



Season 12: Episode 5 | Jason Hildebrand | Is God's Voice a “Sound” We’ve Forgotten How to Hear?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today, Jason Hildebrand will be in conversation with Lorna Dueck. Canadian actor and playwright Jason Hildebrand has recently completed a film project that helps the Psalms of King David connect with our current reality. So, our interview host Lorna Dueck will explore with Jason why his new immersive film is a timely response to the spiritual challenge of hearing God in a distracted digital age.

Jason is the creative principal of Presence Creative Arts, based in Toronto and an award-winning actor and producer with over two decades of storytelling experience. He's known for his ability to craft compelling narratives rooted in Scripture and deeply engaging with audiences. You may have seen his work in *The Prodigal Trilogy*, or perhaps in *Breathe*, in *Jesus Stories*, or in *Blue Light Jazz*, just to name a few of the works he has written and performed.

So, enjoy this conversation between Jason Hildebrand and Lorna Dueck.

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Lorna Dueck: Jason Hildebrand, I have waited to unpack your new adventure with King David for the Bible Society.

So here we go. Welcome, and thank you for joining us.

Jason Hildebrand: Thanks so much, Lorna.

It's so great to be here. I love spending time with you anytime. Like I was saying earlier, prior to us being on, anytime I get to hang out with you is a treat.

Lorna Dueck: Well, you have talked with me back and forth since the beginning of your David adventure, and it's ready to be rolled out publicly now.

Jason Hildebrand: It is.

Lorna Dueck: And friends, our Canadian treasurer of Jason Hildebrand has embodied a doubting, aging King David in his latest work.

Tell us about this project.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah, well, the genesis of it is that many moons ago, over 25 years ago, I wrote a solo theatre piece on the life of King David and toured it all over the world for a number of years. And then it kind of got put to the side, it went on sabbatical.

And then over the last number of years, I've been dreaming about doing a film version, didn't know what it looked like. And the place, just Scotland kept coming into my brain, and I have no connection to Scotland at all. I'm a Mennonite on both sides.

But Scotland was kind of resonating in my spirit. And so, over the last, we were going to go, and location scout, my director, Tad Munnings, and I, my film partner, and then the pandemic happened. And we've been primarily a theatre company for a long time.

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And during the pandemic, things shifted, obviously online. And we shot a number of short films on the Psalms. And we wanted to give people kind of like little breaths of permission to be present in their lives, something that was hopeful in the social media negative, you know, stuff that was going on.

Lorna Dueck: They're beautiful meditations, which are all available. I remember receiving them during COVID. Remember?

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah.

And on our Presence Creative Arts YouTube channel. They're all free, you can and we have a couple in different languages now too, which is really fun.

Lorna Dueck: Ok slow that down, because someone wants to write that down. They are where?

Jason Hildebrand: Presence Creative Arts is our company.

And all the 11 microfilms can be found there. We have 10 more to shoot sometime in the next whenever the Lord provides the funding. But those are there now.

And there's one in Spanish up there as well right now. So that's super fun to have that. But in that process, we realized there was this kind of hunger to create space to kind of, you know, a little bit like what we're doing today is creating space for people to slow down and listen through cinema.

And so, we then went to Scotland and location scouted and God just moved all these pieces into place that were absolutely miraculous from where we were to shoot to the affirmation. I have an intercessory prayer board of these wonderful people from kind of all over the globe that pray for our work. And while in Glasgow picking up tads to drive way up north up near Orkney or near the Orkney Islands.

I got on a zoom call with this incredible bunch of people from the 24 seven prayer movement in Europe and told them what I was doing and said, you know, we think

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we should be doing this thing on David and not sure what it is. We don't have any money, but we're really feeling like Scotland's the place. And unanimously they said to me, you have to shoot next summer, and you have to shoot in Scotland.

And I said, what do you mean? And they said, well, we're on the cusp of the hundredth anniversary of a number of revivals that came out of Northern Scotland that changed the world. And God wants to pour out His Spirit through Scotland to the nations, and you need to be part of it. So, I was like, so encouraging, but I was like, does anybody have any money on the call? Cause you know that kind of thing.

But I came back and through a bunch of and interestingly, a couple of people's dreams and some miraculous circumstances. The Lord asked me to step out on a limb and book all of our cruise accommodation and flights. I was way out, way, way off the cliff.

Like He said, jump off the cliff. And I was way off the cliff. And I said, well, after 27 years of doing this kind of workload, I'm either going to crash and burn or you're going to show up.

And over the last three and a half years, He showed off repeatedly over and over and over and over again until we have this film about a man. It started as a story of King David, which it still is. A man, David, nearing the end of his days, unable to hear the voice of God.

And in the film, we call it "The Sound." And I think it's interesting that we're on the Canadian Bible Society podcast because one of the things that I've been dreaming about and thinking about is the reframing of language in our current cultural moment. And so, we framed The Sound or the voice of God as The Sound, The Sound of God, that David encountered The Sound.

And it actually kind of came out of a podcast I was listening to with Bono and Brene Brown. And Bono was saying that early in his days, he was having a hard time

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connecting to what was going on inside of him. He was a bit distracted and disconnected.

And he said he had to put his head next to the kick drum of Larry Mullen Jr. and hear the sound of the bass just bang, or the kick drum just boom, boom, booming. And then he had this epiphany that amazing grace, how great The Sound, that grace had a sound. And I thought, oh, that's incredible.

And then that just sparked in me, well, what if we frame the whole film around The Sound of God and David's inability in his aging life to hear The Sound because of all of the mess that he's been in? And so, he has to go back to the beginning of his story to listen for The Sound again, to learn how to hear again, and ultimately has to get to repentance in order to hear. But we really wanted to reframe the language because I think also in our cultural moment, a lot of the evangelical language that we have or religious language in our culture has so much baggage, political baggage, other kind of baggage attached to it. We wanted to see if there was a way to keep the heart of the story and the truth of what that story was while reframing.

And I think we saw that a number of years ago with Peterson's translation of Scripture. While it's a paraphrase, he really had a way of reframing language. And I think we've seen it too with translations like *The Voice* that have happened in recent days where the Bible is a which is more theologically specific than Peterson's translation is.

And I would say one more thing, Lorna, that the story, what I was thinking about, how do we speak into a culture with the stories of Scripture that actually would resonate? And I think Alpha does that really great from a pedagogical standpoint, from a, or not pedagogical, like apologetics standpoint. I said, but one of the things that a number of pastors have been saying to me is that we're having all these people coming to our churches right now and they don't even believe the Bible's true yet. How do we speak to those? What's the on ramp for those folks to encounter The Kingdom? And so, I wondered what it would be like, could we create a project that started with story and

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presence and helped, led people to an encounter and let the Holy Spirit do what the Holy Spirit does best? And so that's kind of how it started.

So it went to a film, then an immersive gallery, and now a small group curriculum. So, there's lots of stuff going on.

Lorna Dueck: People need to see this David, this King David in the angst of reconnecting with God, which is so at the heart of this new project.

And it is shot in Northern Scotland, isn't it? At Murray Watts Cottage, or not cottage, castle. Castle, yes. And those incredible, like we've had Murray on the show about, and how God set aside that Northern Scotland place for exactly what you've just created there.

So, let's go into the Psalms where you put together David's cry of reconnecting with God. What did you learn?

Jason Hildebrand: Well, I think that one of the most astounding things about the Psalms is that they convey every possible human emotion. And both with the David film and the Psalms project, we put them up online and I sent them to a ton of people.

People who had a relationship with Jesus, people who were Jewish, people who were agnostic or atheist. And not one person said to me, I don't get it. Everybody said, oh, that one Psalm, whatever it was, that thing really resonated in my soul.

Like I had no idea that somebody could express that thing so deeply. And that was kind of like an aha moment for me. I mean, I feel like I've been living in that space for a lot of years.

It's like when life is complicated or there's a certain thing going on, then I will work towards finding a Psalm that resonates with where I'm at. But speaking that into culture has been kind of a remarkable thing to see how that the Psalms transcend religion. They transcend bias and they move directly to the heart.

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And I think that's kind of, I mean, our team, one of the words that our team uses all the time is Jehovah Sneaky. And it's kind of my favorite name of God. And I don't know where we find it in Scripture.

I just know that that is God. And I think that's art as well. Great art sneaks in the back door of our hearts and plants itself there.

And if we let it, it will, it's like an entry point for the Holy Spirit to begin to do deep work in us. And sometimes we're so filled with all of the trickiness of life that we don't quite know how to let God in. And I think the Psalms kind of sneaks in the back door and art does as well.

I think, I mean, the Psalms is art. So, the Psalms is poetry.

Lorna Dueck: So, it's set in this incredible castle out in Freswick, Northern Scotland.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah.

Lorna Dueck: And what are you sensing about that wild environment?

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah. I mean, when God kept saying Scotland, I didn't know why, because I hadn't been there.

And then we went north and it's quite a remarkable place to be. It is desolate and, and overwhelming. And I think one of my favorite things about being in Northern Scotland is how small I feel.

Lorna Dueck: I just want to remind our viewers that just earlier we had the owner of that castle, artist, Murray Watts, on describing the call, the place, the development. Okay. So, you're there, you're doing exactly what that place was designed in the Holy Spirit to do.

And you feel very small.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah. It's pretty incredible.

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Actually, I met Murray about 25 years ago at an Imago event with John Franklin and we reconnected and, and he invited me up and I have a friend named Baxter Kruger, who's a theologian, and I once heard him preach and he started his, you know, he's from Mississippi. So, he's got the Southern drawl, and he said, we're dirt. He said, but we're loved dirt.

And that makes all the difference. And I felt like loved dirt in Northern Scotland. And I mean that in the most, like, you know, there's these castles that are all washed away and there's buildings that have been there for thousands of years.

And there's a landscape that's just stunning and you feel the fragility of your life. And I loved that so much. I feel like it's one of those things where we're here and we're gone.

I mean, the Scriptures talk about that. We're here and we're gone. We're like a, we're just a breeze.

Like we're gone. And yet, there's the Lord's tenderness to us is so astounding. And I felt like that.

And so, one of the great things about being up there, and I think why I was directed there was it's got kind of that classic story, story tropes of like man versus man, man versus nature, man versus God kind of vibe to it. And, you know, initially I had actually written a full feature film treatment of this David show, like all the actors, like the whole deal. And I got up there and I really had this check in my spirit.

Like, that's not what I asked you to do, Jason. I asked you to go up and I want David to be a guy wandering around, trying to reconcile hearing My sound again. And I, and so I had a little bit of argument with God, like, Lord, who wants to watch a guy wandering around? Like nobody wants to watch that.

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And then He said, well, that's what I told you to do, first of all. And second of all, you know, there's some great films, *Cast Away*, *Moon*. There's like a lot of great films with one guy stuck somewhere.

And so, I kind of changed my, my tune on it, but there's also something remarkable because, I mean, even in the castle, the basement of the castle is 12th century. We shot, the whole film is outside except for one scene where Nathan talks to David and it's in this 12th century Viking hall. And there's a chapel right around the corner in the castle from it as well.

And it's like one of those thin spaces, people talking in, you know, in more mystical terms of the thin space where heaven and earth kind of comes close. And it's definitely that. But there's a real sense in which there's transcendent things happening in Northern Scotland.

Like it's rugged, but it's spiritual. And so it was, it was pretty profound to be there. I was pretty excited about it.

And I think one of the other wild things is we started out; we went three times. We started out making a film about David. And what we realized is that we were making about making a film where people could find themselves in the story of David, which is different than making a film about David.

And that I didn't know that when we started, I didn't realize that was what we were doing. And I think why we were directed in that way was while the artist makes what he needs, ultimately, I think I probably need this the most. So that's why I'm making it for myself.

But I think our culture is desperate to find themselves in a narrative of hope in the midst of brokenness. And I think that's what we tried to do is create space for people to find themselves in the story, and then ultimately find themselves in a place of hope. Because I think our current cultural moment does not allow for that hope.

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Lorna Dueck: And our current cultural moment, desperate for space. In this film, thank you for letting me watch it in advance. Wow, wow.

It is this enormous cry out to God, one man, solo. So, take us to a Scripture where you think in, because it's all Scripture that you're voicing out to God here.

Jason Hildebrand: The film kind of culminates as David wanders through the landscape of the stories from the beginning, you know, getting anointed by Samuel and this sound coming on to him and into him.

And his experience of that culminates into recognizing the disaster he's created with sleeping with Bathsheba and killing Uriah. And so there's this moment, and we build it around a fire. And because it's only one actor, we set up this convention where Nathan is kind of like in the fire.

So, it's the actor, but it's also David kind of having a conversation with himself and also having a conversation with God. And he does that thing where he really says, I mean, you know, the creative, I mean, clean heart has been used in a million different creative ways over the years. And I think it's so powerful because like, Psalm 53, because it is the Gospel encapsulated into one Psalm and Psalm 53.

And so, there's a moment at the end of that scene where he finally recognizes because he's looking back, he finally essentially confesses and to his, the disaster of his life and his inability to hear. And in that moment, he's just crying out that, just don't take yourself, don't take Your sound away from me because it's everything. Without The Sound, my life has no purpose.

It has no meaning. Being a king doesn't matter. Being a father doesn't matter.

Being a husband doesn't, like nothing matters without Your Sound. And, I think in our cultural moment, there's so much like he's in noise in the film, like he's in the noise of all of his mess. And I think we're in the noise of all of our mess, whether it be politics or trying to find enough money to live or, you know, kids who are struggling or

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marriages that are struggling or whatever the thing, loss, grief, we have this noise that plays into our world.

And we have to get to a place. And I think that's what the Psalms do get, give us to a place where we get still again, and we have space again. And in that, like, it says that God doesn't speak to us in the fire and the roar and all that stuff.

He speaks to us in the still, small voice, but where are we creating space in our life to hear the still, small voice? I know for me, I wake up in the morning. What do I do? The first thing I do is I look at my phone and like, what's happening and what's going on.

And the Lord has been checking me on that too, is like, put away the phone because once in my own personally, once my head starts spinning into the business of the day, it's very hard to come back to the still, small voice.

And that's not to say He doesn't speak to us throughout the day. Of course He does.

Lorna Dueck: And you believe all of us can relate to the life of David to there?

Okay. Tell us about how important it is that we take our messy emotions and find them in the Psalms.

Jason Hildebrand: Well, I mean, David is a disaster from beginning to end.

I mean, he, in some ways people would say he just comes upon everything by chance. And of course it's not, it's God directed, but he's got to be one of the worst fathers in history. He's like, he's like a horrible husband.

There's just not, like once he goes from the innocence of being this shepherd boy, hearing The Sound of God and doing these great things, like most of the rest of his life is downhill. I think the reason he's given so much space is because he's such a disaster and we can relate to his disaster. Not necessarily that we're having fidelity or we're killing people, but like all of us are, well, I'll just speak for myself.

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I'm very messy. And I know in my mess and in my brokenness that the only place where I find peace and hope, and a reason to live is, you know, obviously through The Trinity and who, through Who God is. But the vehicle that I have found has spoken most deeply to my soul has been the Psalms because I can find myself there.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Tell me how that works for you as an artist. Where do you, what's a day like when all of a sudden, the Psalms comes around you in that kind of intimacy, and then ultimately to create a show for the, for the world to watch?

Jason Hildebrand: I think it started back, I would say it was started back when I was 17.

You know, I grew up in a Christian home, but I'd never quite fit in, you know, in the church world and in the secular arts world. I felt, you know, a bit of an anomaly. I mean, it's that, "woe is me, I'm an artist" stuff that you find that you're wrestling with, and then you realize that everybody is weird later. But I think when I was, I had actually gone to a youth conference in Regina, Saskatchewan at Canadian Bible College.

And the Lord spoke to me in the middle of a crowd, not audibly, but deep in my spirit, changed my life. And I came back and I had Psalm 25 in my guts, and I didn't really even know how to let Scripture sit in me at that point. It just like went in and it felt like it just began to root around and move in me and my soul.

And out of that place, I just felt the depth of God speaking to me. And since then, the Psalms has continued to do that. It's kind of like, I would say it kind of like reads me where I go in and I think if you let it, it settles in you and it's, it's both intellectual and visceral and spiritual at the same time.

I think one of the great sadnesses I have in the modern church universal, and maybe I'll just speak into evangelical circles because that's the world that I know better is that we're really good with the brain. We're really good with the intellect. And we've done a lot of great work since the reformation on the intellect.

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We don't quite know what to do with The Spirit. We know there is Holy Spirit, but they're not quite sure what to do with it. And we have no idea what to do with the body because people don't know how to.., but we're a triune being just like God is a triune being.

And so, I think one of the things I love about the Psalms is it is when we, when we when we chew on or find our nourishment from the Psalms, it speaks into all three parts of ourselves. It goes both into our mind, but it goes into our body. Like it has a visceral kinetic response in us, and it sits in our spirit in the same way.

So, it's like, I find this, the Psalms a way of unifying my whole being so that I can listen.

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Lorna Dueck: Wow, we've not discussed this on Scripture Untangled before, that as you untangle Scripture, it's actually physiologically doing something. You need God to enter brain, body, physical body, and spirit. What happens to my body physically when I meditate into, let's say, Psalm 25 specifically?

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"Show me your ways.

Guide me in your truth.

Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,

For they are from old."

Jason Hildebrand: We carry so much of the stuff of our day in our physical body.

We have this muscle memory. We hold trauma in our bodies. I remember early on when I did my undergrad in acting, I had a movement teacher talk about how sometimes when you get a massage, somebody's working on some part of your back or your neck, and people will just burst into tears because they've stored the trauma of whatever's gone on in their life in that particular part of their body.

There's this great book called *The Body Keeps the Score* that's helpful for this. And so, I think we do that all the way across.

And I think what—since that we want to feast on Scripture, there's a nourishment aspect to do it. But I think as we process that, as we let the ideas and the stories and the content—I don't even like that word—but the nourishment of the Psalms come in, I think it—I have experienced that the Lord releases that content in my physical body, and that physical thing can actually translate into the release of trauma, into the release of stress, into the release of my physical ailments even. I mean, we can get into healing and whatnot, but I mean, Jesus didn't die on a cross just for my salvation.

He died on a cross for my restoration even in this world. So, there's just something tangible about The Word being spoken into my body and being transformative. And I've experienced it in my own life.

I've—like layers of things come off as you—I would say like you—it's almost like you enflesh it. Like you nourish yourself with it, like Jesus—like you want to eat The Word,

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so to speak. Like, is it—who's the guy, who's the prophet who eats the word and it's bitter? You know, because he's doing that.

But it's that kind of thing where you take the Psalms and you put it in you as nourishment, and it can transform all of you. And I think that there's a mystery to it. I don't understand it entirely.

Like, I'm not a theologian. I just know what I know because it's been in me. And then one of the most incredible things I think that happens out of that is that The Word then comes in you, and then you are Christ in you, the hope of glory.

That Word translates into Christ in me, the hope of glory. And then my co-reflection of Christ—I always think we're doing things co. It's not just Jesus.

It's like Jesus and I, we do it together. That's how—that was the design that that thing then gets shown to the world in a way. And Lorna's reflection of Jesus is completely unique and different than my reflection of Jesus, which makes everybody so incredibly valuable.

But I think we have to nourish ourselves first before that reflection is bright and beautiful and transformative.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, so let's talk about that nourishment time because one big incredible thing about your project is you're putting it into a cultural moment when we have so filled up time with so many options. So, what's your advice for us taking time to be quiet with the Psalms? Like, what's—with our time with God so our spirit can get filled, our physical body can be touched and released into the truth of Scripture?

Jason Hildebrand: I think we have to make—we have to put it in our calendars.

I mean, the whole project started as a film, and then we built it into an immersive gallery as well, which we're going to be touring around. And that gallery is both a contemplative gallery. So, I think *Stations of the Cross* meets *Immersive Van Gogh*.

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It's like that kind of thing. So, I'm trying to create—I think one of the challenges with church today—and I'm a big fan of church. I think we should be—you should be committed to a local community and all those kind of things I said.

But we still, at the end of the day, church often have had a lot of information and not a lot of encounter. And so, my heart as an artist is to create space for people to have encounter, because until they have encounter, they don't know what it feels like or what it can be like. So, we want to create work that's a catalyst so that then you can go home—I'm just moving to your question—create a moment so people go, oh, that's what it's like when God comes.

I nourish on this thing in my mind, body, and spirit. Oh, I can do that at home? Oh, okay. And so, I mean, I'm a big fan of *Lectio 365*.

I love the 24-7 prayer, folks. So that's how my day starts, is *Lectio 365*. And then I have my Bible open and just kind of like, you know, working through a book or a section or something like that.

And then, you know, journaling.

Lorna Dueck: It takes time, doesn't it? Like you—I have a girlfriend who does it at 4 a.m. because she's still working. And yeah, that's where she puts it in.

And—but it takes time to sit with your Bible open on your lap and let God meet you.

Jason Hildebrand: That's true. And it's easier to turn on Netflix.

Lorna Dueck: Or your phone.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah, or your phone. You flick through nothing.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah, it's such a deliberate pulling away to the quiet with God.

Jason Hildebrand: It's a discipline.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah.

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And so, I want to get back to this wild and beautiful film project that you shot as David on those highlands of northern Scotland there. And so, he is getting away with God. Like he's just—you can just see what you guys have done with the wind and with your acting, the landscape, and this utter deep cry, right? God wants to hear our cry.

David took all the mess to God. Tell us about putting that into an acting scene.

Jason Hildebrand: It's kind of a wild thing how it all came together in different bits and starts and experiences.

I think we're—especially with our social media, look how good my life is, moment that we're in. And I know lots of people don't mean it to be that. And I know there's a lot of good things.

Like I love social media because I get to know when people are up to things. I actually was just in Los Angeles. And because I've been connected online, I got to have lunch with a guy I went to high school with.

And we did like *Little Shop of Horrors* together in high school. And it was so fun. So, there's great elements to social media.

But creating—I really wanted to create an honest—it's not—it's a little hard to watch the film actually, because you're watching the guy be a bit of a disaster. And it's a little too close to home. Do you know what I mean?

Lorna Dueck: I've seen it.

Yeah, you can hardly take your eyes off of David because you go, oh, that's what that feels like to cry out to God like that. Yeah, it's very emotional.

Jason Hildebrand: Permission.

I wanted to give people permission to be messy. And the other thing I think that what we were trying to accomplish is one of the things that Hollywood has done really well,

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is to bring some deep honesty to the human condition. I think there's a beautiful thing about that.

But what they have not done well, and I think that's where the Gospel speaks into the world, is to provide hope. I don't mean happy endings. I'm not talking Hallmark.

And I know my wife likes Hallmark, and there's lots of Hallmark-y things. But I think we have to have hope at the end. I think I am not a good artist if I don't offer people hope at the end.

Now, you can leave people with a negative cliffhanger at the end, but if it's not a catalyst to hope, then I've failed as an artist. And I think that's what we aspire to on the David film is to let all the mess hang out, to let the soul cry out in the depths of our despair, because every single one of us get to the depths of our despair. But then, and yet, the Gospel is, and yet, I came alongside you know, all those things.

And so, there's a beauty to transparency and honesty. And I think that our—like you were speaking, our cultural moment, the generation coming up will not accept anything less. They're like, you need to be honest with me, because if I don't buy it, then I'm not going near it.

And so, I think there's something beautiful about that. But if it's just honesty with no hope, then it's a waste of time, in my opinion.

Lorna Dueck: And you challenge us that all of us can find our connection in the Psalms, in the sense that there's nothing that I've encountered that any listener has encountered, that God is not yet greater.

God is not deeply wanting to go into. Isn't that right?

Jason Hildebrand: Absolutely. Well, I imagine you've experienced it too in the last year too, Lorna.

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I was just like, where do you turn when you're broken? You know, my brother-in-law died in January.

Lorna Dueck: I'm sorry.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah, well, I mean, you've walked a hard journey in the last season as well.

Lorna Dueck: Yeh, Verne died in April.

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah, so you just..., and yet we go to the Scriptures, and we cry out and we say, Lord, where are you? Like, what the heck? Why am I in the middle of this? Why does he leave a wife and two teenage kids? And why does, like, all the why's, it's all in the Psalms. It's all there.

It's David saying, show up for crying out loud. You need to show up. You need to come alongside because I have nothing without You.

And the Lord does. And I think we have to be courageous enough to and disciplined enough to find ourselves in those places and not just despondent and not, you know, and not pressing into the Lord on those things.

Lorna Dueck: You know, I'm going to borrow from Murray Watts, your good friend on this podcast, because you're teaching us how to use an artistic skill or how to engage with the arts to help God show up in our life.

And Murray taught us that the arts are like the alabaster jar. It's just broken and a great expense. Doesn't make a lot of logic for some people in the room.

And the fragrance of art goes and does what God lets art do. What's been your experience with that?

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah, I love, I just love it. I think that, yeah, yes, art.

You're right. It's just messy. It's, art is very high tech.

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We're a primarily donor-based organization. So, it's hard, like donors always want to know what's the metrics. And I'm like, well, I don't know.

Lorna Dueck: Murray said we should do the alabaster jar metrics on the arts. He just was on the show a while ago. I love that, alabaster arts.

And so, you live in that world of just trusting that God is going to take your work and let the fragrance of His Spirit go through people.

Jason Hildebrand: And the thing that he, I really felt in my, deep in my spirit, maybe about six or seven years ago, that God was speaking to me about is, stop doing My job. You're not very good at it.

So, you don't have to change anybody's heart. Uh, you don't have to clever your way into bringing people into My Kingdom. You do your job and I'll do My job and it'll go much better that way.

And I think that's the alabaster jar to me is that we offer our craft, in all of its imperfection and we break it at the feet of Jesus. And then say, these are the people that You love. It's up to You to do the work, to now take what we've done and transform people's lives.

And that's the co-partnership is that we courageously, hopefully take the jar and we smash it at Jesus' feet. And He takes that and He allows it to waft into people's lives and be transformative. And it was a real massive epiphany for me that I didn't have to do God's job.

I mean, that sounds arrogant and silly, but I think, you know, you grow up, I grew up in a, you know, an evangelical environment where you felt guilty if you weren't evangelizing or you felt guilty if you weren't doing it, talking to Jesus about a certain way and checking the box. Are they in the Kingdom kind of thing? And I really felt like, uh, the Holy Spirit was saying, no, no, no, you're not the one that does the work,

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that kind of work. You're, you're the guy who, who tees it up so that I can, I can bring the transformation.

Lorna Dueck: And are you finding God is faithful in this unique calling of teeing it up for the Holy Spirit through the arts and now through, *The Shepherd & The Sound*? It's a massive project.

Jason Hildebrand: It's so massive and, you know, we're so, I'm so out of my depth. I don't know how to do most of the things that we did over the last three and a half years.

And I don't even know how to release the project into the world properly yet. I think that the cultural moment is, I think a lot of the streaming services and the way we release our work into the world is broken. And I wonder if the way that we find release and connection is through partnership and not through the streaming.

I'm open to however God directs, but I think there's a way, like even the joy of being on this podcast with you is that what the vision that God put in my heart gets to connect with the vision that God's put in the Canadian Bible Society's heart. And then we do Kingdom together because our callings align, our craft aligns. And I think then something like then the sparks happen and then something exciting can happen.

And hopefully we bless a bunch of people in the mix. And I wonder if that kind of partnership is actually the way that both the film will roll out, but the way that more people will encounter Jesus is through these kinds of partnerships.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah.

It's going to be a personal thing that you need to discover your voice in the Psalms through this gift of David, *The Shepherd & The Sound*.

Okay. There's links in our show notes and there is beautiful video up on your website already.

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People can get a, are there any other advice for people who want to get a flavor of *The Shepherd & The Sound*?

Jason Hildebrand: Yeah. Well, like you said, theshepherdinthesoundfilm.com has all of our links for both the film and the immersive gallery encounter and the small group resource, which is what we're calling community encounter. We're test driving it now.

It should be available widely. If you want to test drive it, let me know or let us know, our team know. And then if you want to check out some of our other work, both the Psalms, the 11 Psalms that we have, as well as other things, other discussions we have, find out, you know, what's going on.

You can go over to our YouTube page, "Presence Creative Arts" or Instagram Presence Creative Arts, Facebook, we're on all the stuff. Yeah, we really, man, even in talking to you, my heart is really towards, how do we create art that nourishes the soul? And, you know, our medium is the performative arts. But I think that's so..., it's interesting when the pandemic happened, where did the entire universe go? They went to media.

And so, we want to, as people who are connected to the Trinity and the Kingdom, be speaking into those spaces in meaningful ways. And I think that's what you're doing with this podcast. And hopefully that's what we are aspiring to do with our work as well.

Lorna Dueck: We are so honored to share *The Shepherd & The Sound* with this audience and your good work. And Jason, we're going to stay tuned. Thank you.

Jason Hildebrand: Likewise. And thank you, Lorna. And I've told you this a bajillion times, but I am super grateful for the way you have pioneered many things.

And I continue to think that you have a prophetic voice to Canada and the world. Even on this podcast.

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Lorna Dueck: All I have to say, we need to hear from Jason. There's something brewing there.

We need to hear from Jason.

Jason Hildebrand: I'm grateful for your friendship and grateful for your continued work. So, bless you and this podcast as well.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah, it does a great job of giving new ideas for how to engage the Scripture. Jason Hildebrandt of Presence Creative Arts. Thank you very much for the project of *The Shepherd & The Sound*.