

# Congregational Questions

**Today during the sermon you mentioned that God has been asking you to first give grace, then speak into truth. You said that has been very influential challenging to you. Often it helps me connect the dots when a specific example is given. Could you provide that for us?**

Sure. Right before I left for sabbatical, I think in May, I had an interaction with another staff member over email. Instead of leading with grace and searching for understanding, I replied with multiple calls to “the truth” or to facts the way that I saw them and the absence of making values based decisions. The situation, the details, the facts, all of it wasn’t necessarily wrong, but the lack of grace was evident. The staff member was on a serious time crunch and trying to do a good job and everything about the heart behind the initial email was good, but without grace we both ended up hurting each other. At the first opportunity, following a short vacation, we connected and talked through the whole situation and we experienced what it was like to give each other grace out of the overflow of being connected to Jesus and reconciled to each other. I think that had I begun with grace, there would have been significant less hurt. We were able to work through it by sitting face to face and talking through it because we are committed to God, to each other, and to accomplishing the mission here, but looking back, I wish I would have had better language for what it means to go full grace first so that truth would be received. I hope that this example helps.

**How do you see your role in hiring new staff? How do you see your leadership teams informing you on hiring new staff?**

As the lead pastor, I think that these questions are intricately connected and I’m glad that they were asked together. Before getting to hiring, we have to talk about where we are going as a church and what God is calling us to accomplish here. Once we know where we are going, we can structure staff positions including roles and responsibilities in a way that helps us get to where we know that God is leading us. This is a combination of operating out of a spiritual center and using the gifts and strengths that God has given us to hire strategically. I think that the direction, job descriptions, and org chart functional parts of hiring will be influenced by making sure that we are creating the right teams to get us where we are going. As we actually go about hiring, I think that I would at least begin by doing what I appreciate was done for me, which is looking at character, competency and chemistry, confirmed through prayer, that finding the right people and acclimating them to the culture will be part of my job as the lead pastor.

**In what way have you led the staff as the equipping pastor in living out what you shared tonight about making disciples?**

Good question. Much of my job was to help staff grow and deepen their impact as ministers and team leaders in different departments. While I understand that it served its purpose for a time, like I shared in the Q&A time, I think that having a separate discipleship department and pastor was something that mitigated against a culture of making disciples within the organization. It is something that I think should shift as we seek to build each other up in love.

**How about establishing “servant leadership” sermons & classes - to deeply know who we are in Christ Jesus - to go deeper in “knowing” & “carrying Christ Jesus in our temple” “Christ Jesus the hope of glory”. We can’t give what we don’t have - we don’t know what power we carry if we don’t know Christ Jesus intimately!!**

I think that the short answer is “yes.” For sure we need to continue to provide opportunities, and even more targeted, in what it means to become fully devoted followers of Jesus through spiritual direction, spiritual disciplines, and living from a spiritual center.

**Do you see this church as OR feel this church is a “religious organization”? OR do you see it as & becoming a strong “spiritual epic center” where Father God, Christ Jesus & the Holy Spirit” can flow freely in their guidance, direction & destiny for their people!**

This seems like a complicated question and I’m not exactly sure how to answer it. But I would say that we are definitely a religious organization, and hopefully we are an organized group of people that are after the kind of religion that God is after, reaching the marginalized and living holy lives (James 1:27). I think that the individual calls that God puts on people also works out through the lives of people better when we aren’t always creating organization sanctioned events and ministries out of personal calling type ministries.

**Would you be willing to “bring” evangelists who are established ministries moving in the miracles, signs & wonders of the move of God – healing the sick (emotionally, physically, spiritually) Jesus said “you will do greater works that I”! Ministries that heal here but go into 3rd world countries & allow God to move!!**

I think that this really depends on the person, the timing, and the move of God. As far as having guest preachers and evangelists come to minister here, I think that this can be beneficial. I’ve also seen where people in communities begin to rely on people that are outside the community to come to minister. I think that the work of God in and through each of us out of a sense of humility and desperation and a heart that breaks for our community is what attracts the presence of God and will allow us to see the in-breaking of the kingdom of heaven through restorative healing of all kinds.

**What are your big dreams of how the Naz will function and meet the needs of our community?**

First and foremost is becoming a strong church where people can get help and learn to follow Jesus. Second I think is that we become really good at listening to our community so that we are addressing real needs. But the big dreams include finding ways to get beyond our four walls and create environments of grace and life throughout the community. This could involve renovating vacant commercial areas or other public areas in a way that restores value to our community, creates welcoming third spaces, and really blesses the community. But I think that the big dreams will really become something that God instills in us as we align ourselves with his move, we create margin enough to be able to respond to his call, listen well to our community, and step out in faith to bring heaven all throughout our community with missional imagination.

**A lot of us have seen you in a pastoral role for a lot of years. How will your role look different as our lead pastor?**

Good question. Over the last few years I have taken on many of the responsibilities of the lead pastor to learn what it is like. I think that a lot of that will be the same or similar, but I think that being the vision holder and helping to lead us forward toward a unified vision, as well as restructuring staff roles and working with the board and elevating their role in the church will be a primary difference.

**Do you have any visions for the youth/young adult ministries?**

To elaborate a little bit on what I said in the Q&A, I do think that the wave starts in the student section. It is vital to invest in and create opportunities for the faith of our young people to come alive. The vibrancy and vital signs of our congregation depend on it. Also, I think that the healthiest long term shift will be to create a role that aligns with the typical global view of what the NYI ministry would entail which does include teenagers, college and early adulthood.

**What will our congregation look like in 10 years?**

I really wish I knew, but I have no idea.

**What's your view on Genesis 1? Do you believe and teach literal 7 days of creation?**

As we believe as Nazarenes, the scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

Personally, I'm not sure if it was 7 literal days or a poem to help us understand and give us a bearing for the good beginning of creation. I definitely don't think that it is necessary to our salvation to figure out exactly the time frame in which it happened. We have quite a bit of leeway here and I think we should use it. There are certainly days that are measured in the first three days, but what we humans use to measure a day (the sun) isn't created until the fourth day. I don't think that the most important part of the passage is whether or not the time is literal, but what actually happens and the loving movement and statements of God throughout it.

**I'm concerned about how your family will adjust to the escalation of demands on your time and energy, especially in light of Jace's health issues. How is your wife, and how are you envisioning keeping a healthy balance in such a high demanding job?**

I did answer this in the Q&A and can elaborate a little more. We have talked at length about this. We both feel that this is the right place and time to step into this role. I have worked here for 10 years, so it is not a mystery to me what the job entails. I think that the 2 things that we will lean on significantly is setting boundaries and maintaining a day of sabbath rest every week. I have watched as many pastors throughout the Christian church have taken on more than God has asked them to in the name of getting more done. It has led to moral failure, ungodly compromise, and has caused immense amounts of personal pain, familial injury, and a continual question in my mind about the demands on this person. I did share that I don't want to meet the expectations of a congregations that might have me work 114 hours a week if it is unchecked. For this season, this is where we think that God wants us. As we learn the rhythms of this new job, our lives will certainly adjust. But in the long run, I would be disqualifying myself from ministry if I did not lead my family and my home well and that will always take precedent.

I'd also like to say something about the fact that my son has type 1 diabetes and that it was brought up in this question, seemingly as a constraint that would hinder my ability to be a lead pastor. Everyone has extenuating circumstances. Suggesting that someone would be more or less qualified to pastor a congregation based on a specific health situation in a family is inappropriate. We've got to hold a high view of 1 Timothy 3 for overseers. Every pastor must be engaged in godly leadership at home and this is a pre-qualification for oversight in the church. This is in no way limiting, but the environment that produces character that is useful for someone in an overseer role. My family gets my best. That is the high demanding job. The church gets seconds. If this reverses, any overseer would be disqualifying themselves.

**Each time there is a pastoral change, there are often changes implemented. What changes do you see that need to be made and how would you go about implementing them?**

Again, I was able to address this a bit in the Q&A, but I would like to reiterate that I'm not sure what changes would come. I think that our Sunday morning gatherings need to help us remember the future together and build each other up in love. Beyond that, we need to equip disciples for the work of ministry. This will require a season of healing, of listening, of assessing where we are and what God would make of us in this place. If we can't listen well to each other within the church, we will have consistent roadblocks as we attempt to reach out to the community. The overall idea that I want to run with is the idea of renovation. There are great things that have gotten us to where we are. Some of those things will help us in the months and years to come, but some have run their course. We will see as we go what remains and what stays. But it will be within the structure of serving the mission and advancing a vision that based on values rooted in Kingdom principles that we make these decisions.

**What part of the lead pastor role are you looking forward to serving in? Or do you feel will be the most challenging?**

I think that the most challenging thing is going to be building a new staff team in the next season. I am quite used to the people that I am currently working with, but with each person, the affect on church culture will present new challenges. Like I said in some of my other answers, we aren't talking about a shift in one leader, but there will be a major shift in overall leadership in this next season. I am most looking forward to developing and implementing strategy for Sunday mornings to come beautifully alive so that people can find help and build a life here, and that the church, specifically gathering to remember the future through worship, teaching, sacraments, prayer, fellowship, and generosity, that the church would be as valuable to the community in it's primary purpose as it says that it is and knows that it is.

**What spiritual disciplines do you personally find most important for keeping fellowship with and growing in Christ?**

Reading my Bible, talking about what Jesus is doing with other people, prayer, learning to pray in the Psalms specifically, and most recently I have had a revitalized connection with Jesus through personal worship at home.

**Could you name three Christian authors (besides writers of the Bible books) who have been most influential in your life?**

The three that I named in the Q&A are Dave Gibbons, Paul David Tripp and Donald Miller. Dave Gibbons wrote *The Monkey and the Fish*, *Xealots* and *Small Cloud Rising*. The themes of these books (in order) are learning to help people from within their culture, living in the way of Jesus,

and what the church might look like beyond the four walls of any given church building. Paul David Tripp wrote *Dangerous Calling* and *New Morning Mercies*. The themes of these books (in order) are the importance of pastoral integrity and connection within the body for a pastor because of the unrelenting attempts of the enemy to strike shepherds to scatter sheep, and a devotional that speaks the gospel into every day of the year. Donald Miller's books *Blue Like Jazz* and *Million Miles in a Thousand Years* have deepened my love for Jesus, taught me to embrace the mystery of the God we will never fully understand, and live a life that with meaning, purpose, and passion.

**Please share your thoughts about the accountability of staff members.**

Like all people, I think that staff should be accountable. For this to happen in a way that is honoring to God and the staff member, I think that there needs to be clear objectives, goal setting, and well outlined job descriptions. Through annual review processes at the least, and more informal tracking throughout the year, I think that every staff member wants to know what is expected of them and would love to know how they are doing in meeting those expectations, and held accountable. In this also is the growth opportunities that are latent in every staff member, just like are in all of us.

**We have heard what you believe are your gifting and strengths. Would you be able to share what you believe are your shortcomings and weaknesses?**

For sure. I think that one of my obvious short comings is experience. While I have experience here in this congregation for 10 years and have learned how to do many different jobs, I have never actually been a lead pastor. I do think that God has called and equipped me for this, but I feel ready for it much in the same way that a first time parent might feel ready and desperately inadequate. It's not that I'm ready because I know what is coming, but I am ready because the time is here and I know that God has been faithful to grow me and raise my capacity over and over again and I don't believe that he will relent on this front. As I learn more and more about myself, like I shared in the sermon *Are You In Grace?* on the morning of September 23rd, I have a tendency to look at issues in black and white rather than leading with grace. It is something that God is growing me in currently and is probably the most honest shortcoming that I am currently aware of.

**Which issue or issues do you feel are the most critical within the evangelical church today?**

I'll have to lean on Dallas Willard who has given me words for what I have felt and greatly influenced what I shared about creating strong churches that really are focused on making disciples of Jesus. Before his passing, Dallas was asked a very similar question about the evangelical church. I think he was right as he talked about our methods of evangelism and our commitment to ongoing evangelism through varied methods are certainly the greatest onramp to the way of Jesus that the world has ever seen. But in these tent meetings and revivals and altar calls and crusades and tracts and canvassing and street preaching and all of the various methods to help people come to Jesus, we have lost our grounding in the eternal current, the ancient ways that have sustained a life in Christ for those that come to faith in Christ. We are good at getting people to come and see and believe, but we have lost our way in apprenticing people in the way of Jesus, and we must become more substantial and expansive in welcoming new believers into the family and teaching them the great and glorious realities of what it is like to live as a child of the King.

**What are your expectations in regards to how the pastoral staff will work together as a team?**

I think it starts with refocusing the mission and then setting those short term visions that I talked about. When we listen well to our community and we have an abiding sense of the presence and direction of the HS, we can get on the same page where we know that we are working together. Without the prework, we would be asking a staff that loves God and loves people to be on the same page, but they are all working with different pages. We must have consensus on what God is calling us to in any season so that each staff person knows how their efforts and energies all help accomplish the tasks before us. We must know what we are trying to win at if we are going to be confident in working together as a team.

**The Church of the Nazarene has a very active World Missions program in 59 world areas and 685 missionaries all supported by all churches giving to Shares for Others. In the last 10 years, OroNaz has paid 100% shares for others only 2 times. What can we do to assure that we give 100% of our responsibility every year?**

I think that when it comes to budgeting, that our church budget should reflect the same Kingdom principles that we would expect for any family. There are some hard budget items that need to be paid. The first for any family is a tithe to the church and giving above that in cheerful generosity as led and enabled by the HS. I think that this value is something that we can do if we reduce some of our hard costs and attempt to budget with some margin rather than constantly expecting income to increase. I think it would be pretty simple to send our shares for others and district responsibility first as a model for what it means for each family to trust that God will provide for the rest of their needs.

**Are you a democrat or republican? Be careful how you answer this because I vote republican.**

Steve Scott allowed this question to be side stepped in the Q&A, but I want to speak into why. My hope is that we are selecting a lead pastor and following a lead pastor based on a relationship with Jesus not political affiliation. I know people in each party that love Jesus and follow Jesus faithfully. Following Jesus is the main thing, and it needs to stay the main thing. Our allegiance to Jesus is primary to all other allegiances or affiliations.

**What if you don't get the position?**

As has been true of my journey, I, along with my family, will seek God and do the work that he has prepared in advance for us to do in the way that he would have us do it. At this point, God has made it clear to walk through this process. If I don't get the position, God has more plans for us, and we are trusting God no matter what.

**Can I ask you any question?**

Of course. My email is [kurt@oronaz.org](mailto:kurt@oronaz.org). My phone number is 530-570-9199. I'm in the office Monday through Thursday. I'd love to talk to anyone about these or any other question they might have.