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Annie: Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store as we continue our prayer series. Y'all loved Monday's episode with Pete Gregg. Me too. If you haven't heard that, go back and listen because that really sets us up for the month.

And we are going to continue today to hear from a couple of MiniBFFs throughout the whole series about some of their thoughts on prayer during each episode. So here are some thoughts about prayer from a MiniBFF that I love. And then we'll get into today's show.

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Annie: I know you already said your name one time, but will you please say your name for all of our friends listening?

Raleigh: Raleigh.

Annie: Raleigh. How old are you?

Raleigh: Seven.

Annie: Seven. Were you going to use your real voice?

Raleigh: I don't know.

Annie: Raleigh, today we're talking all about prayer. Will you tell me what does it look like when you pray?

Raleigh: I get on my knees.

Annie: Oh, do you? You get on your knees and pray? Do you do that at your house or at church or where?

Raleigh: Bedtime.

Annie: Yeah, bedtime. Who do you pray with? Or do you pray by yourself?

Raleigh: I pray with my dad and my mom.

Annie: Is Cohen in there with you too sometimes or just the three of you?

Raleigh: Just because they put him to bed first.

Annie: Oh, got it. And then they put you to bed?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Annie: What kind of stuff do you all pray for?

Raleigh: Saying thank you to God.

Annie: For what?

Raleigh: For dying on the cross I guess.

Annie: Yeah. Do you think God hears you when you pray?

Raleigh: He always does.

Annie: How do you know?

Raleigh: Because you don't have to get His attention and stand in front of you and wait.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. He just wait and He loves talking to us?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Annie: Have you ever listened for God to talk back to you when you've been praying?

Raleigh: But I hear a voice in my head sometimes.

Annie: Oh, do you? What kind of stuff do you hear?

Raleigh: "I will."

Annie: Oh, wow. Like when you're praying and you ask God for something you hear him say, "I will," back to you?

Raleigh: Sometimes I can't get on that. Pretty much all.

Annie: That's good. Why do you get on your knees to pray?

Raleigh: Respect.

Annie: Oh, really? Respect. It's a way you show God you respect Him?

Raleigh: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Annie: Oh, that's really cool. What's one thing that you want to pray for? Like every night when you're praying, what's one thing you want to say to God every night?

Raleigh: Thank you.

Annie: That's great. I think that's awesome. So for all of our friends listening, if you were to tell them one reason they should pray, why should they pray?

Raleigh: They respect God, if they want to I guess.

Annie: If they want to and to respect that. I think that's a beautiful answer. And a growl at the end?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Annie: Very fancy.

[00:02:58] <music>

Annie: Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment share about one of our incredible partners, [Athletic Greens](#). We're interested in doing anything we can to support our health especially when it's convenient and delicious, right? "So what is this stuff?" you're wondering.

Okay, get this. In one scoop of Athletic Greens stirred up really well in cold water, you're absorbing 75 high-quality vitamins, minerals, whole foods sourced superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens. It really helps you start your day right. Listen to this list of things Athletic Greens supports.

Their special blend of ingredients support your gut health, your nervous system, your immune system, your energy recovery, and focus. Okay, basically all the things. AG1 contains less than one gram of sugar, no GMOs, no bad for you chemicals or artificial anything.

While still tasting good, it's got a fresh green flavor with a sort of a tropical pineapple leaf finish to it. One of my friends started taking it because he kept hearing people talk about it and he is hooked on how it's changed his energy and focus. He likes to squeeze a slice of fresh lemon in his. I respect that.

See, AG1 is a small micro habit with big benefits. It's one thing you can do every single day to be a good friend to yourself. And it costs you less than \$3 a day. You're investing in your health for less than a fancy coffee. And it's definitely cheaper than getting all the different supplements you need to get the same benefits separately.

It's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition especially as we finish up this flu and cold season. It's just one scoop in a cup of cold water every day. That's it. To make it easy, Athletic Greens is going to give you a free one year supply of immune-supporting vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. Yes.

All you have to do is visit athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Again, that's athleticgreens.com/soundsfun to take ownership over your health and pick up the ultimate daily nutritional insurance.

Intro: Today on the show I get to talk with one of my favorite pastors, Pastor Derwin Gray. He was with us back on Episode 244, if you want to go back and listen to that one. Pastor Derwin is the lead pastor of Transformation Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and he's an amazing author and preacher.

Today we get to continue our series on prayer, learning from Pastor Derwin, especially about the Lord's Prayer and how it can instruct us, and how we pray for people that are different than us. I also get to ask him about his most recent book, *How to Heal Our Racial Divide: What the Bible Says, and the First Christians Knew, about Racial Reconciliation*.

It's an amazing book that I was honored to get to write the foreword for and one that I know we're all going to benefit from as we continue to do the work to be agents of reconciliation in our churches and in our lives, particularly through our prayer lives, which is what we're going to talk about today. So here is my conversation with Pastor Derwin Gray.

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Annie: Welcome back to That Sounds Fun, Pastor Derwin. I'm so glad you're here.

Derwin: It is always good to be with you, Annie. You know, there's certain people that you just get happy around. I'm not sure if there's a spiritual gift of happiness, but I think you're anointed with that. I just got happy seeing you and hearing your voice.

Annie: Same. I feel the same. I think it's friendship.

Derwin: And your podcast is That Sounds Fun, so...

Annie: Right. So by nature, it's gotta be. Yeah, that's right. One of my favorite things is how much we sneaky Jesus people, when people show up thinking we're going to talk about fun, and we can't help but talk about Jesus a lot. So it's my favorite thing.

Okay. We're going to talk about a couple of different things today. What our friends listening know is that we are starting a whole month on prayer. That next week we are quiet because during Holy Week we don't record a release. And this week you have a new book out that I felt hugely honored to get to write the foreword for. So we've got a whole collection of things to jump into if you're ready.

Derwin: I'm ready.

Annie: Okay. The first thing I want to ask you or say is I want to ask you some real questions about the new book, *How to Heal Our Racial Divide*. But one of my fears, I think a lot of my friends who are white have a fear that they're going to ask their black friends something that is offensive? What's the grace in that—from both sides, from our side of asking questions that are wrong, and from our friend's side who are being asked the questions?

Derwin: That is so, so legit. I believe the dark demonic forces actually keep our white siblings in Christ silent out of fear and response. So, for example, I was on Carey Nieuwhof's podcast. And Carey knows that I love the fish. So he was telling me, you know, he's Canadian, and Canadians are sweet and nice people.

He's like, "When the French came to Ontario, the settlers had canoes and they could walk on the back of fish because there were so many fish in the lakes." And he goes, "Wouldn't you have just loved to go back to 1789 and fish?" And I said, "No Carey, I don't want to be anywhere near North America in 1789. I would be enslaved or taking some people out trying to enslave me."

So it was humorous and we laughed. And then he paused and he went, "Oh, Derwin. I'm so sorry. I never looked at it from the eyes of a black man." And I said, "Carey, there's no reason for you to say I'm sorry. For one, we're brothers in Christ, the blood of Jesus unites us. So therefore, we can walk patiently and lovingly with each other."

So it requires, number one, for me as a black man, my identity is in Christ. So, therefore, if my identity is in Christ, I don't have to be offended. My identity in Christ helps me to be undefendable because my reputation is taken care of through

the blood of Christ. So that way I can respond with humility. I can respond with grace.

A couple of years back, Louie Giglio was speaking on the issue of racial reconciliation. And he said some things that were not good for the cause and people just jumped down his throat. And it's like, we have to learn. We have to learn and we have to be gracious with each other.

Now, I get it. As a black man, as a black Christian, I get it. It's tiring. But Jesus never said that it would not be tiring. Jesus did say, "All those who are heavy laden and burdened, come on to me, and I will give you rest." So I'm going to be a bridge-builder. I'm going to be a wounded healer.

Paul says in Ephesians 4:1-3, that part of maintaining the unity that Jesus can recreate it is patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving. But then on the flip side for my white siblings in Christ, it is important to learn. And that's why I wrote *How to Heal Our Racial Divide*. There is no time to hold grudges. There's no time to hold anger. We need to hold the cross so we can hold each other.

Annie: That's what I loved about *How to Heal Our Racial Divide* is I felt like... I haven't read everything but I've been trying to read a lot of books about how to be a better citizen of the world, and especially when it comes to racial justice. I genuinely think yours is the first one I read that is like, "Here's how to equip the church. Here's how the church should be handling it."

I know you pastor Transformation Church, so obviously, that was important to you. But why does it matter to you specifically as the author, as the pastor of this conversation to speak directly to the church, not just the masses?

Derwin: Because I firmly believe the church is not a building, it's not an institution. The word "Church" was used by the Roman government. The word is "Ecclesia." It means "called out." So any assembly called out for a purpose was called Ecclesia or church.

Well, Jesus said, "The gates of hell will not prevail against my church," meaning "my people." Racial injustice is a sin like any other sin. And Jesus has defeated sin, He's defeated death, He's defeated evil. So what happens in the seats of a church should spill out into the streets as the church goes on mission to influence every facet of the world.

Sadly, in America, particularly with white evangelicalism, we have lagged behind. So as a black brother in Christ, as a New Testament scholar, as a pastor, I wanted to

create a resource in a book that, number one, exalts Jesus. Jesus has something to say about this.

Number two, our expansion of the gospel is going to grow. It's so much more than just Jesus died for sins. He not only died for sins, but He created this beautiful family with different colored skins. And as we learn to love each other across political divides, social-economic divides, then our unity displays that Jesus did raise from the dead.

Now, what some people don't know is somebody by the name of Annie F. Downs wrote the foreword to this book. So I just want to thank you for wrestling with the content and writing a beautiful forward. I wanted your voice to communicate the ethos and the passion of this book because I'm writing it to people of goodwill who say, "I see that this is a problem. I've seen George Floyd. I'm listening now. My eyes are open. I just don't know what to do."

And a lot of times what we do, Annie, is we run to secular sources. Now, there's nothing wrong with that. But here's the problem, though. A secular resource cannot fix a theological problem.

Annie: Wow.

Derwin: We need the theology and the Gospel because that's where the power is. Ephesians 2:14 says, "Christ is our peace that He tore down the dividing wall, he took the Jew and the Gentile and made them one." How? Through His body on the cross. This isn't a secondary issue. This is a primary issue for God so loved the world. And what's in the world? Black people, white people, Asian people, indigenous people, all kinds of people.

And we know every nation, tribe, and tongue is going to be in the new heavens and new earth. So we're to practice now what we're going to do for eternity. And it's like I'm sipping coffee with the person reading the book, walking alongside of them.

Annie: I had two favorite parts of the book. I love the whole thing or I wouldn't have written the foreword. We have very strict rules about forwards that I write because it not only is it my words in your book, which is very generous of any author to have a foreword at all, but also I'm connected with you in this book. So we made sure that it was the right yes. And it absolutely was.

When we talked about the tribes, tongues, and nations, I mean, I've sang that song before, I've thought about it. But the way you wrote about it, like from the beginning of time God intended for us to be the race that we are, because that is

meant to go with us into eternity, will you talk about that a little bit? I think that is an incredible concept.

Derwin: Yeah. I think a lot of times we don't really think about what we think about and we presuppose that our ethnicity is the dominant ethnicity.

Annie: For sure.

Derwin: So let's just give us some perspective here. By 2050, the average follower of Jesus in the world, one out of three will be a Nigerian woman.

Annie: Really?

Derwin: Yeah. By 2050, out of three Christians will be a Nigerian woman. There are more followers of Jesus of color than not.

Annie: Wow.

Derwin: But because of our situatedness, we tend to think of where the majority culture in one facet, we think that's for the whole world. So let's pull back here. Acts 17:26, the apostle Paul in Athens says, "God made from one man all the human race." So there's only one race: the human race. But the human race is comprised of a beautiful array of ethnicities and culture. Ethnicity is language, culture, customs. So ethnicities and cultures image forth the glory of God.

So in Genesis 11, God's people scatter because they're building temples for the gods to come down. I personally think those were demons who wanted to influence people away from God. Genesis 12, God calls a man named Abram, changed his name to Abraham, and says, "Abraham, through you all the nations are going to be blessed. I'm going to give you a big family made up of all the families on earth." That's all the ethnos right? So Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and then Jesus.

When Jesus comes, he's a Jewish Messiah who's going to save the world to give God that multiethnic family He promised Abraham. That's why Galatians 3:8 says, "The good news was preached beforehand to Abraham saying this, 'All the nations will be blessed.'" So the blessing is God the Father gave black kids, white kids, Asian kids, Latino kids, male kids, female kids, all types of kids, so that his eternal purpose can be fulfilled.

Ephesians 3:10 is this beautiful passage. It basically says that the church, the manifold wisdom... That word "manifold" means multicolored. It was like what you wear, a coat. The manifold wisdom of God displays to the demonic world and the

angelic realm that Jesus won. Then verse 11, says, "And this was fulfilled according to the eternal purpose realized in Christ Jesus."

If I could just preach for a minute-

Annie: Yes.

Derwin: Just for a minute.

Annie: Come home.

Derwin: Our cross is way too small if all it does is forgive. Our gospel is way too small if all it does is send us to heaven when we die. The cross and the gospel are about a father reaching this beautiful myriad of children, placing his son Jesus in them, forgiving them, redeeming them, putting the Spirit in them so as they love each other, the whole earth would be filled with His glory.

And when we allow political division, cultural customs that are not biblical to divide us, God's heart hurts. I want to be a part of the generation that says this issue in a church, it ends now. Because what happens in the seats is going to spill over into the streets. And unfortunately, the most segregated institution in America is Jesus' church.

Annie: I've heard someone say that the most segregated hour is 9 a.m. on Sundays.

Derwin: That was Dr. King. Dr. King said that. And interesting, when Dr. King made that quote, a white reporter said, "Well, are white people welcome into the black church?" He goes, "Well, of course they are, but I don't think I'll be welcomed in their church."

Annie: Wow.

Derwin: So it's time for us to say, no, this is Jesus' church. And the early church was filled with Jews and Gentiles. And one of the things that I do as a New Testament scholar, my emphasis is in the first century. So I'm taking people back so that we could go forward. That our faith is beautiful and it is rich, and it's so much bigger and more profound.

This is really a manifesto of our spiritual formation and discipleship. Because at the end of the day, Jesus doesn't say well, you will know my disciples because they argue on Facebook about mass. No, no. He says, "You won't know my disciples because they agape one another. They love one another."

And love, as you know, Annie, is not sentimental feelings. Love looks like the cross. It is sacrificial. It cares about problems that are not your own. "Love says injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere," to quote Dr. King. Love says, "I am for you."

[00:19:45] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Ritual](#). The nutrition provided by the typical American food intake has got some serious gaps. Am I right? Over 97% of women between the ages of 19 and 50 aren't getting enough vitamin D and 95% are not getting their recommended daily intake of key Omega 3s. You guys. You guys.

Ritual's Essential for women 18+ Plus multivitamin was formulated based on exhaustive research so it can help fill nutrient gaps in the diets of women 18 and plus. It's got nutrients to help support brain health, bone health, blood health, and to provide antioxidant support.

But Ritual didn't stop there. They invested in the gold standard, university-led clinical trial to prove the impact of Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin. The finding tells us that their Essential for Women 18+ increased vitamin D levels by 43% and Omega 3 DHA levels by 41% in 12 weeks. That is impressive.

Ritual is committed to third party testing and they include traceable and vegan-friendly ingredients. And they communicate that clearly. All things I want for the people who create my vitamins. My Ritual multivitamins are a part of my daily morning routine. I love knowing that their clean ingredients are helping me make sure my body gets what it needs, and then I'm not guaranteed to get it from...

So right now Ritual is offering my friends 10% off their first three months. Just visit ritual.com/thatsoundsfun and turn healthy habits into a ritual. That's 10% off at ritual.com/thatsoundsfun.

Sponsor: And we've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, Liquid I.V.. We make time and space for the things that we need to keep us healthy, right? Like we rest, we eat good things, we move our bodies, we take our vitamins, and we take time to be with other people, we spend time reading and praying too.

In addition to all of that, though, we can't forget to also make hydration a priority. One stick of Liquid I.V. and 16 ounces of water hydrates faster and more efficiently than water alone. Liquid I.V. has incredible hydration flavors like watermelon, lemon lime, strawberry, pina colada, and more.

I'm a morning time Liquid I.V. gal myself. I just added into my water bottle because it helps me feel my best so I can tackle the day ahead with energy and focus. I was recently on a trip that had me in high altitude and you better believe that we were all using Liquid I.V. to make sure we stayed feeling great, not a headache in the crowd.

It contains five essential vitamins: B3, B5, B6, B12 and vitamin C, and three times the electrolytes of traditional sports drinks. It's made with premium ingredients and it's non-GMO and free from gluten, dairy, and soy. But in addition to tasting awesome and supporting my hydration goals, Liquid I.V. is on a mission to change the world. They've donated over 19 million servings globally. Isn't that awesome?

Grab Liquid I.V. in bulk nationwide at Costco or you can get 25% off when you go to liquidiv.com and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout. That's 25% off anything you order when you use the promo codes THATSOUNDSFUN at liquidiv.com. Experience better hydration day at liquidiv.com promo code THATSOUNDSFUN.

And now back to our conversation with Pastor Derwin.

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Annie: As you're quoting scripture—and you did this so beautifully in the book as well—you reference Galatians Ephesians. I mean, was Paul more of a racial justice guy than I've ever paid attention to before?

Derwin: Let me say this. First of all, yes. But what I would say is this. Paul was a man that was intoxicated with King Jesus. And because Paul was a Pharisaical Jew with the equivalency of two PhDs, when he met Jesus, he saw that Jesus the Jewish Messiah was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Scriptures. So the idea that Gentiles would not be welcomed into the family of God is anathema. So let's remember this. Abraham was not a Jew. Jews did not exist before Abraham.

Annie: Right, right.

Derwin: So when you look at Paul, he's always going back to Abraham. He's always going back to the problems.

Annie: Oh, before there was any separation?

Derwin: Before there was anything.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Derwin: He's always going back to Abraham. So Paul, as a Pharisaical Jew who met the Jewish Messiah understood that Jesus came to be the new temple that Jews and Gentiles could come into, that Jews and Gentiles became the new people of God. In Ephesians 2:16, he says, the two were reconciled to be one, to be a new *kainos* (a new people).

So Grace actually creates a new race made up of all the ethnicities in the human race. And I hope that people that are listening, I'm talking a lot of theology. Why? Because when you know the why, you will fight for the how, and God will give you the spirit of the way. When I say fight, I mean with faith, hope, and love. Not with anger, not with dismissiveness, but with compassion.

So a lot of this issue is under development of our understanding of the work of Jesus, are under development of an understanding of the work of Christ. And also dark demonic powers want to keep us divided. They want us arguing about kneeling during a football game. They want us to argue about politics.

Now, in the midst of that, it's important for our white siblings in Christ to understand this. This is really, really important. When people of color, and I'll just use myself, that me, as a black man, who's, by the way, 23% European—I have an aunt with blond hair and hazel eyes and my mom is about your color—I'm 23% European. I like to say I'm Scottish because I got like 2% Scottish.

Annie: Yeah, there you go.

Derwin: So I'm a black Scotsman and I want to preach in a kilt one day. So my point is this, is that theology is not something just abstract. It's practical. It's livable. And this is how the apostle Paul was able to form these incredible churches is because He rooted them in the story that God is going to give Abraham a family.

So when we look culturally, when people of color, as a black man, when I say, Hey, there was slavery in America, there's systemic injustice, that doesn't mean that I hate America. I love my country. You know what it means is I want my country to represent what the flag represents: liberty and justice for all.

So from our white siblings in Christ, your identity is not in America. You are not America. America belongs to all of us. My people work the land for free. My fourth great grandfather, Moses Davis, fought for the Virginia colored regiment against the Confederacy.

Annie: Wow.

Derwin: So in my blood is patriotism so this nation could be for liberty and justice for all. I believe liberty and justice for all is a Christian principle. So when we bring up those things of the past, they bear weight on the present.

Case in point. In World War II, 1.2 million black GIs went all the way to Germany to fight racists, to fight Hitlers and Nazis, only to come back to America to Jim Crow and segregation, colored only bathrooms, hotels you couldn't stay in, and 1.2 million of them didn't get the GI Bill, which was the impetus to the modern day suburban house movement. If you own a home, you grow wealth. So there were 1.2 million black people who missed out on billions of dollars because they were not given the GI Bill like they were promised.

So when we bring those things up, it's not an excuse and it's not to make white people guilty. You shouldn't be guilty at all because your identity is in Christ. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. And because your conscience is clear, you can clearly look back and say, "That was wrong and I can see how we as white Americans, white Christians have benefited from that."

However, how do we, as Matthew 5:6 says, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness or justice for they will be satisfied. Justice is what love looks like in the streets.

Annie: Justice is what love looks like in the streets. An interesting thing that happened last fall is we separated from an ad partner because when we did a series of conversations last fall on racial justice, the ad partner said, "That's not a conversation for this year anymore. That was 2020."

You kind of speak to why is this book... I mean, the answer is at the moment of us recording this, there isn't a loud racial story going on in America. There is a global war concern. So why do we need to talk about and think about and really pursue racial justice when the news is not yelling at us?

Derwin: If I could, and I want to measure my words, but I do want to be prophetic, the pain of black people is not a new story. Racial justice and racism is not a new cycle. And then more importantly, racial justice for King Jesus is not a news cycle. It's not a hobby. It's a spiritual habit.

Annie: Oh, that's good. It's a spiritual habit.

Derwin: It's not a hobby. And since I've been a Christian, and I want to say this prophetically, why is it that white Christians think that they get to set the terms on what's important? No, Jesus does. Sadly, I can listen to sermons from Dr. Evans from the 80s, from John Perkins from the 70s, from [unintelligible 00:30:12] from

71, I can read things from 1840 and I'm saying the exact same things, but differently.

So this isn't an issue that's gone away because it's not in the news. This is intrinsic to the Gospel. This matters to King Jesus. So I applaud you for not keeping that relationship because black people's pain is not a news cycle. And since I've been a Christian starting in 1997, I've watched white evangelicalism put on the sweater of AIDS. Like, we're going to cure AIDS. And then next it was water wells. So like, "We're going to do water wells. So let's wear that."

"Okay. So next, what we're going to do is we're going to go to Mexico and we're going to build houses for people. I see people from Latin America building houses in America. So Can people in Latin America not build a house? Or are Americans going over to build houses because it makes them feel good?"

Annie: Right. Right.

Derwin: So I've seen all these shirts being taken off. And what I'm saying is HIV AIDS, water, all those issues of justice aren't shirts we take on and off. They're a part of our DNA because we're part of Jesus' DNA.

Annie: Yea, that's it. It makes me think of the spiritual disciplines that we talk about so much here. I mean, the whole month is about prayer life, fasting and Sabbath, and prayer and studying the Bible. And it's like, Oh, man, can we start treating racial equality and treating our friends with love as one of our holy habits and one of our spiritual disciplines?

Derwin: Yes. And what I would even say, Annie, is what's the purpose of fasting? What's the purpose of prayer? What's the purpose of solitude? What's the purpose of silence? What's the purpose of Scripture? The purpose is to make us more loving people, not just for ourselves, but for the world.

Even our spiritual disciplines end up being selfish. It's like, no, God wants me to practice silence and solitude and scripture reading and prayer so that I'm conformed to the image of Christ to love my neighbor as I love myself. Love God, love your neighbor as you love yourself. And that's one of my big beefs with a lot of spiritual formation books.

I'm getting to the age now where I just kind of don't care. And I'll talk to the authors and I'll go, "So people are doing all this stuff, but yet you don't talk about loving your neighbors across ethnic and cultural lines as much as that's been a plague on our society. How do you miss that?" So I'm challenging people, put that in your

next book. Hey, if you don't know what to say, let me write it and we can co-write that chapter together. But we have to move beyond that discipleship.

Even think about this. Jesus told His Jewish disciples, "Go make disciples of all ethnos, all nations." He's telling Jewish people, "Go reach Gentiles." But listen to this. Go reach the people who held your ancestors in slavery for 400 years in Egypt. Go reach the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, all the people who tried to wipe out your ancestors. Go reach the Babylonians who cured you in captivity. Go reach the Romans who crucify your men as we speak." Racial reconciliation is intrinsic to this thing. It's not a part of it. It's intrinsic to it. So God is trying to help us expand the horizons of our capacity to love.

Annie: So as we're spending the month on prayer, tell me what role prayer plays in us being less racially divided? In my life, what role does prayer play? In my church, in our Bible studies, and the women's groups that we're in, what role does prayer play in this?

Derwin: Annie, the first thing that I would say is as you asked that question, it's like I want to ask a question back.

Annie: Okay.

Derwin: What role does breathing have with staying alive?

Annie: Yes. Good. Yes, yes. Tell us why, though. Tell us why.

Derwin: Because prayer is primarily a means and it's a gift of God's grace to hear Him whisper His truth over your life. Prayer is not primarily saying, "God, this is what I want." Prayer is primarily saying, "God, I want your kingdom. I want your will. I want what you want."

I think that's where we get in trouble with prayer. I wrote a book last fall called *God, Do You Hear Me? Discover the Prayer God Always Answers*. Because so much of our praying, and I say this respectfully, is really superstition. It's if I say the right thing, if I do the right thing, then God will do what I want.

And when you look at the beauty of the Lord's Prayer, which if Jesus tells me, "Pray this way," Derwin don't pray this way. Listen, He rose from the dead, His blood will reconcile. I'm listening to Him. So the Lord's Prayer is this beautiful choreography. And it starts with a Father. Matthew 6:32 says that God knows everything that we need. Don't be like the Gentiles just asking for stuff.

And then verse 33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." So God is saying, "Before you ask Me for something, ask Me for Me. Ask to know Me as Father. Ask to know Me as Pap. Ask to know my kindness. Ask to know my grace. Ask to know my wisdom."

Then it moves on "Your name is holy." In other words, my eyes are only for you. Like this wedding ring, I belong to Vicki Gray. That is my boo. We will be celebrating 30 years of marriage. She is set apart. I'm set apart. When Jesus gave us a bloodbath, He set us apart to set our eyes on God. So we proved Him to be holy as we fend off every other lover trying to steal our hearts because we go back to our first love. And then your kingdom come. Now, Annie, this was a hard prayer.

Annie: Really?

Derwin: It's a very hard prayer. Think about it. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." Let me be honest here. There's some people I want to get in a head like this, Annie. I mean, that ain't Jesus' will.

Annie: That's right.

Derwin: That is not in His will. There are some things that I wanted to do, and God said, "That's not what I've called you to do." So that's why Paul says in Romans 12:1, to be a living sacrifice. In order to fulfill God's will, we're going to be a living dead thing. But everything we die to, He gives us new life.

So prayer shapes everything. And it is God's will that we not be racist. It is God's will that we not be prejudice. It is God's will that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. For example, it is God's will. And I said this at our church a few weeks ago, a few months ago now, Russia invaded Ukraine and we financially supported the refugees of Ukraine.

But then I paused and I said, we supported the refugees of Syria. We've supported refugees from Latin America. All refugees are made in the image of God, not just European refugees. And when you listen to the media, have not beaten the media, listen, the media is all like, "I can't believe this. Europe is a civilized country and refugees, not like the Middle East."

I'm like, Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, last I checked, World War I was started in Europe, World War II was started in Europe. So don't forget your history about refugees and bloodbaths and evil things. It's not just third world countries located in the Middle East. A lot of it has been in Europe. So it's important for us to take off those cultural biases.

And prayer allows us to do that. And we pray, "Lord, you're the bread of life, provide. You're the forgiver, may I forgive. And then Lord, you've overcome dark powers." So prayer helps us to overcome. Can I share a story with you about how prayer opens eyes?

Annie: Oh, that's what we want.

Derwin: At our church, God has blessed us. We look like every nation, tribe, and tongue. It's utterly beautiful. There'll be white families who adopt black kids and specifically black little boys. And when the black little boys are young, they're cute and cuddly. By 15, 16, 17, they go from cute and cuddly to a threat.

And what will happen is, is the white parents will say, "Pastor, we had no idea that racism and prejudice was just hard for black people until our teenage son began to grow up and we see the way he's treated compared to our white kids. We just can't believe it. Of course I empathize, I sympathize, but then I lovingly say, how could you not believe it when we as your black brothers and sisters have been telling you this for so long? The reason you believe it now is because the problem has knocked on your door and now it's your problem and not just theirs."

So I just want to pause here. As brothers and sisters of Christ of all ethnicities, we are our brothers and sisters' keeper. The Bible says if one part of the body hurts, we all hurt. And can you imagine in the counsel of eternity, the Father, Son and Spirit, know that human beings are going to blow it and bring sin into the world? And Jesus goes, "Well, I'm not going. That's not my problem. I have never sinned. I cannot sin. I am utterly wholly imperfect." That's not my problem. I ain't going, Dad, I ain't going Holy Spirit. No." Jesus goes because love says, Your problem is my problem.

And that's my hope and my prayer is that we as the people of God would say, "I got your back and you got my back because Jesus was nailed to a cross. Therefore we are nailed to each other in resurrection power. And who messes with you messes with me."

[00:40:48] <music>

Sponsor: Hi friends! Just interrupting this conversation one last time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Prose](#). Who doesn't want healthy-looking hair? I know I do. While I'm currently trying to grow my hair out a little bit, Prose makes the products I'm relying on.

Prose is the world's most personalized haircare. They take natural ingredients and combine them in innovative ways to give us clean haircare with incredible results.

Their formulas offer answers to your individual hair needs, not the same old solution that targets everyone's issues which really limits their effectiveness. I've been extremely impressed with how shiny and manageable my hair has been and how fast it's growing with Prose support.

Stress can cause some wackadoodle responses in our body. Among those and increase in hair shedding and thinning, people can lose about 50% of their total hair before they even notice that their hair is shedding. You guys, what? Prose can help stop stress-related hair loss in its tracks and spark new stronger growth.

Not only does Prose specialize in custom haircare, but now they also make custom hair supplements that help reduce excess shedding and spark fuller, thicker hair growth with just two capsules a day. Just take their online consultation—you know we love a quiz around here—and then Prose will customize your supplements to address the factors that could be triggering your hair issues. It could be hormonal changes or stress or nutrition or age or... who knows. They'll figure it out.

Prose supplements only use natural, clean, safe ingredients, which we love, right? No drugs, no hormone disruptors. All of their formulas are toxicologist-approved, gluten-free, and vegan. Perhaps the best news for us and the Prose users out there, it works. Multiple studies including on my own head show that over 90% of women taking Prose hair supplements saw less shedding, more growth, and improved overall appearance in just 90 days.

Try your own custom hair supplements and you'll get 15% off. Get yours at prose.com/thatsoundsfun. That's prose.com/thatsoundsfun for your free in-depth hair consultation and 15% off custom hair supplements. Just go to prose.com/thatsoundsfun to try custom hair supplements and get 15% off.

Sponsor: And I got one last amazing partner to tell you about, [Family Camp](#). Okay, y'all know we are all about fun around here. And if you are looking for a fun, funny, lighthearted movie to watch with the whole family, make plans right now to see Family Camp. It's the first feature film by The Skit Guys who I think are hysterical and is exclusively in theaters on May 13th.

Okay, picture this. Two families who could not be more different find themselves sharing a cabin for an entire week at family camp. United only by their competitive drive to win the camp trophy, the dads end up lost in the woods and deal with a whole trail of hilarious mishaps while everyone else desperately tries to find them. They ended up having to work together to find their way back.

It is such a fun movie fair for the whole family. And our friend Heather Land, who some of you got to see in Baltimore and Columbus on the That Sounds Fun tour,

she makes an appearance in the movie too. She is so funny. So you guys, get your tickets to see it in a theater near you by visiting familycampmovie.com. Again, that's familycampmovie.com.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Pastor Derwin.

[00:44:09] <music>

Annie: Okay, talk about that. Speaking of Jesus dying and resurrected again, and it's coming next week, for Holy Week we are quiet. What are some practices for you for Holy Week? What are some practices you suggest for us? Will you pastor us a little bit about how we can observe Holy Week if we've never observed it before, if there's something new to it?

Derwin: Holy Week is a time for us to really slow down and do what I call marinate. To really marinate at this thought. That God the Father would rather allow his son to be sacrificed than to spend an eternity without you. But also think about this. Jesus' sacrifice is rooted in God's heart to be with His people. Yes, it is the forgiveness of sins. And yes.

But think about this. In the Garden of Eden, the Father was with Adam and Eve. "The nation of Israel, build me a tabernacle. I want to be with you, build me a temple, I want to be with you." And He provides sacrifices for purity, for cleaning, for forgiveness. Why? Because he wants to be with us. We have a love sick father who says, "I want to be with you."

So when Jesus comes, all the sacrifices, the whole thing, Jesus becomes the high priest who goes into the temple because He's the temple. Jesus is not only the Ark of the Covenant, He's the blood of the lamb that's poured over the tablet of the 10 commandments.

This Holy Week is about this. There's a God who wants you to be pure in His presence because He's pure. And he sends Jesus to cleanse us, to forgive us, to renew us, to make us right with Him, to sacrifice for us, to show the depths of His love. So this Holy Week, go back to your first love. Be intentional.

Some of the things that we do, my family and I, from time to time will watch *The Passion of the Christ*.

Annie: That is hard to watch.

Derwin: It is. It is very hard to watch. But if we don't really understand the magnitude of what crucifixion was, oftentimes we miss the depth of God's love. The word

"excruciating" is a Latin word. And it was invented by the Romans because it describes the cross. The word "excruciating" literally means "out of the cross."

Annie: I did not know that.

Derwin: Yeah, yeah. So the crucifixion was so bad, it needed a new word. This Holy Week really get back to the love of God, the sacrifice of God. And spend this Holy Week thinking about this. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

You are the righteousness of Christ. You are the bride of Christ, the friend of Christ, the body of Christ. And none of that is contingent upon your behavior. It's all anchored in the beautiful behavior of Jesus, His sinless life and it's atoning substitutionary death sacrificially on the cross. If we ever doubt that God loves us, look at the bloody cross, and then remember the empty tomb.

Annie: Yes. Yeah. Because when Sunday comes, what I want to have happen, Pastor Derwin is when Sunday comes, when Easter comes, I want it all to be right. I want everything because that's what Jesus did. But on Easter, I'm still going to be a sinner. We are still going to struggle, people are still going to be racist and unkind, and people are still going to be cruel, and they're still going to be fighting in countries around the world. So how is the cross true and the resurrection true when the world still feels terrible?

Derwin: I think it's very important to be honest about that reality. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says this. If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. Behold the old has passed and a new has come." So as people of the resurrection, you and I are actually people of the future in the present.

Annie: Wow. I like that.

Derwin: Yeah, yeah. We are people of the future in the present. When Jesus rose from the dead, everything changed and a new timetable began. So evil and unjust sexual harassment, sexual abuse, slavery and war, and sickness and unkindness, and sin is on a time clock. And that time is running out because there's a new day that is dawning.

So the kingdom of God is here, but not fully. And because we are people of the future, because we're people of the resurrection, He gives us power in the present to be a light to those and darkness so that we can take as many with us into that glorious resurrection. But here's the part where I think Christians struggle.

They forget that Jesus said in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble but take courage for I have overcome the world." When Jesus rose from the dead, he

drugged you and I out with him. He is with us. We are His people. The idea is to set our minds on Him. And in the midst of discouragement, keep our eyes on the resurrection power.

But also remember this. He left us here to continue His ministry and mission. He entrusted us to finish His ministry and mission. I'm like, "Jesus, you're sure about me?" He's like, "This is what I'm sure about. I'm sure about the Holy Spirit's power and I'm sure that if you trust in Me the Spirit's power would do what you could never do."

Annie, what I say to people when they go, "But did Jesus make everything right?" Yeah, He did. But the outworking of that is on a time clock. And until that clock hits midnight, we are to be the hands and feet of Jesus, we are to weep, we are to mourn, we are to heal, we are to love, we are to forgive, we are to give. We are to be His people.

Annie: I mean, this is a ridiculous comparison. So I know before I even say it. But when you say we're people of the future, the present, I'm like, we're kind of Marty McFly from *Back to the Future*, who have the cheat codes on the betting book of the sports. But we're like, we get to be in the present be like, "Hey, we know what the future is. Come with us." We have the cheat codes for this.

Derwin: Literally.

Annie: I have literally never thought about us being people of the future living in the present. That's the hope we have. That's when scripture says always have an answer. But the hope, the answer is, yeah, I know where we're going. I know how this ends.

Derwin: and we know where we're going, we know how it ends, and we know who's walking with us.

Annie: Yes!

Derwin: Just like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus was right there with them. Jesus is right here with us. I long for the new heavens and the new earth, glorified, resurrected bodies. My knee is not going to hurt. My back is not going to hurt. I'm going to be whole.

Annie: In your BYU football prime again.

Derwin: That's right. Prime. But here's the juxtaposition. I hunger to bring as many people with me as possible. And it is oftentimes in a great crisis that we call upon the great Christ.

Annie: I have a friend who's 17 or 18 and her Instagram bio says "Here to make heaven crowded." I thought, "Man, that's it. That's it." That's what we want to do is be people of the future in the present taking as many people with us.

Derwin: In the present.

Annie: Oh, man.

Derwin: We are literally signposts. I think the devil wants us to dumb down our faith so much that we're so pragmatic and we're so practical that we've practically preach Jesus out of what it means to be a Christian. We're so busy trying to get formulas and to make life work. Jesus is going, "I want you to walk with me and I want you to love and all that you do." The world is broken. The world is mourning for redemption itself. But I want you to know that even my blood one day is going to make the wrongs right. I think it's Sally Lloyd-Jones. I think that's her name. I'm not sure.

Annie: Yes, yeah.

Derwin: But she says this. One day Jesus will make all the sad things untrue. So a vision of the future transforms what we do today. We know where we're going, we know who we're going with. But until that time, he's with us saying, "Be a mirror, be a door that people can walk through."

Annie: Which day matters more to you? Easter or Good Friday?

Derwin: That is a wonderful, wonderful question. Good Friday is my favorite service of the entire year.

Annie: Is it really? Do y'all stream your good Friday service?

Derwin: We have. I need to check again. I think that we are but let me check. We do the 13 Stations of the Cross. We have music, we have pic... I mean it is powerful. Now, just because it's my favorite, there is no Easter without the sinless life of Jesus. There is no crucifixion and death without Easter. There is no sinless life without it.

So just as God is Father, Son, and Spirit, life, death, and resurrection are one. So I can't have a favorite. They're all seamlessly one just as the Father, Son, and Spirit is.

Annie: I won't ask what kid is your favorite either. I won't do that to you either. You can have a favorite daughter and a favorite son? No.

Derwin: It's interesting. What I have found is the children who are least like me require me to love them harder. And it gives me greater appreciation. In having children, it gave me a glimpse into the heart of God the Father.

Annie: Oh, sure.

Derwin: Because man, listen, I will destroy a city to rescue my kids. I will swim the Pacific Ocean. There's nothing I wouldn't do. So think of me, a puny, flawed human can love like that, think of God the Father. I think it was Max Lucado who said this. You have to step over Jesus' dead body to go to hell.

Annie: Yeah, right. Wow, that's beautiful. I look forward to next week. One of the things that we have talked about a little bit is lent lasts for 46 days, 48 days, something like that, but Eastertide between Easter and Pentecost is 50 days. It's just two more. The celebration, the feast is longer than the fast. So I'm always living for a feast is longer than the past.

Okay, is there anything we didn't talk about today you want to make sure we cover?

Derwin: Yeah, I would just say this is above everything. Jesus is the great prize. Jesus is a great treasure. Get to know Him, spend time with Him. Don't just ask Him to kind of be like your life coach. Don't just ask Him to be your problem fixer.

Annie: Wow.

Derwin: Ask Him to be your first love.

Annie: That's it. That's it. If at the end of all of this, whatever this is, today's episode, this series, my life, if people feel like they are better friends with Jesus, that is why we're here—taking people with us into the future.

Derwin: Now that sounds fun.

Annie: That sounds fun. Okay, so that leads me to our last question. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, besides making heaven crowded, what else sounds fun to you, Pastor Derwin?

Derwin: Oh, man. What sounds fun to me is being at dinner with my adult children and beautiful bride and we just talk about all kinds of stuff. For some reason, my kids

just think I'm the funniest man in the world. I guess because I'm meant to pronounciate people's names. I mean, we just have so much fun.

Like we were talking about one time we were going through Yellowstone Park and we love out west. That's where my wife's from. And I love to take pictures with my Samsung Galaxy S22. I love to do it. I'm a professional in my own mind.

Annie: You take incredible pictures. It's unbelievable.

Derwin: Thank you.

Annie: They're gorgeous.

Derwin: Thank you. Thank you. Well, we were in Yellowstone Park one time and I was like, "There are people here, there must be a bear. Let me out." My wife was like, "The bear may be close." I'm like, "Honey, I'm a professional photographer." So I got out of our truck and a big, old, grizzly bear was about 30 yards away from me.

Annie: No, that's too close. They move so fast.

Derwin: It is. But here's the one thing that I knew. There was about 50 people there and there were some old women. I knew I could outrun one of them. So if the bear would eat them, I would just have prayed for them, laid hands on them. But I was out.

Annie: Out. Right. Right. Here's why you should let me travel with the family, is that if anytime that happens, I am the slowest. Every Gray family member is faster than me. So I would be the sacrificial lamb for sure. Pastor Derwin, thank you again for being on here today. Again, I just can't tell you what an honor it was to get to write the foreword for this book.

Derwin: Thank you.

Annie: I am thankful it exists. It changed my life reading it. So I'm excited for our friends to get it. Thanks for walking us into Holy Week.

Derwin: Hey, thank you so much, and thanks for being my friend. And thank you for just the light that you cast in this world. Appreciate you.

Annie: Thank you.

[00:58:26] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't he just the best? Hey, listen, grab a copy of *How to Heal Our Racial Divide*. Actually, I'd encourage you to grab two or three. Just get a couple of copies. This is a great book to hand to your pastor, to hand to your small group leader, to hand to your husband or your wife and y'all read it together. Again, it's called *How to Heal Our Racial Divide*. Get one or two copies and follow Pastor Derwin on social media and tell him thanks so much for being on the show and all his wisdom about prayer.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook? All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me as it warms up is sitting on my porch this afternoon while I finish up some work. So that is on my to-do.

Y'all have a great weekend. We will see you back here next Monday on Easter Monday. Remember that we don't record or release podcasts during Holy Week. But I do encourage you to take some time to be still and quiet with the story of Easter and how it changes everything for us. And then I'll see you back here on Monday, April 18th to continue our prayer series with the lovely and wise Ann Voskamp. We may have a little surprise for you tomorrow. So just stick around. We'll see you. Y'all, have a great weekend.