

Introduction: Welcome to Engage 360 Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the Gospel and the life-changing truth of scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hey friends, welcome again to Engage 360 at Denver Seminary. We're glad to have you with us. I'm Don Payne your host. Over the past year and a half, we've taken time with a few guests to explore the broader life effects of the pandemic beyond merely the physical effects of COVID. Our many frontline workers have experienced acute affects of the worldwide pandemic. And in this episode, we want to focus on a group of people, another group of frontline workers, who can sometimes feel like they are dealing with the effects of a pandemic throughout their entire careers. Pastors, pastoral ministry, as well as many other forms of people oriented people centered ministry can be personally taxing and existentially draining in ways that are really difficult to describe to those who haven't been in those roles. When I was pastoring a few decades ago, I used to refer to it as the best job I ever hated and the worst job I ever loved. It's glorious and it's a sacred privilege in so many ways.

And at the same time, it's fraught with risks and hazards. So with this week, we have a conversation with an experienced pastor who knows both the hazards and the glories all too well. And now has a ministry to pastors who have been ground up or burned out or hollowed out. Kevin Butcher is the executive director of rooted ministries after having pastored Hope Community Church in Detroit, which he founded. I'm going to have him tell a little bit of that story, but Kevin, welcome to the podcast.

Kevin Butcher: So good to be with you Don.

Dr. Don Payne: Really, really glad you're here. Kevin is the author of a couple of books. I'll want to draw your attention to one is called, Choose and Choose Again. The brave act of returning to God's love. The other is called Free; Rescued from Shame Based Religion Released into the Life-Giving Love of Jesus. I love those titles. That second one, that's a mouthful. That just about takes up the cover of the book that subtitle does. Anyway, we're both of these books are published by Nav Press and I'll mention them again before we're done today. Kevin has Kevin is a mentoring resource for Pastors who are, as I said, ground up, used up hollowed out and can't be totally open. They don't have a safe place in their circles to talk about all of that. So, Kevin, first of all, if you would maybe just give us a brief overview of your story, how you came to do this.

Kevin Butcher: Yeah. I mean, honestly it starts when I was just a kid. I mean, I already in the home that I was raised in, I could sense the impact of shame on my life. And so when I met the love of Jesus at the age of five, you know, I didn't know anything about the [inaudible], didn't know anything about the Trinity. I just knew that the brother that was speaking that night, when I should have been tearing the pages out of hymnals, I was somehow my heart was drawn to the love that I felt from him and this guy named Jesus that he talked about. So I believe that night problem is for the next 30, 31 years. I didn't experience much of that Love. I

experienced a lot of the rules, what I've learned to call just do it Christianity, you know, now that you're saved by his love and grace, you better get with the program. And if you're not, I don't understand why because the rest of us are, which is by the way, not true.

And so that led me to a near suicide attempt that kind of emptiness because of that love that I didn't know about. I was 36 years old. I was a successful pastor. In fact, to be honest, I had been fortunate enough to be successful. Academically athletically married the woman of my, the girl of my dreams, three beautiful daughters. The church was coming out of a tough time and beginning to really grow and take off. And yet I was miserable inside because I didn't know Don, it's amazing. Isn't it? Four years of seminary didn't know that God loved me. I knew that he loved you. I knew all the Greek words for love. I could preach a sermon about love that make you cry. I didn't know that he loved me. So one night on a freeway in Detroit, I almost took my own life. And so I began to wonder, are there other Pastors who know all the right words, they can preach like crazy. They can maybe do a degree of counseling. They can administrate, they can construct mission statements and strategic statements, and lead in that sense.

But deep down inside where that hole is that Paul talks about in Ephesians 3, that needs to be filled with the love of Christ, that fullness of God, that will come through that love. What if they don't know either? And they're ministering out of that emptiness that will eventually catch up with them. I think that's when the seeds of who's, who's talking to guys like me or sisters, like me who are in ministry for me, it was no one. So from the moment I entered ministry at 29 through that period of almost suicide, I mean I got a therapist by the grace of God that really became the closest thing to a mentor I ever had. But all the way to the last day of vocational ministry after 34 years, Don never had one older brother for me. My wife, Carla, never had one older sister that came to us and said, we don't anything from you. We just want to be here with you and for you. And so toward the end of those 34 years, I began to say to myself, what had been birthed in me earlier on what if we could construct something. And I didn't know what, where we could be for other pastors and their spouses and their families, their children, what we never had. And rooted ministries was birthed out of that passion and that dream.

Dr. Don Payne: You used one phrase or one descriptor I'd love to pick up on. Because I think it captures much of what many, many pastors feel. And that is that everybody in your circle wants something from you. And that seems to have been the unique gift or the whole, the space that you needed failed is that you needed somebody who wanted nothing from you.

Kevin Butcher: Yeah. I mean, don't, we all need that. Someone who says I'm just here and I just love you. I mean, not to get all pious, but that's what Jesus gave to people I'm here. And I just love you. I mean, even the rabbinic community, the Pharisaical community, back in the New Testament era, I mean, there, there was a gender agenda everywhere. Religion is there's agenda, but where Jesus walked, people

sensed no agenda. Just a love that heals, you know, his mission statement and look for I've come to heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free. I needed some of that. My wife desperately needed that my children needed that pastors at all levels, if you will, in the structure of the church, need that. Where do they go to find that they can't go to their official board, whatever you call that more because they hold the keys to their employment. They hold the money. If you will. And the power, they can't really share everything with their constituency, because that would be abusive.

If I shared everything with a person who's looking up to me in that pastoral position, that wouldn't be good either. You can be, you can be transparent, but not that transparent. So where is there someone just there, that I'm not above or below in terms of the structure of life. Where there's no, as Freud would call it transference and countertransference, where we can just share and be safe. There was never anyone. I had three brother Pastors that God gave me walking together still after 40 years, they saved our life. My life. I think we helped saved their life, but in terms of older and we need that Titus 2 says we need that. Nobody.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Somebody who has a few more miles on their tires. Yeah, no. Do you think that's a curious thing about pastoral ministry is that, one of the same time we need to be needed.

Kevin Butcher: Indeed.

Dr. Don Payne: And that turns into something quite toxic.

Kevin Butcher: Especially if our hearts are empty. I mean, everybody wants to think that they're needed. I mean, that feeling like I'm not just taking up space on the planet without purpose.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. We do need to be needed.

Kevin Butcher: Of course we do. But when it becomes, for me, Don, that became because of my emptiness, that became an addiction so that, you know, I needed to know. I mean, I was a pretty good communicator. I needed to know that sermon was probably the best that I'd ever preached, you know? And I would never say that I would be too ashamed to say that, but I was like, you know, we saw many heroin addicts in our neighborhood. In the last church I Pastored, I was like an approval addict because I wanted to be needed, but on steroids because of the emptiness inside me. The brokenness Don that no one until I cracked, literally until I broke wide open, nobody ever talked to me about curiously, even in seminary, nobody ever talked to me about it.

Dr. Don Payne: So what is it about pastoral ministry and maybe, maybe other forms of ministry for that matter, but what is it about Pastoring that seems to set people up for

these spiritual implosions that you experienced and that you're currently addressing through your ministry?

Kevin Butcher:

I would say first and foremost, it's that inner emptiness that most of the time is not easily talked about or easily focused on, especially in our training, let alone in our undergrad work, or, you know, back when we're growing up in high school and whatever, how often does somebody come up to you and say, they'll say, how are you doing? But I think really they're wanting to know how circumstances are going and how you're functioning and your roles in life. How many times do you have somebody that says, no, really, man, you know, we're all wounded in some way, what's going on inside. And then if we could even fair it out, what is there that is driving us? Cause you know, this God that if we have damaged emotions, those damaged emotions will control that wounded space will control what our cognitive brain, our left brain believes or thinks we believe or know every time. So first and foremost, I think many Pastors are walking around with a head full of knowledge.

I personally had six and a half years of Greek, two years of Hebrew and three years of Latin. By the time I entered ministry at the age of 29, but my heart was broken. My heart was empty. I had childhood wounds. There was trauma that had never been dealt with. There were false beliefs that I was carrying around to me and because I'd been successful, nobody would have thought that, but it was true. So that's first and foremost, that sets us up for the rigors of ministry to just continue to suck the life out of us. And we end up empty and then acting out of that emptiness. But I would also say there are some structural reasons. I mean the hierarchical structure of the church creates no safe place for Pastor to simply be a part of the body money. I mean, how is a pastor supposed to lead, when a few folks that they know are supporting the ministry might not like the way they are leading aware they're leading the church?

Dr. Don Payne:

That's enormous.

Kevin Butcher:

It's enormous. And man, what I love and I think many of my brother and sister pastors would love to deconstruct the whole thing and start over without money being such a big piece, you can't do it. You just cannot do it. So you have to live with in it. But I can't tell you how many pastors I'm dealing with right now, where that is a huge, mostly unspoken issue of power and control over their ministry. Hero worship, you know, we're set up to fail because nobody can live into what people think we should be. I had a therapist say to me at the peak of my quote, unquote success back at my second church, grace community church in Detroit we had just had a 10 year anniversary party. And it was just one of those moments where you go, like, this thing has happened in man, we're growing, we're baptized and folks, we were probably at a thousand people, you know, all the benchmarks that we are taught, this is what makes you the guy.

Dr. Don Payne:

And to put a crassly, I mean, that's a buzz, right?

Kevin Butcher: Are you kidding me. It's like Crack cocaine. And this therapist and his wife, who's a therapist. They came up to us afterward and I, and I'll never forget it. They said, this is great. We're so happy for you, but don't forget this. If they love you beyond reason, they will hate you without reason. And I was like, what are you telling me this for now eight years later? No, four years later in the midst of racial turmoil where we were trying to lead our church into being a community of justice, got fire. I mean, in ways that I don't have time to go into, but wounding ways, I went from being the hero to the enemy without passing through purgatory on my way to hell. And that is a, Pastors can't live into what's expected. In fact, you know, this lead, especially lead pastors, job descriptions. I think if Paul came back down, he would say, where did you get this? No, he wouldn't get hired. And we'll say, well, you know, first Timothy three. And I think he would say, don't you blame what you've got on this paper on me, no human. I would never write this because no human being could fulfill this.

And then you add the family pressures. How about one pastor talked to me lately about CPR COVID, politics, and the incredible division between right and left sitting in the pews, expecting the Pastor to somehow solve all of that. Usually expecting the Pastor to go their way, lead the church their way. And then the racial brokenness in our country that we can no longer ignore shame on us for ignoring and as long as many of us have, but we can no longer ignore. And so you add those three present pressures on everything else we've talked about. And there's more, Don I'm surprised anybody survives at all.

Dr. Don Payne: I wonder if anybody's still standing right?

Kevin Butcher: And you know that the stats say that 40%. I don't know where I got this, but I heard it from a reputable source. 40% today of Pastors are considering stepping away because they just can't take it anymore.

Dr. Don Payne: You've already kind of spoken to this, but I want to hear you elaborate on it further, Kevin, what is it that pastors really need when they're in the crucible of all of that, right? In the thick of those pressures, those demands dealing with their own emptiness, some of the temptations that will lure them into some unhealthy spaces.

Kevin Butcher: Yeah. I mean even as you're talking to me, I'm getting kind of messed up inside. Because I'm thinking of specific Pastors right now that routed is privileged to walk with in ways that we had no one walking with us. And I think this is going to sound so pious, but I don't mean it to be this as boots on the ground reality for me, Pastors need to know that Jesus is not just out there somewhere in the cosmos at the right hand of the father, wherever that is. Looking down on them saying, you know, thumbs up, got your back. Keep following me. Here's 10 more things you should be doing. They need to know that the Jesus who said I will be with you always, even to the end of the age is right next to them. Maybe right across the veil in glory, like he was when he broke through and was with the two on the road to a mass and then he was gone. And then he was with Thomas and then he was gone.

They need to know he's that near, or I don't know how they survive. I was talking to a pastor the other day who is in the crucible of trying to help his mostly Caucasian congregation understand that racial justice is a part of the word of God and the work of the cross. And they're killing him, walking out long-time friends, he's married them, buried them, walking away. And I said to my brother, I said, bro where's Jesus in this for you, the one who called you, the one who is the Lord of this church, where's Jesus. He said, well, I think Kev, Jesus is saying that we should do this and we should do this. And tomorrow I'm going to do this because I think Jesus is telling me, I said, my friend, I'm not trying to be coy. I'm not asking you what Jesus is telling you. I'm asking you where he is. He for you, honest to goodness, Don. He looked at me, he hung his head. The tears began to fall. And he said, to be honest, Kevin, I have no idea. And this is a studied preaching machine.

He's a lover. He just, somehow the ministry is, has pulled Christ away from his heart. That's the most important thing. And then if, if pastors can be with others without the hierarchy, Don, so, there's no fear of, if I share this with you, what are you going to do with this information? So peers, if you will, that are just there to love just a safe place where they can take off the pastoral mask and say, this is who I really am. They don't have to be a therapist. You know this, Peter said above all things love one, another fervently because that love will cover, heal, a multitude of sins. Pastors need that. They need to have someone to be there. They need a Don to be with a Kevin or a Kevin to be with a Don where I can look in your eyes and see that you really care about me. And I can tell you anything. And the love of Christ through you will meet me in that pain and begin to heal me. Those two things. I think pastors need more than anything. And so often those are the two things that they don't really have.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So it sounds like what you're talking about is an embodiment of that love. Cause I was going to ask you, what was it about those safe people who came into your life? What was it about them that showed you where Jesus was? And I think you just answered that question. It was that embodiment.

Kevin Butcher: That is a word I use quite frequently in the second book, because I believe that with all of my heart, it's kind of like God said, I want to love my people. I'm going to embody that love. I'm going to incarnate and come in Christ. And so we too have to embody that love if we don't, if the church is a place for Pastors where it's about output, it's about production, that taps into all the shame and all the emptiness eventually will implode. So one time I was doing with one of these close brother pastors, I was talking about with you, I was doing this this, I think I'd asked him to come in and do a leadership conference for our, for our church. And so we administered together. Side-By-Side when we got done, we went downstairs to debrief with our wives and just to laugh and joke and drink coffee. And my friend Ed said, Kev, you did a great job. And I was early on in my healing at this point from shame and the lack of love in my life and all kinds of gifts, but empty, Don. And so he said, you did a great job Kev. And I was like, oh man, I don't know, I shouldn't have said that.

I should have said this hard. My buddy ed, who's an ex army captain and not exactly the hugging type. Okay, Don, he asked Carla and his wife Judy to step away for a minute. He pulled everything aside, pulled his chair right up in front of mine, took my head and his hands, got right up in my face and said, don't you understand, Kev, I just love you. I can't even tell you Don how much shame. And I had a boatload came leaking out of the bottom of my feet down into the trough that led it back to a drain that led it back to hell where it came from because of the embodiment in that moment of that love. What if Pastors had a steady diet of that to heal the emptiness, heal the brokenness that they have not even sure sometimes they have, so that the love that the people come into the church looking for, yes, they need knowledge and yes, they need strategies and things to do. But they're really looking for love. They're looking for the love of Christ. What if pastors, instead of preaching at that were able to embody it themselves because it had been embodied to them.

Dr. Don Payne:

You know, right before we started this recording, we were talking about the, the, the importance of the tactile, the physicality of the world that we, we in the Protestant world have kind of dispensed with for about 500 years and summer kind of sort of trying to get that back, those in the Roman Catholic world and the Eastern Orthodox walls have long since, I mean, they're probably looking at us and saying, yeah, about time. What have we been telling you all this kind of. But because they have a sense of the tactile. Now we may quibble and differ on some things theologically about what that means, but I have to believe we're the losers in all of that, because having lost a functional theology of the tactile, we've lost more than we know we've lost, not only with the inanimate tactile, but with the animate tactile world touch and presence with each other.

Kevin Butcher:

It's so true. And in my reading recently, you know, you read a lot about neuro-biological conclusions in this most recent science, if, you know, I mean, it's not an, it's a more recent scientific discipline last 35, 50 years or whatever. And they will tell you that if you talk to a neurobiologist, who's in the Christian community, they'll say it's fascinating to see that most of Christianity in the west, especially centers in the left brain, which is where we do all the cognitive. So, you know, it's where we have concepts in our theologies and whatnot. So our emphasis is on what we teach what we say we believe on creeds. And those are all important things. I don't want your listeners to think. I don't believe that I want the Dallas Theological Seminary. I couldn't not believe that and still be associated with them. I believe in the word of God, I believe in truth, but those same neurobiologists will tell us that most of our wounds lie in the limbic system, where we are hurt with damaged emotions and false beliefs that control us and trauma.

And so, if the church doesn't create space for a healing, that is not just through me. Wouldn't it be great, Don, if you were struggling with the love of Christ deeply, because you had been hurt as a child or lost your dad or whatever. And so you come into church and we say, so what's going on with you today? My brother. And you say, well, I don't really know that God loves me. And then we could say to you go over to that line over there. Cause there's somebody that's

there. And you go over there. Who's going to tell you, you walk up and you go, I don't know, God loves me. And they say to you, Don, look me in the eye. God loves you. It says it in John 3:16, be warm, be filled. It doesn't work that way. You, you can't heal those deeply damaged places with just speaking words, the words are important, but they've got to be to your point embodied in the way that quite frankly, Jesus embodied them when he was on the planet, dealing with wounded, hurting people, and the way those two branches of the church have embodied them in history since that time.

- Dr. Don Payne: Kevin, tell us a little bit more about rooted, rooted ministries and specifically what you do, how to maybe if people want to connect with you, how do they find you and what would they expect?
- Kevin Butcher: That's a great question. Well the website is www.rootedministries.co. Dot com was already taken.
- Dr. Don Payne: It's .co, okay.
- Kevin Butcher: And they can go to the website. And there's a place where you can talk about whether you're a rooted church, cause you might be an elder or whatnot, or a rooted Pastor. That's looking for some encouragement or some hope or some connection. And then the website will take you to a place where you can literally fill out a very short form that says, what, what are you looking for? That's one pathway. And that will come to our leadership, our board, and will also come to me. And another way is that you can go there and just email me directly. I think it's J K B or JKbutcher@rudeministries.co that will come to me directly. And for a long time now the ministry has been me and my wife, Carla, and the basement apartment we have in our home here in Highlands Ranch. And we had in our home in Michigan before I moved here, where Pastors could come with their spouses and just be, and connect and be loved.
- And talk through some things and be embraced and be encouraged and be wept with and share joy with that healing relational process, because of that, we've had so much need for Pastors that need help and need encouragement need partnership. We now have a couple of small groups going, there'll be another one starting in the Fall. And we've also just hired our fourth first time Full-Time Pastoral associate, a young African-American brother from Louisville, Kentucky who has got 12 or 14 years in the ministry already. He's studying to be a spiritual director. He is boots on the ground, solid. He is like a son to me and he's coming on full time, August one. And we also, we had our first retreat back in November. I was supposed to be onsite, but as you know, everything went viral. There will be another retreat coming up in the next nine to 12 months where we can gather pastors together and that's going to be more of a regular rhythm.
- We're only three years old. So we literally are finding our way with the love that is within us to meet with whatever pastors we can. I will tell you this. If a pastor says through the website, through an email to me that they need connection, they will, I promise this, get a call from me within a few days. Okay. Promise it.

And no fixing, no advice giving it's about presence. It's about the love that they sense the safety that they sense and together we figure out what they might need, what their family might need. You know, we haven't talked about this Don, but I can't tell you how many spouses. Most of the time it's been male Pastors, female spouses, a couple of times not, but most of the time spouses that I've met with sobbing because of the pain they're experiencing and they don't know what to do with it. There's no safe place for them to share that pain. So the ministry rooted is for those spouses as well. Not just the Pastor.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. I kind of wish Carla were here because I had wanted to probe into her experience of all of this alongside you. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Kevin Butcher: There's been a lot of pain, a lot of wound. There has obviously been some joy, but I can tell you when I got fired from the large church, that more of the mega church because we retreated as many Pastors are as a commodity, you know, for 14 years, we'd been the Pastor. We love him. We love his wife. We love his three girls. And then when we got fired, it was, you can't come back in the building. We're going to pack your boxes for you have to come after hours. So I bet she lost all her friends. She lost her friends, depression that she's come out of, of course our girls were, it became pariahs in the community. If we think we have no power, sometimes as Pastors and the structure in which we're finding some woundedness, our wives, our spouses, it could be a husband for a female Pastor. They have even less power. What are they going to do? Barge into an elder meeting some night and just kind of spew out their pain. Who do they talk to in the church that might not be connected to someone who's connected to someone who might share with the wrong folks? Yeah. Loneliness is, has been her experience and a lot of pain alongside some joy, a lot of pain.

Dr. Don Payne: So with all this, what gives you hope for those going into pastoral ministry? And what would you say to them about why they can and should still consider doing that?

Kevin Butcher: How do you deny what's in your heart? The call of Jesus Christ and other, you know, Angie Ward just wrote a book on Call, and thought she did a good job with that topic, but it's a mysterious word. What is call me? But it's that place in your gut? It's what I felt after I got fired, that led me deeper into urban Detroit, responding to the need of that other church, where I was I'm done. I couldn't deny the call. You know, this little anecdote, but I will share with younger Pastors, if you can find anything else to do that you think you could have passion to do. So that Pastoring becomes optional sort of to you, you could, but you don't have to. I would say, go do it because there's too much pain. The church is in too much of a mess, the enemy will be scratching and clawing at your back. You won't survive. But if I look into the eyes of a young woman, a Pastor to be an a, or a young man, Pastor to be, and they say, it's in me like Jeremiah, it's in my bones. I can't deny it. Then you have to step forward. You have to follow that call.

That's the way it has been for me for 35 years. But I would also say Don, the question that I would ask them is not, Hey, let me have a couple of recordings of your sermons, or how do you feel about counseling or have you been to some leadership training? So you know how to construct a mission statement and lead by goal orientation. I'd say, Don, what's going in your heart? What is it that you don't want to tell me that is there? That you're afraid that if you told someone that they wouldn't be able to be present to you? What wounds, how did it go in your childhood? How's it gone in the church for you? When you think about God, when he looks at you, do you see your ABA, your loving father, who chose you in that cosmic orphanage to be his son, his daughter? Or do you see a CEO that says, you know, you better get with the program? I want to probe what's going on inside so that some of the healing could begin and they could start from the beginning, Don, to have a life long journey of healing.

And being filled with the love of Christ, replacing the shame, displacing the shame. That is the only other option. If you don't know the love, you live in shame, I'd want to start them on a journey of healing. So that, that would be the next 40 years of their life, as they're trying to lead their community into that same healing of Jesus. That's where I would start. And those are questions that seminary never asked.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah, yeah. Typically not. And you know, you're making me think of some of the reasons that over 20 years ago here, we put a mentoring emphasis at the core of our curriculum. And if we have mentors, former mentors, future mentors, listening to this, I hope you'll let Kevin's words really help dial in who you are with the students you mentor, because it made me want to ask you Kevin, if you were starting seminary over again, how would you do it? I mean you got to take the courses that are on the worksheet, right. But how, would you engage seminary preparing to be a Pastor in the middle of all the stuff that you have to do?

Kevin Butcher:

Huge question and not sure I have an adequate answer, but I would tell you this theology 101 would be, let's take a look at Jesus' words in John 13, to his disciples, a new commandment I give to you love one another. As I have loved you and the world would know, they'll know that you're with me and I come from God. And then I would say, I don't want to focus on the loved one, another piece we get that. I want to focus on young students. I want to focus on the, as I have loved you piece. We're assuming we assume that because you came to seminary, you know, the, as I have loved you, you know, he loves you, but I want to ask you, do you ever have, do you ever look inside and struggle with your identity? Do you ever have closet thoughts of self hatred that you don't know who to share with? Do you sometimes feel like you're addicted to approval? Do you ever feel like you have a critical spirit and don't know what to do or where it comes from? Do you ever struggle in relationships and aren't sure why?

Do you have any problems with any kinds of addictions that you may not be the big three, but maybe addiction to work? Maybe you're a workaholic. Do, do you

have trouble finding rest in your spirit? Because these are all possible symptoms though. You think, you know the love of God because you know the verses, you've not really experienced his love. I would start there, and help whatever came out. When I go and teach and preach, that's what I talk about first and Don people. It's not because I'm a great preacher. It's not because I'm a great anything, to be honest with you, people will run to the front and want to talk with me because they say, you just told my story. And that seminary students as well, that's pastors as well, I would build the curriculum around their experience, not just the theology of their experience of knowing the love of a Jesus that will heal their brokenness and set them free.

So that, Don, when they get to John 15, and Jesus says, you know, you know this first by heart, you know what? In Greek, I'm sure as the father has loved me. So love I, you I'm sending you out now, here it is. This is the embodiment of my heart for you, abide in my love. Make your home in the love that you have experienced from me that I have experience from the father because my brothers and sisters, you cannot give away to the broken world. What you have not first received from me. There'll be ready for that at graduation, at least on the road to that. Whereas when I was released from, you know, ready to graduate, I was a mess inside, broken inside, empty inside, but because I could preach because I was a command leader, you know, I was a captain of the football team and all of that, I got hired and started on the journey until I imploded.

Kevin Butcher: And you never had to look at that stuff. Nothing, nothing in the process made you look at that stuff. And it probably gave you all kinds of surface level competencies. Not that they're insignificant, but they are extraneous competencies in one sense that allow us to mask the hollowness inside. And you know, when we're young, we think we can manage that. We can keep it under control, but it always catches up with us sooner or later, it always catches up.

Kevin Butcher: I call all of those competencies, the icing on the cake, but it can't be the cake. Or you will implode one way or another you'll implode

Dr. Don Payne: Kevin, I'm so grateful for what you're doing for how you've made your own story and your experience available to the rest of the body of Christ. And I'm just glad for the fruitful season of ministry, God is giving you now building on all that. And I hope a lot of listeners will either contact you or begin to do some of that work you've talked about, whatever form that takes

Kevin Butcher: Indeed. And I mean, first of all, I am honestly done more honored than I have words to say, to be on this podcast with you talking to me, hopefully some graduate, some folks one year out or 25 years out. These are my brothers and sisters. And I mean, you're looking me in the eye right now. You could feel if I was giving you a pile of BS, this is for real, this is from my heart. I want each of them to know. We may never be able to talk, but I love them.

Dr. Don Payne:

And somebody else does as well. There's somebody who can embody that love of Christ to us, seek them out. Kevin Butcher, Rooted Ministries, Kevin so grateful for your time. And hope that many of you will reach out to Kevin or reach out to somebody and don't let this stuff keep going. This has been another episode of Engage 360 from Denver Seminary. And we want to express to you that we would communicate to you that our Lord loves you. However it is that you need to hear that and can hear that, every one of us needs to hear that our Lord loves you full stop. Come back and be with us again, friends Engage 360 from Denver Seminary. Talk to you soon.