

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hi 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. Hope you had a great Easter and a great Holy Week. We are glad to be back with you. We've got a great show in store today.

Before we dive in, I want to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Athletic Greens](#). There's a lot to keep up with in our busy lives, right? So when it comes to things that will help us prioritize our health, wouldn't it be nice to not have to keep up with a supplement routine that comes with a bunch of different products? I know.

AG1 by Athletic Greens makes figuring out supplements so much easier. Why take a bunch of different things when you can just mix one scoop of powder in really cold water once a day? Every scoop is packed with 75 vitamins, minerals, and whole foods sourced ingredients in the highest quality that gives us major benefits like gut and mood support, boosted energy, and even healthier-looking skin, hair, and nails?

AG1 is delivered like clockwork every month, so it's super easy to make it a daily habit. No worries about running out or remembering to reorder and don't get me started on the single-serving travel packs that help us never miss a day. Just mix the powder in ice-cold water, drink it first thing every morning. That's it. With AG1, being good friends to our bodies each day is really that simple.

If you're looking for an easier way to take supplements, Athletic Greens has given you a free one-year supply of vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. So go to athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. That's athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Y'all check it out.

Intro: Today on the show, I get to talk with our good friend, Pastor Mark Batterson. You probably remember Pastor Mark from when he was with us on Episode 177 and Episode 270. Those are linked in the show notes if you want to go back and listen.

He is the lead pastor of National Community Church in Washington DC, and the New York Times bestselling author of 23 books including *The Circle Maker*, *Win the Day*, and maybe my favorite, *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*. Y'all, I love that book so much.

His latest one is called *Please, Sorry, Thanks: The Three Words That Change Everything*. It released just last week, and it's about how we get better at using

those three simple magic words: please, sorry, and thanks, and how that will help us in leadership and in relationships just in life.

I'm so grateful for him, his voice in our lives. I cannot wait to share this one with y'all. You know we love doing the last show before Holy Week as a pastor show and the first show back with the pastor that we love as well. So here is my conversation with Pastor Mark Batterson.

[00:02:35] <music>

Annie: Pastor Mark, welcome back to That Sounds Fun.

Pastor Mark: And here we are.

Annie: Here we are. What a treat! Thank you for making time to do this.

Pastor Mark: Well, thank you. I've been looking forward to it. Everything is more fun with Annie Downs.

Annie: Thank you. I appreciate it. I've never known life without Annie Downs. So I just have to take your word for it. I can't be sure.

Pastor Mark: Listen, trust me, I'm on the other side of you, and it's fun.

Annie: Thank you.

Pastor Mark: It's fun.

Annie: What our friends listening know is we don't record or release shows during Holy Week, but you are the show the day after Easter. Will you tell me a little bit about what your church is getting to do for the first time this year on Easter?

Pastor Mark: Yeah. Forty-three years ago, a pastor named Amos Dodge had a thought that what if we did an Easter sunrise at the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall as the sun rises over Washington, DC? And this year, they asked us, National Community Church, to begin hosting that annual gathering.

Annie: Wow.

Pastor Mark: So, Annie, in all the years of pastoring, this is probably one of the most humbling things ever. Because when Laura and I first moved to DC, our first Easter was '95.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Pastor Mark: And we got up early and bundled up and made our way down to the Lincoln Memorial. And it was so unforgettable. I just wouldn't have imagined all these years later that we would be able to host that gathering. So, you know, thousands of people sit on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, same place where Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. Someone pinch me. It's one of those pinch-me moments.

But I will say this, to be able to declare that the tomb is empty and that we serve a risen Savior on the National Mall just feels like a declaration of who we are and what we're about.

Annie: Will you talk for a minute about... Gosh, I have so many thoughts about this. Will talk for a minute about God incubating a dream? I mean, you couldn't have dreamed "I hope I preach there." But 20... I can't do the math very quickly. Twenty-seven, twenty-eight years ago?

Pastor Mark: Yeah, 27.

Annie: That y'all were standing there... Because there's so many of our friends listening who have dreams in their hearts or who have moved to a new city and we forget that sometimes God incubates dreams for 30 years.

Pastor Mark: It's true.

Annie: Right.

Pastor Mark: Wow. Now my brain just flipped into a different headspace. Because did you know the cedar of Lebanon takes 30 years to flower?

Annie: No, I did not know that.

Pastor Mark: But wait for this. But it can live to 1,000 years, Annie. But it doesn't flower, it doesn't produce anything for 30 years. So there's something hidden in nature. Romans 1:20, that God's invisible qualities, His divine nature. And by the way, the cedar of Lebanon, there's a chemical compound that it produces that repels snakes.

Annie: What are you saying to me?

Pastor Mark: So if you take... Well, here is what I'm-

Annie: This is too prophetic.

Pastor Mark: No. Here's what I'm saying: that all truth is God's truth.

Annie: That's right.

Pastor Mark: By the way, one of my favorite books is *The Hidden Life of Trees*. So praise God for special revelation. We call it the Bible. But let's not discount, general revelation. It's called nature and it's God's handiwork.

Annie: It's just so encouraging for so many of us who think, "Man, I wonder if God will ever (fill in the blank)." And then He goes, "Yeah, in 26 years I will. In 40 years I will. But not the day you dream it necessarily."

Pastor Mark: I'm gonna flip this question on you. I felt called to write at 22 but I didn't write a book until 35. So I think God was accumulating some life experience. That's my take now looking back on it. But about year 10 or 11 or 12, I knew I was called to write, but I was so frustrated.

And I will say this. Eventually, I leveraged my 35th birthday as a deadline. I said, "I'm not turning 35 without producing a book." Was that true for you, too? Like, did it take a minute?

Annie: Yes. And you know, it's really interesting, especially when we're thinking about the National Mall, part of the story is I was a writer as a kid but I didn't know that God was setting me up that when I turn... I mean, my first book didn't come out till I was 32. I mean, I probably wrote when I was 10, I wrote a picture book when I was 10 and then my first book didn't come out till I was 32. And actually wrote it when I was 26 and it didn't come out till I was 32. So that's a whole other part of the story, right? That ain't get out of me long before it gets on a shelf.

Pastor Mark: Wow. Wow. Wow. Wow.

Annie: Tell me the part about how y'all get to have a Christian service on a national monument like that. Is that okay?

Pastor Mark: That gathering actually got grandfathered in. You can only sit on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for presidential and congressional events, Annie. But because this has been happening for 43 years, somehow it has found favor. Again, we drink from wells we didn't dig.

Annie: That's so true.

Pastor Mark: We eat from fields we didn't plant. We live in houses we didn't build. So we can't take any credit for it. It's just fun to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. So praise God for a lot of faithfulness that sets us up with God's favorite.

Annie: Oh, man, that's great. My hope is that today, the day after Easter, that we'll be able to see pictures and watch video and all that. We'll link to some of that that y'all share from the church. For any of our friends... I mean, I just think Easter is the day that so many people go, "I am going to go to church. I haven't been. I've been sleeping in all winter. I've been hibernate like a bear. I'm coming out. I'm gonna go to church on Easter."

So maybe they're joining us today because they're like reinvigorating this rhythm of their faith life. What's some encouragement you would say to somebody who's like jumping back in or maybe jumping in for the first time?

Pastor Mark: Yeah, the tomb is still empty on the Monday after Easter.

Annie: That's right.

Pastor Mark: So it is something, Annie, that we celebrate every day in every way. If the tomb is empty, then all bets are off, all things are possible. This is the centerpiece of our faith. And it's more than personality. I bet positivity is one of your strengths. I'm throwing a dart here.

Annie: You're correct. You're correct.

Pastor Mark: So, Annie, see if you identify with this. Our family jokes that I'm the guy that wakes up every day wondering if today is the day I win the lottery and I don't even play the lottery. But that today might be the day that I win.

Annie: Totally.

Pastor Mark: I'm Emily Dickinson guy, I dwell in possibility. I love that piece of poetry. But I hope those who are listening know it's not just personality, it's theology. We live at the intersection of two realities, two theologies: the faithfulness of God is pursuing us from the past and the sovereignty of God is setting us up for the future. And we live where those two theologies, those two realities overlap.

So the way we say it at NCC is so far so God, and the best is yet to come. And we live kind of right there where God is just so real, He's ever-present help in time and need, and He is the God who's preparing good works in advance.

Annie: I mean, you're a pastor of a church, I'm on the teaching team at Cross Point. No one's gonna be surprised that we are pro-local church. To me, there's a lot of like anywhere you take your body is a commitment. You know, when we go to the gym, we're committing our bodies there, when we go to a restaurant, when we go to a show.

So embodying our faith, to me a lot is why it's worth showing up on Sunday. What are some reasons you would say that, yeah, if churches hurt you before or people at church have hurt you before, what's the reason for getting up and going to church?

Pastor Mark: Well, you won't find a perfect church.

Annie: Right. Especially once you get in there.

Pastor Mark: There aren't any perfect people.

Annie: Once I show up, I screw it up. I'm telling you.

Pastor Mark: You know what C. S. Lewis said, Annie? He said that he went to church. Stop and think about it. C. S. Lewis was brilliant. There probably wasn't any preacher on the planet who was going to say something he didn't know. But he said he went to church because he was concerned about solitary conceit.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Pastor Mark: In other words, when we're all by ourselves, it's just easy to morph in the wrong directions. This is not a solo sport, this is a team sport. So there's something about being in a cloud of witnesses, in a community of believers. I call it supernatural synergy. There's something that happens when we worship and disciple and commit ourselves to being a part of a local church. I think it's significant.

Annie: I messaged my mentor this morning, Pastor Mark, because I mean, this morning when I was trying to read my Bible, it was one of those where the Holy Spirit just wouldn't get off my back. Do you know what I mean? Like, just wasn't letting me sit in it. Because twice in a row, I've kind of bumped at...I haven't kind of. I've bumped into the same sin twice in a row.

And after the first time, what I said to myself is, well, if you do this again, then you got to tell somebody. If you do this again... And what ends up happening, if I keep doing that is I never confess and I keep secrets and I'm not in community.

So I had to tell her this morning. I was like, "It was twice. I've run into the same thing twice. And I told myself after once I would tell you, and I told myself after

twice that I could wait one more time, but I know I can't." And if I don't go to church and look people in the eyes once a week-ish as best I can, then I can keep a lot of secrets too and no one ever knows my sin. And scripture says, "When we confess our sin is when we're healed."

Pastor Mark: And it's we confess to God for forgiveness, but we horizontal-confess to each other for healing. I think that's so good. Our pastor of prayer for many years said that-

Annie: What a great job.

Pastor Mark: Well, yeah, how great is that. ...said that we don't just need accountability partners, we need expectability partners. In other words, a church should be some herd immunity against fear or cowardice or... There's something about being around people with faith that it elevates... we dream bigger and we think longer, and we pray harder. So it's both the accountability, I think, and the expectability.

Annie: I love the idea of herd immunity is what happens when you go to church. That's awesome. I mean, of course, we do. I walk out every surface and I've thought something new or I've sung something that I really meant. I mean, very often I have something to process when I walk at a church because of herd immunity. That's so good.

[00:14:39] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Brooklinen](#). Our winter hibernation season may be behind us but y'all know your girl AFD is always about a good night's sleep. Rest is always in season. You should know this. You deserve the best dress. Brooklinen has your comfort covered with a lineup of cozy home essentials especially made for relaxation.

Brooklinen makes sheets that drove the internet wild and have been keeping people comfy ever since, including me. You may already know this about me. I have multiple sets of Brooklinen sheets so that my bed is never not made up with them, no matter if some are in the wash or not.

The classic and luck sheets are made to meet the needs of hot and cold sleepers and always look as good as they feel. They only use the highest quality materials for their products such as long-staple cotton, so everything Brooklinen creates is built to last. And they are so awesome. The sheets are so awesome, you guys.

With over 100,000 five star-reviews, 100k, you guys, it is no wonder they're go-to for stepping up all things winding down. If you're looking to elevate your space and your R&R style but aren't interested in having a bunch of decisions you have to make, Brooklinen's bundles put everything you need in one place. They have options for bed, bath or both. Even better, when you bundle you can save up to 25% off.

Shop in-store or at [brooklinen.com](https://www.brooklinen.com) for a home refresh at its best. For a limited time, my friends get \$20 off, plus free shipping on orders of \$100 or more with the code THATSOUNDSFUN. That's brooklinen.com, code THATSOUNDSFUN for \$20 off.

Sponsor: I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Raycon](https://www.raycon.com). Let's face it. With coffee and teas starting at like \$5, yes, even without any customizations, and our bank accounts having their limits, we are officially in need of the greatest products that do the same thing as their higher price cousins but at our normal people attempting to live wisely price point.

So a good duplicate or a dupe as you know is crucial for getting the highest quality at the best price. One dupe you definitely shouldn't sleep on, Raycon wireless earbuds. Raycon is premium audio at the perfect price point so you can listen to what you want when you want without breaking the bank.

I mean, there's no reason to adding new budget worries just to be able to listen to great quality audio on the go, you know? Raycon's mission is to prove that you shouldn't have to pay an arm and a leg for quality sound and essential smart tech listening features. You can get a pair and despair and still pay less than you would with some of those other more big time tech brands out there.

Raycon knows that in this economy every purchase needs to be perfect. So listen to this. They offer "buy now, pay later" options right now you can pay as low as \$18 at checkout. They have an easy and free return guarantee. They offer two years of product protection insurance for just a few bucks and they offer free domestic shipping and flat fee international shipping.

They have over 50,000 five-star reviews, which is amazing. I wonder if I can predict why so many people love them based on my own experience. Could it be the custom gel tips for the perfect, most affordable in-ear fit? Maybe. Or their water and sweat resistance so they are a great companion for your workouts? That is helpful. Or maybe it's the eight hours of playtime which means you have to charge them rarely. You have heard me say this before: I charge my Raycon so rare I often lose the charger. And I have to keep up with it and ask Ashley to help me.

Go to buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun today to get 15% off your Raycon order.
That's buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun to score 15% off.
[Buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun](https://buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Mark Batterson.

[00:18:18] <music>

Annie: Okay, so the Monday after Easter, are you exhausted? What does it feel like to pastor like marathon pastor during Easter weekend?

Pastor Mark: I mean, I hope this is okay. I call it a holy hangover.

Annie: Yeah, for sure.

Pastor Mark: It feels like a Mack Truck hit you. But—Oh, this is so fun, Annie—not only do we have a unique fingerprint, voiceprint and eyeprint, but we have a unique sweat print. There are 373 chemical compounds that create a unique sweat print. And where I'm going with that is this, that we're called to love God heart, soul, mind, and strength. So to me, strength is blood, sweat, and tears.

So I think what's so beautiful is that on a day when I'm exhausted, I'm also energized because I'm doing the will of God. So next time someone tells you you stink, just say thanks because it's a unique sweat print, and I would say it's a beautiful aroma to God. When we use our calories, when we use our energy to serve God's purposes, I think it's actually a really beautiful thing.

Annie: Will you speak for a minute to our friends listening who are on church staffs? Because they have worked, y'all have worked for months. I mean, since Christmas, our church staff has worked on Easter. So what would you say if you had a team meeting with all the church staff people listening, what would you tell them on Monday after Easter?

Pastor Mark: Well, Annie I get to do quite a few professional sports circles. I'm doing a lot of chapels and interfacing with a lot of coaches. Part of it is that that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a professional athlete. But long story short, what sets professional athletes apart is rest and recovery, not practice.

They're really good at the rest and recovery. So I think that in church world the best of the best aren't just good at giving God 110%. They're really good at the Sabbath. They're really good at Saleh. They're really good at learning to rest and recover.

Now, this is a three on the Enneagram saying that. This is a performer and achiever, someone that's thinking about the next book before this book comes out. You know, I'm preaching to myself. But I have learned to be religious about one thing, and that is the Sabbath. That I've got to make sure that I'm guarding my boundaries so that I can really catch my breath.

And I tell our staff, "Make sure you use all your vacation days." That's good stewardship. Make sure that you are checking out. On your day off, make sure that you're checking out some of the technology that may be just takes you right back to work. I would say just catch your breath.

I mean, that's the original meaning of the Sabbath to catch one's breath and let the Spirit catch up with you. And guess what? The emails will still be there when you get back. All of the work will still be there.

Annie: Man, that is so encouraging for me to hear you say as an employer, to remind me that it is good stewardship for me to encourage everyone who works here take every day, take every day. That's good stewardship. That is important for me to hear.

Pastor Mark: You know, Annie, we talk about a theology of fun, and you might be like the patron saint, I don't know, of fun. But I really believe this. There's a few things that I think need to be stated for the record. One, who you are is more important than what you do. Let's not chew people up and spit them out. Like let's see their future, that this is an opportunity to develop their leadership.

Then second, you are not going to be at peak productivity if you're not having fun. This is just too hard to do not to do it with a smile on your face. So I think you have to keep a sense of humor. And of course, humor and humility have the same etymological root.

Annie: Do they?

Pastor Mark: Oh, yeah.

Annie: What?

Pastor Mark: Listen, the most humble people-

Annie: You just drop bombs on here. Every time. Every time.

Pastor Mark: Annie, is it not true that the most humble people laugh at themselves the most?

Annie: Yeah.

Pastor Mark: They just don't take themselves too seriously. So people who try to impress people are unimpressive. People who aren't trying to impress anybody are super impressive. And on that note, you really can't care for people until you don't care what they think about you. Now, once you don't care about what they think about you, now you can actually care for them.

So much of life and ministry is getting past or self-consciousness, which is part of the curse. I mean, they were naked and unashamed before the fall. So it was self-consciousness that gets the best of us.

You know even as a communicator you're not going to be an effective communicator if you care about what people think about your quote-unquote performance. It's not until you get past that then you begin to hit on all cylinders as a communicator.

Annie: Yeah, that's beautiful. So speaking of that, *Please, Sorry, Thanks*, your new book, I mean, you talk a lot about the tongue has the power of life and death. I mean, we're all communicating constantly. And we're seeing it in great ways and in terrible ways on the internet.

So tell me about the moment you went, I've got to write a book about using the words please, sorry, and thanks. Like, I've got to get in my people that listen to me that we've got to start using these words again.

Pastor Mark: Now, can we come back to common enemy and common humanity?

Annie: Yes.

Pastor Mark: I feel like I want to touch on that. But here's the big picture, and this is good news. You only need to be good at three things. If you're good at please, sorry and thanks, you are good to go. It's the greatest predictor of success, I believe, in life, in love, in leadership.

Beyond a PhD., PST (please, sorry, thanks) is going to be at your workplace, in a marriage, in friendship, even in a relationship with God. If you're good at please, sorry, and thanks. Everything else is going to take care of itself.

So there's this thing called the constructive conception of language. It's this idea that words don't represent the world objectively. Words create the world subjectively. So our words have the power to bless or curse. And our words will create worlds of hurt or worlds of hope.

So the power of words, words create worlds is sort of the basic premise of the book. And then it's honestly going back to what our parents probably taught us: it's the three magic words. Annie, they were right.

Annie: I wrote that down. I wrote magic words on my notes as I was reading. I was like, "Pastor Mark is writing a book about the magic words."

Pastor Mark: It is true. It is true. But now here's the fun thing. There is an art and a science to these three words. So the science I kind of geek out on like-

Annie: It's awesome.

Pastor Mark: I mean, there are even studies that show... and I don't know who does these studies. They kind of cracked me up. But if you talk negatively to your plants, those plants will languish. If you talk positively to your plants, those plants will flourish. Like what's true of plants is true people.

I could cite a couple of dozen studies, and I cite some of them in the book. That literally if you want to change your life, you have to change your words. You just have to. And that's where, by the way, as someone who has a daily Bible reading plan, Scripture is our script cure. This is how we rewrite some of those negative narratives. And you'll be surprised. Read the book through the please, sorry, thanks, filter and you'll be amazed how often those words pop up, and how important they really are.

Annie: You write about this in the book, but the idea that God could have created in any way. He didn't have to say, "Let there be light." And if we're made in God's image... I mean, I wonder if that's why plants respond is because plants have always responded to image bearers and to God telling them what to do.

Pastor Mark: Yes. Everything in the universe was once said.

Annie: Yes, it's so bizarre.

Pastor Mark: What even gets crazier, Annie, is that everything you see was one said. So everything comes out of the power of God's voice. We don't have time to deep dive this.

Annie: So good.

Pastor Mark: But once you get outside of 20 to 20,000 hertz, which is our hearing range, now sound becomes ultrasonic or infrasonic and now you begin to see the power of

sound waves that we think phonics. But the truth is it's physics. I know we can't big bang the world like God did, but don't tell me that your words don't create worlds as well because they really do.

For better or for worse, our words are self-fulfilling prophecies. Don't you love it, Annie, when science confirms what Scripture said like thousands of years ago?

Annie: Yes.

Pastor Mark: Solomon said it best, like you cited: the power of life and death. And is there any greater power? No. The greatest power is in the tongue. I think if we can learn to leverage our words. Ephesians 4 talks about our words being gifts. And it's the same word that gets translated 'gift' or 'grace'.

So what if we treated our words, "I'm going to give you a gift," and we gave those words as a gift? I think the world would be a better place. We were talking about how it's kind of unfortunate that this book is even necessary.

Annie: I wasn't gonna say that. I told you I wasn't gonna say that in the show.

Pastor Mark: Well, but we need a rising tide of please, sorry, and thanks. We just happen to find ourselves in a cultural moment, where everybody's blaming everybody for everything. That's just not going to solve anything. So recapturing and turning it into an art form where your please and your sorry, and your thanks actually carry weight. But you say these things kindly and creatively and thoughtfully. It sounds too simple to be true but the greatest truth or the simplest truth. I think that was Occam's razor. That's what that was about.

Annie: Yeah, you wrote about that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, the science you have in each section just had me geeking out in Frothy Monkey coffee shop yesterday. I mean, I was like loving it. But one of the things I thought was so interesting that you said when you're talking about "we don't have the power to Big Bang like God did," but you say 1000 compliments and one criticism equals one criticism. So we can blow some stuff up with one criticism. I've experienced that on both sides on the giving and the receiving.

Pastor Mark: It's this negativity bias. You know, we have about 60,000 thoughts a day and 80% are negative. That you do have a very real negativity bias. So we have to work hard to counteract that.

Annie: And you write about having a real concern about social media.

Pastor Mark: Well.

Annie: I know.

Pastor Mark: Annie, that brings us back to... Let me big-frame this. You know, wide angle this. There are kind of two ways to look at things. You can have a common enemy that anybody that doesn't look like me, think like me, vote like me is part of an out group that we just demonize and they become a common enemy.

Or—and this is the only biblical alternative—we can have a common humanity, that instead of demonizing we humanize, and the image of God in me greets the image of God in you. And I think it goes back to a theology and dignity that we got to go all the way back. To me, every problem has to be reverse-engineered back to Genesis 1. I think rediscovering that were created in the image of God.

I shared this in the book, but I have two rules of life. One, everyone is my superior in some way in that I learned of them. Like, I want to take a posture of learning from other people. And then two, everyone's fighting a battle we know nothing about. So could we just have the extra measure of grace?

Oh, I had this idea. How fun would it be if all of your podcast listeners did this? I think everybody ought to carry around a picture of their five-year-old self. Like their kindergarten picture. And when someone's like being super mean, just like pull it out.

Annie: You're talking to this person.

Pastor Mark: This is me. So when you meet someone, it's like starting to read a book on page 117. Like, if you don't know what happened on page 5, or 22, or 72, you know, you're gonna judge a book by its cover instead of really treating other people as human beings. So, here we are, this is the hand that was dealt us-

Annie: Is this a bigger problem in the church than you thought it would be? Like, is this a bigger problem for Christians than you'd imagined a decade ago? Are you talking to everyone or are you kind of looking at us as faith people and going, use these words better?

Pastor Mark: Well, how many layers down the layer cake do we want to go today, Annie?

Annie: As hard as you want, Pastor Mark. I'm here for it. You know me.

Pastor Mark: I want to be careful because we get... You know, okay, words matter, and how we nuance things these days is really important. And I don't want to ruffle any feathers

but I do believe that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. It just is what it is.

But I also believe in original blessing before original sin. Like if you look at the sequence of Genesis, that God blesses us. And we are made in His image. No matter how fractured we are by sin, you are still an image bear. And I think that sequence is significant.

So we have to be careful as the church to not just throw people out because they think different or look different. I think we have to remind ourselves that we are made in the image of God. And if we treat each other that way, now the ground is level at the foot of the cross and we can let Jesus do for us what He does and take care of that sin problem.

But I think we got to get back some of the common ground and common grace. That's what's lacking in culture. And there's such a lack of civility that we are canceling each other right and left.

So part of what I'm praying for with the book, Annie, is just a rising tide of please, sorry, and thanks. And I think if we had that in the church, we would get a lot further. In fact, Romans 2 is the linchpin of my theology, that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. So when God wants us to change, He doesn't threaten us or nag us, He shows us kindness. And if that doesn't work, He shows us more kindness now.

Annie: I know. It doesn't make any sense.

Pastor Mark: What a good God! What a good God! He's so patient. He's so long-suffering with us. So I think we could afford to... In fact, one more thought as it relates to sorry. If Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" to those who literally nailed Him to a cross, then, Annie, I don't have a leg to stand on. I've got to be seventy times seven. I've got to try to be undefendable and I've got to try to be a person that shows grace to anyone and everybody that I meet.

Annie: I think that some tension I wrestle with this feeling like if we're going to change, I need to go from level two to level ten. And that feels really hard. Like, okay, well if everybody's supposed to be all loving and all gracious and dah dah dah, that's too many steps.

But if you tell me one step is saying please more and one step is saying sorry more, and one step is saying thanks more, those feel like handholds. As I was reading the book, I thought, These are handholds that I can really be thoughtful about, and go like, Okay, if all you can do today is that you tell the story... Will you tell the story

in the book about the guy who decided to say thank you to everyone who made his cup of coffee?

Pastor Mark: Yes. And it was like 964 people. Because it's not just the barista at the Frothy Monkey.

Annie: Frothy Monkey, yeah.

Pastor Mark: It's not just the barista pulling the shot of espresso, you know, there was a truck driver who brought those beans. And those beans there was a farmer somewhere who harvested them. And there's a lot in between.

Annie, it's the last part of the book that just to me I'm praying for a revival of gratitude. So, you know, right now our hearts will beat about 100,000 times today and it'll pump six quarts of blood through 60,000 miles of veins and arteries and capillaries.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Pastor Mark: We have 25 trillion red blood cells, and every red blood cell has about 260 million proteins called hemoglobin. And it's the hemoglobin that then delivers oxygen to the cells. So my question, Annie, is, when was the last time any of us thanked God for hemoglobin?

Annie: Right.

Pastor Mark: We just don't do that. But I think there's capacity for us to grow in our gratitude for the God that we take for granted. In Him we live and move and have our being. So to the person who says, "I've never experienced a miracle," with all due respect, you have never not. In fact, you are one.

Annie: Yes, yes. Oh my gosh. I love all the science you keep in your brain, Pastor Mark. It makes me so happy.

Pastor Mark: It's a scary place in here.

Annie: No.

Pastor Mark: It's a scary place.

Annie: No, no. It is a circuit that I love attending. I absolutely love it. It's the best.

[00:38:54] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about another amazing partner, Indeed. Okay, you may have seen my posts on Instagram a couple of weeks ago about how grateful I am for my teammates. I know those of you who lead teams understand how crucial it is to build and hire in such a way that you've got people with talents and experience that truly match the roles you need filled.

You and your company can find them in the same way we found several of our amazing team members. If you're hiring, you need [Indeed](#). Indeed is the hiring platform where you can attract, interview and hire all in one place. Don't spend your valuable hours digging through multiple job sites looking for candidates with the right skills when you can do it all and fast with Indeed.

Finding great talent doesn't have to be a second job. I mean, you already have a full-time job, right? You can reclaim your time and find top talent fast with Indeed. Their suite of powerful hiring tools like assessments and virtual interviews allow you to find top talent fast.

This is the part that I love most. With Indeed instant match, they do the hard work for you. You simply sponsor a job and boom, instant match shows you your candidates whose resumes fit the jobs evident immediately after you post. Indeed knows hiring needs to be cost-effective and efficient when you're running your own business.

Visit indeed.com/soundsfun to start hiring now. Just go to indeed.com/soundsfun. [Indeed.com/soundsfun](https://indeed.com/soundsfun). Terms and conditions apply. Cost-per-application pricing not available for everyone. Need to hire, you need Indeed.

Sponsor: And I've one last amazing partner to share with you, the [Hallow App](#). Oh y'all, I loved using the Hallow App during Lent this year. And I'm so looking forward to continuing to use it. So I'm doing Eastertide too.

Hallow App is the number one prayer app in the world. It's a Catholic app. It's so interesting to pay attention to all the ways that overlaps and connects with my Protestant faith. And they've seen over 9 million downloads and 150 million prayers completed. That is so cool.

Hallow helps you to pray, meditate, and sleep better, providing resources for you to build a daily routine and a habit of prayer. There are thousands of prayers, meditations, and Christian music available on the App and for all parts of your day.

Begin the day with scripture reading and reflection. You can play the Bible in a Year Podcasts with our guy, Father Mike as you get ready or on your commute. You can listen to peaceful music throughout your day or end your day with the Bible story. They feature meditations that are led by our friend Jonathan Roumie and by other notable voices like Jim Caviezel and Mark Wahlberg and others.

Hallow is offering our friends an extended three-month trial of all 10,000 plus prayers and meditations at hallow.com/thatsoundsfun. Just visit for an extended three-month trial.

And now let's go back and finish up our conversation with Mark Batterson.

[00:41:37] <music>

Annie: Okay, so as we're grabbing the book this week, as we're reading through it, and as we are walking again toward another election season, another high profile election season while we've had midterms, you're pastoring in DC, just like our buddy David Platt. I mean, y'all are pastoring in the heart of this. How do we lead with gratitude in a season that feels scary, that feels like we're gonna be mad before we realize it? How do we lead with gratitude going into an election season?

Pastor Mark: I mean, here's the thought: keep a gratitude journal. We don't see the world as it is, we see the world as we are. So I think there's this cluster of brain cells called the reticular activating system that determine what we notice and what goes unnoticed.

And when you keep a gratitude journal, you're just noticing things to be grateful for. So I would even say in the process that let's show some common grace to each other. God has shown common grace to us. The polarization, you know, feels like it's at an all-time high. You know, there is a negative partisanship that I think crossed the line somewhere.

And I would just remind us that if your biblical theology filters through your political ideology, that's called idolatry.

Annie: Wow.

Pastor Mark: So we've got to make sure that we're thinking theologically about anyone, everything, and everything in between. I think that baseline of thanks is really, really important. If you want to defuse some of the tension, be it political or otherwise, these three words are pretty good at doing that: Please, sorry, thanks.

Annie: That's what I enjoyed about reading it is I feel like not only did you give us this fun science behind stuff, and the wisdom moving forward, but there were all these kind

of gates of like, can you walk through this gate? One of the things you say is selfish people don't say sorry.

And I was like, Oh, that is a new gate for me of going like, Okay, as I'm walking into this next season of my life, whatever it is, into the next few years as we walk toward another presidential election, if I'm not willing to say sorry, what am I being selfish about? So you give gates like that the whole way through, which I thought was... makes it a guidebook we need to keep next to us.

Pastor Mark: And at the end of the day, I want to be the one leper who came back and said thanks.

Annie: That's right. That's right. He was a Samaritan, not even Jewish.

Pastor Mark: Nine of them were healed physically but that one leper was healed of ingratitude. You know, gratitude isn't getting what you want, it's appreciating what you have. And life is good. God is good.

Listen, I have as many scars as anybody else. I mean, my wife Laura has fought two battles with cancer the last five years. You know, we've pastored through some tough times. But at the end of the day, life is a gift and God is good. I think your focus is going to determine your reality.

If there are any people listening, Annie, that are just a little tired, I get it. It can be very, very challenging. But at the end of the day, I got some good news. The kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. I know how this thing ends, with every nation, tribe, people language worshiping around the throne of God. What a beautiful promise! What a beautiful picture!

So be encouraged. May God give us a holy confidence in His promises. Let's keep on keeping on. I'm believing for a revival, I'm believing for just really good things, that God's gonna move in some great ways.

Annie: Oh, yes. I mean, I cannot wait. When books like this release, when seasons like this are going on, where we feel this kind of nationwide, if not globally, like uptake of the Holy Spirit, I'm always like, I'm ready to fast forward a year and see what's actually happening here. I want to see. I don't want to miss the experience.

But I'm also curious about... There's a handful of books... I mean, one of the joys of my job is I read everyone's books. So I know what the themes are that the Holy Spirit is trying to get in front of us because I've read everybody's books.

Pastor Mark: I love it.

Annie: I'm like, He's telling us to pay attention and to get right with culture. Not agree with culture, but to get right and be the humble side. And that's what you're inviting us to as well. It's beautiful.

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

Pastor Mark: No. I would just say, Let's stand in the gap as peacemakers, grace givers, and tone setters. I touch on those four principles of peacemaking-

Annie: Oh, I loved it. Page 84. I wrote it down.

Pastor Mark: Annie, it's really helped us because... You know, I'm literally less than a mile from the Capitol. We walk our dog to the Capitol and back. That's how close we are to being kind of in the epicenter of politics, so it can get a little crazy. But we have these four principles of peacemaking: Ask anything, listen well, disagree freely and love regard.

Annie: Love regardless. Love regardless.

Pastor Mark: Of course, Jesus... No one did it like Jesus. You know, Eugene Peterson said that Jesus is the dictionary in which we look up the meaning of words, which I love.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Pastor Mark: He is grace and He is truth. Grace means I'm gonna love you no matter what. Truth means I'm gonna be honest with you no matter what. And guess what? That creates some tension. Because I'm not going to compromise my convictions but there's nothing that you can do that will cause me to not love you. I don't have any other option.

That's the radical nature of the gospel, not just love your neighbor. Love your enemy. In other words, pray for those who persecute you, bless those who curse you, turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, give the shirt off your back. That is the gospel message. And that's what's going to change the world. That's what's going to turn this city upside down.

Annie: I'll tell you one of the rhythms that you changed in me reading this book was how Eugene Peterson always read another sermon before he preached a sermon. I was like, "That is such a good idea. I'm gonna start doing that."

Pastor Mark: Annie, can I ask you a question?

Annie: Sure.

Pastor Mark: Do you remember how Eugene he hung three pictures? Do you remember this?

Annie: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Pastor Mark: And Alexander White, the Scottish preacher is one of them that you're referencing. I'm starting to ask this question to people. Who would be the three pictures you would hang? Who were the three kind of... Who left fingerprints on your soul? Who really impacted your life?

So this is a fun question for listeners too. If you were gonna hang three pictures in your study of people who have had the greatest influence on your life, is there one that immediately comes to mind?

Annie: One of my grandmothers, my mom's mom is the first one that comes to mind. Because it's not that she directly taught me what to do, but she always... I caught more than she taught. Do you know what I mean?

Pastor Mark: And what was her name?

Annie: Ruth.

Pastor Mark: Ruth.

Annie: She's one of the ones that comes to my mind. Have you done it yet? Have you hung up three pictures yet?

Pastor Mark: I have not.

Annie: I haven't either.

Pastor Mark: But haven't either because it's so hard for me to pick like, you know, my grandfather, Elmer Johnson, the influence that he had on me and then I've got a few living legends in my life. You know what's funny? I think George Washington Carver would be one of them.

Annie: That made peanut butter?

Pastor Mark: Oh, yeah.

Annie: I love him.

Pastor Mark: Do you know his life verse was Job 12:7, Ask the earth and it will reveal its secrets. So he would get up at 4 a.m. and he would do prayer walks through the woods. And over time, sure enough, the God of nature did reveal to him so many different things. So I kind of have this holy curiosity that I find great affinity with George Washington Carver. So that might be one of my three.

Annie: Okay, I'm gonna ask today on Instagram when people are listening to this and we'll see who they list, who are the three people? Do you have anybody of your three that you would list? That's awesome. I can't wait to get people's answers.

Pastor Mark: I love it. So fun. Me too.

Annie: The last question I always ask, speaking of fun. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, Pastor Mark, tell me what sounds fun to you right now.

Pastor Mark: Oh, man. Well, I think coming off of an Easter weekend, I'm not going to say binge on Netflix, I'm not going to necessarily say ice cream. But you know what? I do love a good nap. I mean, Jesus napped. But to me, fun, I do... You know it's spring season in DC. So you got cherry blossoms, the weather starts to change.

You know what I love to do? I love going out by the Tidal Basin, so kind of right by the Jefferson Memorial. There's a bike circle that all kinds of bikers and runners go out there. I really enjoy, once the weather changes, just getting out on the bike and biking around the Tidal Basin. That sounds like fun.

Annie: We don't have to earn our fun, but you more than deserve it

Pastor Mark: Oh, thank you.

Annie: So fun we get to have without earning it. But thank you for making time to do this. I can't wait for people to get their hands on this book. So thank you.

Pastor Mark: Annie, thanks so much. God bless. Keep doing what you're doing. We're grateful. We need your leadership, so keep leading the way.

Annie: You're very kind. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:52:09] <music>

Annie: Oh, you guys, don't you love him? He's just the best. Oh, I'm so grateful for Pastor Mark. Hey, be sure to grab your copy of *Please, Sorry, Thanks*. Follow him on social media, tell Mark thank you for being on this show today.

And if you found this episode helpful or know someone you think would enjoy it, be sure to share it with your friends. Shoot it to them in a text or hit "share", posts on your social media. It means a world when you invite your friends into these conversations with us too.

Okay, so you heard what sounds fun to Pastor Mark, now we get to hear what sounds fun to one of our friends who listens just like you.

Okay, Anna, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Anna: Hey, I'm Anna. I'm from Bosley, Virginia, and I'm a mom to four, so life is really, really full and it's really hard to connect with friends these days. So it sounds fun to be escaping to somewhere with an ocean with my best girlfriends and no commitments for just a couple of nights so that we can laugh and eat and sleep and read and not be called mom for a couple of days.

Annie: Yes. Anna, when you go on vacation with your girlfriend, say you're leaving Thursday night you get back Sunday, do you want dinner reservations on Friday and Saturday or do you want to take a nap after you lay by the beach and then make a dinner choice in the moment?

Anna: Probably make a general choice in the moment one night, maybe reservations another night.

Annie: Yeah, because sometimes then it feels like vacation gets worky if everything is so scheduled.

Anna: Yes, 100%. And sometimes you do just need the nap. So yes.

Annie: Listen, a post-lunch, post-beach nap is kind of my truth.

Anna: Yes.

Annie: I love it.

Anna: Sounds amazing.

Annie: How far are you from the beach in Virginia?

Anna: We're actually only two hours from Virginia Beach. But if I'm going to a beach, I need to go to a North Carolina or South Carolina Beach.

Annie: Okay, those are the ones. You're like a Hilton Head girl?

Anna: Actually, this little beach called Sunset Beach, North Carolina is where I grew up going. And now my parents live there so I do get to go there often. So that's my favorite place.

Annie: Okay, Sunset Beach, one dinner reservation, one not, the girlfriends, just a couple of days, no one's gonna call you mom.

Anna: Yes. That sounds awesome.

Annie: I agree with you actually. No one calls me mom ever but I agree with you. It still is great.

Anna: You can come join us. All my friends would love to meet you. It'll be great.

Annie: I am coming. Oh, I love it.

Okay, if anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram and Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me.

And 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 is Easter leftovers. Let's go! Lent is over. We can eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, anything we want. We are free as birds because it's Eastertide, you guys. It's time to feast.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with a new friend I adore. Y'all are going to love her too, Jasmine Holmes. We'll see y'all on Thursday.