Leadership Lunch & Learn

Conversation Highlights & Leadership Discussion Outline

Special Guest: Pastor Jim Hennesy Church: Trinity Church — Cedar Hill, Texas Host: Pastor Joe Cormier — First Assembly of God Theme: Faith, Trust, Relationships, and Building a Lasting Legacy

Overview

After 46 years in pastoral ministry, including 32 years at Trinity Church, Pastor Jim Hennesy shares wisdom from his current season of leadership transition. The conversation explores the evolution of faith, the importance of maintaining a healthy heart, the power of covenant relationships, and the responsibility to build a legacy that outlives us.

1. Trusting God Without Knowing Every Detail

“The more you trust God, the less details you need. The less you trust Him, the more details you need.” — Pastor Jim Hennesy

Major points

- Trusting God does not necessarily become easier with experience.
- Faith is rooted in God’s character, not our understanding of circumstances.
- Trusting God also involves trusting His processes and the people He places around us.
- We can trust someone’s heart without assuming they will always make the right decisions.
- A new season of leadership may require a renewed dependence on God.

Biblical foundation: Genesis 12:1–4; Hebrews 11:8

Leadership question: Am I trusting God’s character, or am I demanding details before I obey?

2. Two Dimensions of Faith: “Let’s Go” and “Hold On”

Pastor Jim describes Abraham’s journey as two expressions of faith.

Let’s Go

Young man’s faith

Faith that initiates, pioneers, takes risks, and embraces the adventure of following God.

Example: Accepting the call to Trinity without first discussing compensation, and launching a $13 million building project.

Hold On

Enduring faith

Faith that perseveres through delays, uncertainty, disappointment, and seasons when God's promises remain unfulfilled.

Example: Abraham and Sarah waiting decades for the promised child.

Major takeaway: Mature faith is not simply the courage to begin. It is also the endurance to remain faithful.

Biblical foundation: Genesis 15–22; Hebrews 11:11

3. Three Practices for Maintaining a Healthy Heart in Ministry

A. Keep Building Altars — Belonging and Surrender

- Calling begins with belonging to God, not holding a ministry position.
- The altar represents surrendering ownership and control to God.
- Tests of faith reveal the depth of our surrender.
- Our identity must remain rooted in covenant with God rather than ministry achievement.

B. Practice Thanksgiving — Guarding the Heart

- Thanksgiving changes our perspective and spiritual atmosphere.
- Gratitude keeps difficult circumstances connected to God's goodness.
- We give thanks in circumstances, not necessarily for circumstances.
- Thanksgiving protects against discouragement, fear, comparison, and bitterness.

Key statement: Thanksgiving changes atmospheres.

C. Guard the Current of Your Heart — Internal Spiritual Health

- Our hearts often supply assumptions when we lack information.
- Fear, insecurity, and past disappointments can distort how we interpret situations.
- God's abundant grace must become the dominant influence within us.
- External circumstances should not have greater authority than the truth God has established internally.

Key statement: "My heart provides information for the data I do not have."

Biblical foundation: Genesis 22; Psalm 100:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 1–4; Hebrews 4:12

Leadership question: What is the prevailing current of my heart—fear, frustration, gratitude, or faith?

4. Ministry Is About Divine Encounters

Pastor Jim discusses the Hebrew word paga, emphasizing its meaning of meeting or encountering.

Major points

- Ministry places us at the intersection of spiritual conflict and divine opportunity.
- Some encounters are encouraging; others involve resistance and warfare.
- Leaders must recognize that difficult encounters do not have to define or damage their identity.
- We can approach ministry challenges with confidence in God's resurrection power.

Key takeaway: Every encounter is an opportunity to represent the life and presence of Jesus.

5. Covenant Relationships Are Essential to Healthy Leadership

"When I can't see God, if I can talk to somebody who is seeing God, then I can see God too."

Major points

- Pastor Jim's advice to his younger self: value relationships more.
- Ministry companions are more important than professional networking or transactional partnerships.
- Luke's faithful companionship with Paul illustrates the value of simply walking alongside someone.
- We receive encouragement and spiritual strength by observing God's work in others.
- Celebrating others protects us from unhealthy comparison.
- Every leader needs a few relationships where honesty, vulnerability, and mutual support are possible.

A powerful distinction: Success may bring a crowd, but covenant relationships keep us from being alone.

Biblical foundation: Ecclesiastes 4:9–12; Romans 12:4–5; Acts 27

6. Four Core Values That Shaped Trinity Church

Core value	Leadership principle
Substance	Prioritize the presence of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of Jesus.

Covenant Relationships	Commit to the well-being of others without demanding something in return.
Legacy	Build what will last and invest in generations beyond your own.
Marketplace	Measure the church's impact by what happens Monday through Saturday, not only on Sunday.

Pastor Jim describes these values as a God-given strategy during a season when he felt inadequate for the assignment of leading Trinity.

7. Legacy: Building Something That Outlives You

"They saw the promises afar off, were assured of them, embraced them…" — Hebrews 11:13

Major points

- Legacy requires seeing beyond our immediate circumstances.
- Faithful leaders invest in promises they may never personally see fulfilled.
- We benefit today from the faith, sacrifice, and prayers of previous generations.
- Future generations have potential for both good and evil; leadership should intentionally cultivate the good.
- We must be willing to live differently from the surrounding culture to pursue God's purposes.
- Generational momentum allows others to walk in blessings they did not personally establish.

Four expressions of legacy faith:

- See far off — Develop vision beyond your lifetime.
- Embrace the promise — Hold tightly to what God has spoken.
- Confess the promise — Agree with God's Word before seeing fulfillment.
- Live as a pilgrim — Remain willing to pioneer and follow God into unfamiliar territory.

Leadership question: What am I building today that will continue producing fruit after I am gone?

8. Navigating Leadership Transitions

Drawing from his experience of preparing to hand off Trinity Church after 32 years, Pastor Jim shares two observations.

Transition is more difficult than we expect. Even a healthy, God-directed transition can involve grief, uncertainty, and emotional difficulty. The discomfort does not necessarily mean the decision is wrong.

God can redirect our passion and capacity. Pastor Jim described sensing that the grace and enthusiasm for his previous assignment were shifting toward a new season of ministry.

Leadership takeaway: A change in assignment does not mean a loss of calling. It may represent a new expression of that calling.

9. Belonging: The Foundation of Personal Significance

Pastor Jim concludes by returning to the importance of belonging.

Major points

- Leaders can mistakenly attach personal significance to attendance, budgets, baptisms, and ministry success.
- Belonging answers the deeper human desire to be known, loved, and valued.
- Genuine friendship allows leaders to process pain without isolation.
- A healthy leader needs three to five trusted companions who offer mutual care and availability.
- We should never sacrifice our closest relationships in pursuit of ministry achievement.

Key statement: “Belonging is longing to be.”

Leadership question: If my title, position, and ministry accomplishments were removed, would I still know where I belong?

Five Major Takeaways

1

Trust God’s character

Faith does not require knowing every detail.

2

Keep your heart healthy

Surrender, gratitude, and spiritual abundance sustain leadership.

3

Invest in covenant relationships

We need people who help us see God when our own vision becomes clouded.

4

Build for future generations

True legacy reaches beyond our own lifetime.

5

Find significance in belonging

Our identity is rooted in God and authentic relationships, not ministry success.

Closing Reflection

The overarching message of this conversation is that faithful leadership is less about what we accomplish and more about who we become, who we walk with, and what we leave behind.

Pastor Jim's reflections challenge ministry leaders to move beyond performance-driven leadership toward a life of trust, spiritual health, covenant relationships, and generational faithfulness.

Prepared from the Thursday Leadership Lunch & Learn conversation with Pastor Jim Hennesy. Quotations are drawn from the supplied recording transcript; supporting points have been condensed and organized for clarity.