plant after 10 years and to see the number of people coming in just because their lives are hurting. They come in and God meets them in the middle of that pain and is doing an amazing work. God's up to something in this crazy world right now.

[00:44:49.530] - Adam Ramsey

Yeah, we don't like that pain, but he sure does get our attention through it.

[00:44:52.830] - Darryl Dash

Doesn't he? Does he ever? Yeah, does he ever. How can people find out more about you and not just this book, but your previous books as well?

[00:45:02.370] - Adam Ramsey

Yeah, anywhere online. They're all on Amazon. They're all on where most Christian books are sold. You can look up my name. I'm on the different social channels. Not that active really these days as much on Twitter. Just bored with it, to be honest, Darryl. But I'm on Instagram. You can find me on Instagram and Facebook and on there and even just our podcast at Liberty Church. It's L-I-B-E-R-T-I. We're not trying to be avant-garde and just spell it cool and different. It's the Latin word that means freed people, and it's just a beautiful gospel implication there of we are in Christ, freed people. Liberti Church on the Gold Coast. I pastor the Carrara church of a family of churches that are Liberti Churches, and our podcasts are all on there.

[00:45:53.830] - Darryl Dash

Well, Adam, I really appreciate your ministry. Near the end of the book, you write:

Do not lament the shortness of your days or the changing of the seasons. Do not despair that you cannot freeze the best moments in time. Instead, press on in the power of the Holy Spirit fully and gratefully alive to the short life God has given you. Receive each day as the limited edition gift

that it is God does not promise you tomorrow, but he does promise you in Christ an everlasting life and is never failing love.

Man, I'm so grateful for your book. I hope a lot of people read it. I really appreciate how it's ministered to my soul. Thank you for being on the podcast today as well.

[00:46:29.610] - Adam Ramsey

Darryl, it has been such a joy to talk to you about all this. Thanks for having me.