

The following is an interview conducted with ITS student, Taylor Bradbury, in September 2017.

Taylor is the Director of Ministries at New City Church on the east side of Indianapolis.

How did you come to faith?

The Lord began to call me to himself while I was in eighth grade. It began when a student/peer reached out and befriended me. He was a Christian and could tell that I was not. He began to share with me the good news of Jesus Christ and invited me to his church and youth group. At first I thought it was silly and yet I wanted to return. I don't remember the exact date, but it was the summer before my freshman year of high school that the Lord changed my heart and I believed the gospel. I remember a distinct change in my thinking. I realized that I was a sinner in need of a Savior. I put my trust in the gospel that summer and have been walking with the Lord ever since. To this day I thank God for my dear friend who reached out to me with the gospel.



How did God call you to ministry?

The Lord called me to ministry while I was serving in my local church. I was volunteering with the youth group and was serving in children's ministry while in college. I kept hearing from various people that I was a gifted teacher and that I should thinking about being a pastor some day. Additionally, I heard a similar thing while in college. I found myself tutoring peers and would often hear them say that I was able to teach and instruct in a way that helped them learn and grasp the material. So hearing from various individuals that I was a gifted teacher, coupled with a desire to pastor God's people, I began to pursue pastoral ministry. I invited my church elders and friends to inspect my life and gifts in order to discern if I was gifted, called, and qualified to serve in pastoral ministry.

What challenges are you facing?

The main challenge that I am facing right now is balancing all the various components of life. Studying for pastoral ministry, while working a full-time job and a part-time job on the side, while raising two small children and loving my wife well, has proven to be a task that requires diligent balancing. By God's grace I have been able to juggle all these things well, but it has indeed been a challenge.

Why did you choose ITS?

I chose ITS for a number of reasons. First, I love studying in person. I have always preferred the classroom setting to online education. So when I heard that Indianapolis was going to start a solid seminary, I was overjoyed. Secondly, I chose ITS because the credits transfer to the seminary where I am pursuing an MDiv. I am able to take classes in person at ITS and have the credits count toward my online MDiv program at another institution. Thirdly, I chose ITS because I wanted to study the word, theology, and church history with brothers

and sisters in Christ from around my city. I love Indianapolis and have benefited from the networking that ITS has provided. I have gotten to know pastors, interns, students, and lay people from various local congregations that I would not have met otherwise. And some of these relationships have turned into great friendships. Lastly, I chose ITS because it is providing a world-class theological education. The professors that teach at ITS are renowned scholars and I have been abundantly blessed by the caliber of education ITS has provided thus far.

What have you learned at ITS?

I have learned a lot through being a student at ITS. If I had to pick one area, however, I would say that through my classes I have become a better reader of God's word. Through the various courses I have taken at ITS, I have grown at reading Scripture in light of the overarching story of the Bible. I have learned to locate books of the Bible within their redemptive and historical settings which has served to provide a more robust understanding and reading. Additionally, through the courses at ITS I have become a better reader of whole books of the Bible. I have learned to read a specific chapter or section of a book within its entire-book context. This has paid dividends in both pastoral ministry and in my personal walk with Christ as it has helped me read texts within their immediate literary context and understand the author's flow of thought throughout the entire book. I cannot thank ITS enough for making me a more skilled and thoughtful reader of Holy Scripture.

What gospel (spiritual) lessons have you learned from your experience of getting training for pastoral ministry?

I have learned a number of lessons in my training for pastoral ministry—too many to name here. One main lesson I have learned is the importance of spiritual disciplines for pastoral ministry. Pastoral ministry comes with many demands and a busy schedule. It can be all too easy to neglect family or to neglect one's own walk with God. Making intentional time to commune with God through prayer, the word, solitude and silence are vitally important to sustain a man called to pastoral ministry. That has been another great benefit of ITS. Although I am learning lots of theology and doctrine and philosophy, the instructors and professors always connect what I am learning back to a relationship with God.