

# What is the Shepherd's Podcast?

## Episode 1 | Shepherds Podcast

**Pastor Lee.** Hello everyone, and welcome to something very special. We're calling the Shepherd's Podcast. I'm Lee Wilson. I'm actually here and with my pastor; Pastor John Carter. Pastor, how are you?

**Pastor John.** Hey, I am doing great, and I am excited about launching this new podcast. It's something that's been in our heart for a long time, and I'm excited about what I think God's gonna do as we define what it is that the Shepherd's Podcast is all about, and who we believe God wants us to reach.

**Pastor Lee.** So, right off the top, I just want to ask you, why the name, The Shepherd's Podcast?

**Pastor John.** Because we want to focus on people who are called to lead in the local church, specifically shepherds, and those who assist them. The word we use mostly to refer to the leader of a local church is pastor today, but the word pastor is a Greek word comes from a Greek word poimen, which means a shepherd. And in essence, a pastor is a shepherd. And there are some unique characteristics of pastoral leadership, and we want to carve those out and really speak to them.

**Pastor Lee.** I love that. You know a shepherd, we've heard this, years ago, I did in ministry, that you're a shepherd, but it's not something you hear a lot now in today's culture, even within the local church. And so I think it's important for people to understand this is not just a title, when we say a pastor. It's not just someone that's hired to a position. But it is a true calling.

**Pastor John.** It's a calling. It's a set of values. It's a work that God gives some to do. The reason I really have this in my heart to do this podcast is because over the last 30 years, there has come a great emphasis in the church, on leadership. And not without purpose. It's been an excellent emphasis. Like in the eighties, 76, before this, when you would be a pastor or trained for ministry, you would be trained in the unique characteristics, skills, tools, and qualities that are necessary to lead in ministry. Either in a local church, as a pastor, or as a ministry leader, or in evangelism and traveling and preaching.

There were unique skill sets that were ministered to and catered to, and unique challenges that ministry leaders face. About 30 or 35 years ago, some pastors began to say, well, you know what? We need to do better in terms of leadership. Our churches are not growing. One pastor in particular Bill Hybels really looked at the passage in Romans chapter 12, that says, that if your gift is leadership, lead with diligence, and he began to recognize that there's a unique gift of leadership that God gives to churches. God gives to every believer, and he said, let's develop that. So he started a leadership event, a summit once a year in August at his church in Chicago. That became sort of a think tank for leadership. And what began to happen over the last 30 years is that the dialogue between spiritual leadership and corporate and secular leadership began to flow together.

At the same time, a pastor named John Maxwell, who pastored a great church in California, felt the call of God to leave shepherding and go into leadership development. So, John Maxwell began to write books and materials all about leadership. And in each of these cases, their focus was not specifically just targeted to pastors, but to general leaders. So what began to happen is you would have spiritual leaders, marketplace leaders, business leaders, salespeople, entrepreneurs, in fact, believers from all walks of life, even people that aren't

leaders. And not everybody is a leader. Leadership is a gift. Right. But we're all called to lead in some capacity, but they began to flow those things together. So, over the last 30 years, if you go to a minister's conference, typically it's not even called that anymore. It's not called a pastor's conference. It's called the leadership event. Or a leadership conference with some fancy name. And often the speakers are not just pastors and ministers, but also marketplace leaders and others.

And there's been this intramural dialogue. And while that has been incredibly helpful on some levels, I mean, it's important for people who lead in one industry to communicate with people who lead in another industry because there are principles that transcend that. The challenge is that there are unique characteristics of spiritual leadership that are not required, of people who lead a business, a company who are entrepreneurs, who even lead a home. There's some unique requirements in God's word for spiritual leaders. And that began to go to the wayside. So today, if you are a pastor and you want to have a pastor's conference, or you want to go to learn about pastoring and the unique challenges that ministers face, you're gonna have a really hard time finding a podcast, finding any kind of equipping or training that's uniquely designed for ministers. I'll give you an example of that.

A few years ago, I went to a leadership event in California, and this leadership event was led by two incredible psychologists who also do a lot of leadership development in the marketplace. Okay. And they have a lot of crossover. They train pastors, but they're really more in the marketplace training. So, I went to this event, it was a week-long event. It was revolutionary in many ways for my life, but part of the training involved meeting with other people in small pods or groups. And I was in my pod, the only pastor.

Now, there were also people who were business owners, multi-millionaires, there were leaders right? Because it was a leadership event. So, when we would start to talk about the challenges each of us faced uniquely the guy who was running a construction company in Los Angeles that his net income was 10 million a year. He worked in Beverly Hills and just poured concrete for rich and famous people's homes, right? He was talking about the challenges he faced, and they were real and we were able to encourage each other.

Then someone else spoke who had a business about a \$400,000 a year coaching business, counseling business, and they were talking about the challenges they were facing, working with their clients, and we encouraged, right? And learn from each other. Then when it was my turn to talk, I began talking about what it was like to lead a 3000 member church in the northeast United States, that got some very unique characteristics. It's diverse racially, it's also diverse generationally. And I just began to share with them just some of the things that I was dealing with just in the last couple of weeks.

All of their faces hit the floor, and their only answers to me, and these were like highly successful leaders. Their answers were, well, you need to hire somebody to take care of that. You shouldn't have to do all of that, or you should just get another job. They literally didn't know how to advise me. They could give me practical suggestions on things that had to do with like hiring, looking for talent how to have a difficult conversation.

And those things could cross over. But the things about spiritual leadership as a pastor, you're not just employing people. You just don't have a single relationship with people. You are their shepherd. You become a spiritual father, and there are layers of relationship that are unique to spiritual local church leadership that the guy working for Google or the person working in a business doesn't have to deal with.

So, I found that in terms of their ability to help me, they were limited in their ability to advise. And I found myself saying, I wish I could go to a leadership event, conference, not that I wouldn't want to hear from marketplace leaders, but I was with pastors who get it. They just

literally couldn't get it. When I told them I had done two funerals. I was counseling a couple in crisis. I was preaching three times all the things that I did in a week, and I was telling them, I was feeling a little stressed. They said, how often does this happen? And I said, oh, this is normal. Yeah. This is, you know, not every week. But yeah. This is my life since I was 22, and I'm 59, at that time, about 57, 56. I said, this is life in ministry. They couldn't relate to it. And I realized at that moment that what's happened is we've so cross pollinated leadership in general, that we have lost the unique voice that pastors need to hear. And now when a crisis hits like Covid, what are we seeing? Pastors are quitting. Pastors are walking away.

**Pastor Lee.** Even committing suicide.

**Pastor John.** Committing suicide. Falling into sin. And it's open season on pastors and ministry leaders right now.

**Pastor Lee.** So, let's drill down a little in terms of the Shepherd's podcast. I love everything you're saying, and I think it is so important. Myself being in ministry for 40 years, I've actually pastored two churches. I've been a co-pastor. I've been a youth pastor, a children's pastor executive pastor. So, I get what you're saying and truly understand the need for it. But what are some of the needs that Shepherds Pastors have?

**Pastor John.** That's a great question. So, just to continue with this idea, based on your question. If I wanted to go to an apostolic conference and learn from people who believe in apostles, there's apostolic conferences all day long everywhere right? If I wanted to go to a prophetic conference and learn about prophets and prophecy, there's all kinds of unique material for people that feel called to that ministry. Where are the shepherds conferences? Where are the conferences, the podcasts, the material for the people who aren't just apostolically going places, but actually working in a local city, in a **local church with a group of people day in and day out with the unique challenges, the supernatural** opposition and the supernatural supply that is unique to local church ministry.

**Pastor Lee.** Well, we have it here.

**Pastor John.** We have it here. So, that's what this is all about. We are focused on pastors, we're focused on the local church. And if you feel called to a prophetic ministry, part of my calling is prophetic. I think you'll be blessed by this. If you're a teacher and you're called to teaching ministry, you'll be blessed by this. If you're an apostolic or missionary type person and you feel called to travel and missionary evangelism and apostolic work, you'll be blessed by this. But I'll tell you right now, you can have prophets, you can have apostles, you can have evangelists, but somebody's got to pastor what's left. Somebody's got to take the people who are saved, delivered, set free, and sit with them in a local community over a long period of time. And that's the work of the shepherd. And that's what I want to minister to.

**Pastor Lee.** I've seen you now for almost 20 years. I've been under your leadership as my pastor. And another unique thing about pastoring that I've learned from you, you have this unique ability, even in the midst of what's happening in the world, to make sure that what happens in culture and what the scripture says, to bring that comfort and also often clarity. And what do I do as a person? Like I watch you as a pastor, as a shepherd. You shepherd our congregation through the pandemic.

I watch you shepherd our congregation through the crisis that we had the racial crisis, political crisis. And it's not always easy. I've watched you cry, I've watched you, your heart's broken by the things that are happening in our world. And then I also, you're human as well. And so I think one of the things about pastors and shepherds not having a place to go, they tend to hold all those things in and they process it all and still have to stand up and be the pastor every

Sunday. And you have to be able to deal with all these things. And I've watched you, just a uniqueness about how you balance culture. Also how you are an incredible father, incredible husband, incredible brother. I've seen you on all aspects. I've seen you a pastor, you're a teacher, you're a prophet. You don't call yourself these things. You just do what God's called you to do. Right. But I do believe that there's such a need in our culture right now. It comes down to we're in the last days. So, how do you shepherd in the last days?

**Pastor John.** That's it. Because there are qualifications for a spiritual leader that the business leader does not bear. Right. If you have somebody in your company that isn't working, that is maybe failed in some area, you fire them or you demote them. Right. And it's done next. In the local church, you have people employed, but you're also, first and foremost, their pastor, their shepherd. Your relationship with them is not just transactional and employment wise, it's also spiritual. We don't have the luxury of just throwing people away.

So, what has happened in churches, is churches have adopted business and entrepreneurial culture, a leadership culture, and it's caused numerical growth, but it's been at the expense of real discipleship and spiritual maturity. So, people that are no longer useful in, we would say the growth model of the organization of the church, they become transitioned out. But what about the person? If you're a pastor, you still need to shepherd that person. So true. You've got to be able to take off the employer hat and still keep on the shepherd - sheep hat. And the only way to do that is if you realize you're wearing more than one hat with people.

And there's brother and sister hat too. Even if we're not in an employment relationship, even if you're not part of the local church, my local church. If you're a Christian, I still have a relationship with you that's beyond fellow human. We are in the same family, brother and sister. And there's certain obligations I have to you as a brother or sister that go beyond the obligations I'd have if you were just a coworker, an employee, a fellow attendee. It's more than just what we see. There's no other industry. There's no other business. There's nothing else that's like the local church. Nothing. It is unique in every possible way.

**Pastor Lee.** I'm a pastor, I'm just found this podcast. Someone told me to listen to it. My time is like, as you just mentioned, limited, but I need this. Why do I listen to this podcast over the most amazing podcast and speaker that's out there and drill down into, what am I going to get? What are gonna be the specifics I get from this Shepherd's podcast?

**Pastor John.** Well, the Shepherd's podcast is really gonna be designed to speak to pastors and people who lead ministry. So it could be a pastor, it could be a children's pastor, it could be somebody who's a ministry leader. Anybody who's called the spiritual leadership, particularly the work of shepherding people, which is the main job of the local church. It's the main job. I'm gonna say something that's controversial today, but it shouldn't be. The local church is not called to be an evangelistic center first.

It's called to be a sheepfold for the sheep. And evangelism occurs once somebody's saved. Once you bring somebody into the kingdom, if that's your win, you have a low bar. Jesus said in Matthew 28, he gave the great commission, he said, to go into all the world. And the word world is cosmos, which means every man's world, every culture, every place where people exist in communities and preach the gospel. He said, go and make disciples. I'm mixing that up with Mark 16. He said, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is initiation, right?

**Pastor Lee.** That's the beginning.

**Pastor John.** That's the beginning. You preach the gospel, they get saved. And by the way, they come to an altar, caller fill out a card, that's wonderful. But the bar, Jesus set for conversion, baptism. You could be saved and not be water baptized, but you're not supposed to be saved and not be water baptized. That's what we should focus towards. We ought to be counting who's obeying Jesus with conscious understanding going into the waters of baptism. And that requires us to know people who are responding to Christ, to instruct them, and then to actually have that sacred right of initiation of water, baptism. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And he said, and teaching them all things I've commanded you, that's the second half of discipleship.

We preach the gospel, those who are saved, we baptize them. And that's the beginning of a lifelong process of teaching them. So, the local church has got to be a teaching center, or you're gonna have a bunch of babies that are never going to grow up and be able to know who they are in Christ, walk in their spiritual gifts, and live successfully in the world God's called them to. So, it's my belief, the local church, we do need to evangelize. But in some churches are more evangelistically oriented than others. We need to have as wide and as accessible as a shallow end to the pool as we can get. But if our goal is just getting a bunch of people in the shallow end, our goal is not the same as Jesus's.

Jesus' goal is to get them in. And then, and this is the emphasis, teaching them all things I've commanded you. You teach with instruction, you teach with example. You teach by giving people the opportunity to do things. That's the work of the church, day in and day out. So, I don't think it's an either - or proposition. We do need to reach people for Christ, but once you're saved, you're in the Father's family.

And this is something you don't hear often. But which family has a father who's more interested in having new babies than he is in taking care of the babies has already got. We wouldn't call that a good father. And we sometimes portrayed God as he's only interested in getting everybody possibly under the boat. And certainly Jesus died for the whole world. And we need to preach the gospel. Every creature. But the heart of God is not just in the decision for Christ, or the conversion moment. The heart of God is to take people who are believers and grow them to maturity. To present them complete in Christ.

**Pastor Lee.** So, you said teaching, and I'm a pastor. I feel like I am teaching. I'm teaching every Sunday, I have series. Breakdown teaching. And when you talk about teaching them, what are you specifically, saying to a pastor, what he should be teaching?

**Pastor John.** And not all pastors, their gifting may not be highly in the teaching side of things. They may be more preachers. And there's a difference between preaching and teaching, right? So, preaching simply means evangelion, and it means to proclaim.

You're saying this has occurred. So, when a person is preaching, they're saying, Jesus is alive. Jesus is Lord, he died for your sins. You're making proclamations about the gospel. And the Holy Spirit works through that to open the hearts of the lost and also the fallen, and draw them back to Jesus. We need preaching. Teaching is not proclaiming. It comes from the Greek root *didak*, which means to teach systematically or to explain. Preaching is proclaiming. Teaching is explaining. The loss need to be proclaimed to.

But once they're saved, they need to be *didak*. They've got to be taught line upon line, precept upon precept. When a person gets saved, all they know is Jesus loves them, died for their sins. And a lot of times they don't have any deep revelation about the Trinity. They don't have any revelation about the Holy Spirit. They don't really know what the Bible is or how it works, but God receives them if they accept Christ in the message of Jesus.

But once they're saved, we better be teaching them about the power of God's word. We better be, every Sunday lifting up the Bible and using our messages from the word of God. There's even a movement right now, and I love my brother, but he's dead wrong on this. This stepping back from the Bible and the Old Testament, and not using scriptural expository preaching to grow believers. You're not going to grow believers with just great messages that are informed by themes in the Bible. Christians need the word.

They need to know the words. They need to have it in them, and pastors and shepherds need to have it in them. So the uniqueness of the local church is we are called to proclaim, but then we have to teach, explain. Teach people not just that Jesus died for their sins, but what it means for them. And that's really what the epistles do.

Sort of like the gospels tell you what Jesus did. The epistles tell you why he did it. And what happened behind the scene. It's only in the epistles you find out that Jesus is our high priest. It's only in the epistles. You find out that his pre-incarnate glory and God was personally in Christ reconciling the world to himself. All those deeper truths of what happened to you, the moment you got saved, it takes a lifetime to unpack them and live them. That's part of the mission of the church.

**Pastor Lee.** So, I hear you talk a lot about doctrine and theology. And I know the podcast is going to provide some of that. Can you break that down, as to why that's important for shepherds and pastors to understand what's doctrine, what's theology?

**Pastor John.** That's a great question. I've heard pastors today, good guys. I love them, but say, I'm not a theologian. Every time I hear that, I want to say to them, don't say that. Every time you teach anything that you say is from God's word. You are a theologian. Theology is the study and the knowledge of God.

You're presenting the knowledge of God. You may not be a theoretical theologian. You may not have a deep understanding of theology, historical theology, but everybody who proclaims to be a leader in the church ought to be devoted to theology, which is simply learning the study of God through his word, understanding God, understanding what the Bible says about God, and in a growing way, unpacking the incredible revelation that's enfolded in every chapter of the Bible.

I know it's a passion of yours, but I can hear it coming out of you right now. As you're talking about this. What excites you about the possibilities of this podcast, and even more than that, pastors who are listening to this, that say, I need to grow. I need to know, I need a safe place. Because we're not just gonna be dealing with just things in terms of doctrine. We're also gonna be dealing with things in terms of the soul.

**Pastor John.** Practical and emotional.

**Pastor Lee.** Emotional. Which I think is huge for pastors.

**Pastor John.** By the way, that's doctrinal too.

**Pastor Lee.** Yes. It is.

**Pastor John.** Doctrine is simply what God's word has to say about any particular topic.

**Pastor Lee.** And I think that's, that's so important to really park on there because pastors are taught, you don't show that. You don't share that. You just deal with it. I know I was, it was never really, truly addressed.

**Pastor John.** Don't deal with your feelings. If you're strong spiritually, you kind of push those feelings down.

**Pastor Lee.** And even if something came out that you are struggling with in your soul, you dare not talk about it. Because if you do, you may be sat down, you may be punished, you may not ever be able to pursue. So many pastors go on in their life, and they have all these issues, which now we see it's coming out now because it's coming out in every way possible. So, I think there's a strong part about what this podcast is going to provide. And one of the things I've seen with you is your transparency with your own, hey, I'm working on this. You're always talking about that. And that's one of the things I appreciate about you. But pastors also get that type of ministry, which they need, whether they know they need it or not.

**Pastor John.** Yeah. And so well said. I think we have to also recognize the need for shepherd's ministry and training for spiritual leaders, because there are things that are required of us that the business leader does not have to worry about. A business leader can get divorced and remarried three or four time, and it's a note on page six. Right. It's not an issue. That can be disqualifying for ministry. Right? And in some circumstances. If a business leader falls into drinking, over drinking and go to rehab, it's no big deal. He doesn't lose his role as CEO unless it causes him to do something that's functionally injuring the organization. A pastor who falls into some of these things, their very livelihood is at risk. And they often, you know, their marketplace value outside of the ministry is often small because their life and training has been devoted to the local church.

So pastors have unique challenges and a higher bar than any other group of people. The only other people that I would say historically have a high bar like we do, as church leaders, in the same way, would be politicians.

And people who have are leading in nonprofit world, some charitable organization, because people expect you to be publicly a certain way. Everything you do is scrutinized at a different level. Right? And politicians, used to be they would quit or they would be recalled. Anymore, I don't think we hold our politicians to much of anything. But pastors, oh no. We still have the high bar. Man, we've got to preach thousands of words every year, and we better not say something wrong

**Pastor Lee.** Or do something.

**Pastor John.** OR do something wrong

**Pastor Lee.** Or post something post.

**Pastor John.** Oh, man, come on.

**Pastor Lee.** Now let's post something or be seen doing something. You can actually be out with your family on vacation, and someone assume that you're doing something and they caught a picture of you.

**Pastor John.** A hundred percent.

**Pastor Lee.** You are right about pastors being put in that category. So, I'm a pastor and I've done it. I messed up. I'm guilty of all of the above. What do you say to him now?

**Pastor John.** Oh, wow. Well, that would be a topic. That would be a topic of another podcast. But I would say to those who have stumbled, welcome to the club. There is not a minister or shepherd or pastor or hero of yours in ministry that has not only stumbled in ways you know about, but has also stumbled in ways you don't know about. And I know this because I've

been in this job since I was 22, and I have worked with a lot of different churches and organizations. I've been close to a lot of leaders with big names. And I can tell you there's not one out there that doesn't have something that they've stumbled in. That doesn't mean they're disqualified. They've got some stories, and some of them aren't preachable.

Okay. And it wouldn't benefit them or the body to be that vulnerable about some of these things. That doesn't mean that every pastor's fallen into gross moral sin, but every pastor has stumbled in one way or the other. And so, I would say the key is, to know where your weaknesses and your faults are, to be accountable for them, and to be in a relationship with some other people that get you as a pastor and aren't going to judge you, but at the same time are going to speak truth to you in a loving way and help you along the way.

**Pastor Lee.** Beautifully said, pastor. Scripturally, going back to Jesus, where is this found in scripture in terms of ministering to the shepherd or the shepherds, the heart of the shepherd? We didn't rehearse these questions. I'm just thinking about it now. I just having that confirmation from scripture, why a podcast or a resource or a ministry, because what we're providing here is not just the podcast. There's the vision of your heart is the Shepherd's Network. And so, this podcast is one of those things that fall underneath that. But when you look in scripture and you see the importance of shepherding and Jesus, what would he say? Where are there scriptures that you would point to?

**Pastor John.** We'll probably delve into this in a future episode. The first thing I would point out is this, if you look at all the sermons of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which I have done, carefully studied them you'll find that almost half of them are not spoken to the multitudes. They're not spoken to like the crowds, the congregation, we could say.

They're spoken to the 12 or a very small group. And what Jesus said to the disciples is different than what he said to the multitudes. He required things of them. He opened up levels of revelation to them. He did not open up to the church in general. Today a pastor, everything he has to say, he says on Sunday to everybody, not only everybody in the room, but everybody that's watching online or listening in perpetuity.

On YouTube or Vimeo or social media. It's out there to everybody. Here's the reality. There are things you can say to the 12, you can't say to the 120 or the 70. And there's things you can say to the 120 or the 70 that you can't say to the multitudes. Not because you're hiding something, but because they haven't paid the price of commitment to be that close. There are some truths that don't belong to you until you have matured to the place to hear it.

Even on the New Testament, we see this. Paul numerous times says in First Corinthians and in Hebrews, he said, you ought to be here in the book of Hebrews. I want to have much to say to you about, for instance, Melchizedek. But I can't right now, because you've become hard of hearing, dull of hearing. I've got to teach you again, the first principles of the Oracles of Christ. I have so much more to say. You don't have the spiritual character quality to handle it. You don't have the endurance for it.

This to me is a high point of peak verse in the New Testament in John 16, Jesus, he had spent three and a half years with these guys. He had poured out not just what we have in the gospels, but things that weren't recorded. And he's about to go to the cross. He's marching from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane, and he gives one final sermon. It's only found in the gospel of John. And it's four chapters long John 14, 15, 16, and 17. It's one sermon given between the Last Supper and the garden of Gethsemane.

And there is stuff in there that is nowhere else in the gospels. That's why it's so unique. And that is spoken only to the 12. It's leadership revelation. Now, it applies to the whole body in so many ways. But Jesus is saying things specifically to his spiritual leaders. And one of the



things he says in chapter 16 is this, I have many other things to say to you. Think about that he's about to leave. And he said, oh, there is so much I did not get to. There is so much I have to say.

**Pastor Lee.** Every pastor says that, by the way.

**Pastor John.** I know. But he'd been talking about three and a half years of ministry. I have so much more to say to you, but you cannot bear it now. The word bear there means you can't comprehend it. You don't have the capacities to handle it right now. Sort of like that old movie you can't handle the truth. He's sort of saying that. Really what he's saying, is the deepest things I have to say I haven't said yet. Which means the teaching of Jesus in the four gospels is not the highest revelation. The teaching of Jesus in the four gospels is preparatory revelation. Jesus said, you can't bear it now, but when he, the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth. For he will take the things of the Father and show it to you. He'll show you things to come.

What is He saying? After I leave, I'm going to die. I'm going to go to heaven and I'm going to send the Holy Spirit. He actually goes on to talk about that, in chapter 16. And when the Holy Spirit comes and you have your nature changed and you become born again, and you begin to minister out of that new place, I'm going to continue to teach you through the Holy Spirit. The many other things I couldn't say to you because you couldn't handle it. Which is why as church members, we need to spend time in the epistles. The epistles are the written letters of Paul, Peter, and James. Those are the many other things that Jesus wants to say to the church that he couldn't say to them before they were saved, even to the 12 disciples. That tells us there's levels of revelation.

And if we try to preach messages on Sunday, that's going to reach everybody all the time. We're not going to hit what we need to hit. You're going to hit some, you're going to hit the middle. But there are things that people who are more advanced place need to hear alone with other people that are in that place.

That have paid the price to be there. And that's what I want the Shepherd's podcast to be. It's wonderful if somebody who's an entrepreneur or owns a business, tunes in and gets principles that help them in their business. And we may have some people come in who are business leaders that help us with some of the tactical leadership stuff we need as pastors, but my heart isn't that. It's to stop mixing all kinds of leadership together and recognize that spiritual leadership is unique. And there are things the Bible says to and about spiritual leaders that aren't said to any other group of people.

And that's what we're going to focus on. And I want the pastors out there who are struggling, who are hungry, who are hurting, who are just looking for resources to have a place they can go, where they can hear teaching from a shepherd and other shepherds about the unique leadership challenges and ministry challenges of pastoring the local Church.

**Pastor Lee.** So, as we wrap up this first episode, which is really more like an introduction and a trailer, if you were looking for a movie, I just want you to give just high level 30,000 feet view of some of the topics, give our listeners just a few of those topics, and don't drill down on them because I know you can, because we're gonna wrap this up. But just give us some of those things.

**Pastor John.** I want to talk about the difference between a career and a calling. They're not the same thing.

- I want to talk about what the Bible really says about women in ministry. I'll just put it out there. I'm a fan. For a lot of reasons.
- I want to talk about how do you deal with emotional demotivation? When you're a minister and you literally don't feel anything? How do I lead when I don't feel anything? Ministry has a way of numbing you. Because you deal with people at their highest and lowest points often on the same day, in the same week. So, how do we emotionally protect ourselves as ministers? How do we stay spiritually and mentally and emotionally healthy?
- How do we lead our families as ministers? The CEO's kids does not have the burden that the pastor's kids have. It's a totally different kind of thing. I want to talk about those things.
- I want to talk about how do we address cultural issues? No one that I know of in the larger leadership conversation in church right now, is having open conversations about how do we deal with the new sexual reality, the LGBTQIA+, and the rest. How do we deal with that, not just in a way that affirms God's word to be true. But also, understandingly, and compassionately. How do we speak to people that call themselves that consider themselves part of those communities in a way that speaks the truth, but also gives them opportunity to come and to know the Lord and to grow.

So, let's talk about some of these things. I got to tell you, I went to a counseling conference, the largest Christian counselors conference in the world. I won't call it by name, but many people are know it. I'm a member of it. Great organization. There were 10,000 people that came. They do it every two years. They had literally hundreds of workshops, general sessions and workshops on everything from dealing with alcoholism in people's lives to how to help the suicidal. I mean, every topic of mental health and counseling and even church related stuff. It's for Christian counselors.

There wasn't a single seminar, workshop or general session that addressed sexual issues. Not one. They would talk about maybe sexual addiction. They had one on pornography, but not about the big ticket. Highly controversial, cultural issues, LGBTQIA+, that stuff, they didn't even address it. I spoke up and I said in front of I several hundred people, I said, listen, I can't find a workshop that talks to us about how do we help people. And they literally didn't answer the question.

They didn't want to touch it. And that is a problem. So, in this podcast, to the extent that it makes sense, we want to talk about issues like that. Not just that of course, but we wanna say, let's be real about it. What is it like, what are the challenges we face as pastors who have an a 2000 year old gospel? But we're reaching a culture that now looks a whole lot more like Greece in the year 36 than it does like America in the year 1976. We're living in a different world. So I wanna talk about this.

**Pastor Lee.** Here's a new one and we got to close, but a new thing before us is AI. So how does AI and bible, and scripture crossover. And I know you have some thoughts on that. I'm actually excited to not only just be a part of it, I'm excited to hear what God and how God's going to be saying. And this podcast is going to also at times have special guests that you'll have come in and talk and really deal with specific things. So we're looking forward to that.

The network is going to provide things in the future. We're gonna do trainings, we're gonna have resources available, we're gonna have a conference. So there's some things that we believe that God has called you to do that we're going to be a part of bringing it to the world, bringing it to the culture, bringing it to the church. I'm excited about this calling and I will just say I'm proud of you for taking this step. You've always obeyed God and the best is yet to come. And the Shepherd's podcast is going to be an exciting resource and tool and I believe a ministry to thousands, if not millions of pastors and church leaders around the world.

**Pastor John.** We prayed today before we started this inaugural podcast, and I said, Lord, you decide who hears this and how large it gets. That's up to you. That's not my focus. My focus is to have the conversations and to minister to whoever is interested and wants to hear. And to make it searchable so that people can find these topics and really listen to them, especially pastors and leaders of local Churches.

I also would just say this, one of the things about our ministry our calling that's unique is that we have a unique founder. Our founder didn't start out with a hamburger stand and build a multi-billion dollar real estate company. Our founder, was not a politician. Our founder was not a great entrepreneur or shall we say inventor, who innovated things like the great giants in the 1800's and 1900's, Alexander Graham Bell and others.

Our founder was here 2000 years ago and taught things. He didn't leave product, he didn't leave an organizational system. He didn't leave a marketing plan. He left words and he left Leaders. Leaders He had trained and trusted them to take it. And we're sitting here today, 2000 years later because there's something supernatural about our founder and the method and the ministry that he released. Let's learn about that.

**Pastor Lee.** It's beautiful. That's so beautiful. Thank you. I can't wait to hear more. And I know those of you that are listening, you're excited about this too. So thank you for tuning in and just taking in all of the content that we are providing and ministry providing here on the Shepherd's podcast.