

Q&A 2018-Part 1

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike: Well, you have come on an interesting weekend here at Compass Bible Church. It is the one weekend where we take this time where I would normally be expositing a biblical passage and instead we try to do our best to answer biblical questions. They don't have to be specifically about the Bible. We would allow you to ask a question about, obviously, a biblical text about the Christian life, something related to biblical theology or doctrine, any of those things. Nothing's texted in ahead of time, nothing, you know, pre-written, no plants out there, just this is a live, kind of let's wait and see what happens kind of night that we have. And it's been in the past that we often have a great time of mutual edification and I hope it turns out that way again. So, I have two pastors with microphones, I think we do, on two sides of the room, and when you flagged down a pastor on one side, if you're on the other side, flag down the person with the microphone, there's the pastor right there, and we'll get you going back and forth and antiphonally from one side to the next. All right. So let's ask some Bible questions. Who's first? All right. Very good.

Question: Pastor Mike, this is more of, I guess, about the Christian life. And it has to do with social media and responding to people on social media. I had a friend from high school and another guy from high school died today, and a lot of people responded to that. Everyone, of course, is saying that the guy's, you know, with the angels. Is that an appropriate place to respond somehow with the Gospel or making some kind of a comment about being sure that we're right with God when we're all going to be facing death. And as people get increasingly older in social media we're hearing it all the time. Just your thoughts on that.

Pastor Mike: I don't find it a particularly appropriate place to have that kind of conversation. And I think, it is a strange phenomenon that we are passing condolences around publicly for everyone else to read, but, you know, whatever, it happens. Obviously, I do it. But a condolence is one thing, I think, trying to rectify a culture's wrong perspective on what happens when you die is probably not the right context. You know some people make it a sport. And that's what they love to do. But I would recommend that that not be the place that you do it, certainly not the place I would find as an appropriate place to engage in that. I mean, if you see someone who is just, you know, pontificating, I don't know, I might private-message them and say, "OK, here's a third party. Here's my buddy who is suffering or my friend's wife or widow. Let's deal with that through another means, another channel. That would be my recommendation. Yeah. Where are we now? In the back.

Question: My question is trichotomy versus dichotomy. The early Eastern church believed in three parts: body, soul and spirit. The Western church held that man is body and soul, suggesting that the soul and spirit are the same substance. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." I believe in trichotomy and I believe when you mentioned on Compass Night that you were dichotomous. Can they both be right? Or is this just one of those doctrinal quagmires.

Pastor Mike: No. Someone's right and someone's wrong. Right? I mean, how could it be illogically any other way? We're dealing with passages of Scripture and I could add more that give us more aspects to humanity. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." You know, adding strength to it. Yeah, I'm a dichotomous because I think that makes the best use of the

biblical data. A lot of great guys I know, including you, a great guy, that are trichotomous, that's fine. I think the concern I had on Compass Night when I was teaching on trichotomy versus dichotomy is that many have built doctrines on soulishness versus spiritual mindedness. They make distinctions in their practical theology about what comes from my soul, what comes from my spirit, and they build entire sandcastles, in my mind, on distinctions that I don't think exist. And in my mind I just, yeah, I wouldn't want to take that next step. You want to say we're trying trichotomy, okay, great. I'm going to go back to the first reference to these words "resh" and "naphach" in Genesis Chapter 2 when it says that "God made the man out of the dust of the earth, he breathed into him," there's the word for spirit, "the breath of life and he became a living soul," "nephesh" he became a soul. Now, I know there's not a completely consistent use of those terms if you want to press every single passage where those terms are enlisted, but I think much like a captain of the ship would say, how many souls do you have onboard, soul is the unique totality of who the person is. Of course, it means more than just their immaterial part. But I believe there is a material part and immaterial part. And I think where trichotomists would try to look at me and say, "Well, we're saying the same thing here," is that I have to concede that there is a humanity that makes us alive. And this is where they will try to draw the line. In other words, if an animal is alive, an animal is a living creature, it's not just the dust of the earth. When God creates out of the dirt with magnesium, the oxygen, the carbon, the phosphorus that comes out of the dirt, that's dirt. But it becomes alive in an animal. So there has to be some living dynamic there. But then God gives us his own spirit, a spirit that reflects his spirit, it has intellect, emotion and will, and that's then, I say, is a human life that has a spirit that's made in the image of God and the totality of that then is a living soul. Yeah. And I know it's messy. I've looked at all the passages, I'm sure, like you have, but I can't build a chart the way the trichotomists do. I just don't agree with that view. But I don't think we're going to split over that, I hope. It's a minor issue. I think when you start to build, as I've said, practical issues of sanctification and theology based on those words, that's where I think you may be stepping too far afield. And I think I know partly, because I know you, where some of that is reinforced in the reading of sanctification that you might do that drives some of that. But, anyway, we can talk about that part of it later. But, yeah, I'm a dichotomous, admittedly I'm dichotomous. But there's a right view and a wrong view and I could be wrong, and then, you know, in a hundred years you can look me up and say, "Hey, you were wrong," and you might be wrong and then I can look you up in a hundred years and say, "Hey, you were wrong," but I don't think we'll be worrying about who is right and wrong, but someone is right and wrong. Yeah. All right.

Question: I think I heard you or another pastor preach on human repentance versus repentance that comes from God, and I was wondering how you would counsel your kids, or anyone, how to know if they're improving in behavior because just sheer force of will or if they actually have gotten repentance from God that leads to salvation.

Pastor Mike: Well the distinction in Second Corinthians 6 is because someone is sorrowful, but it doesn't end up in a changed behavior. It's like me saying I've repented of smoking of cigarettes, but you look to me in three months and I'm smoking cigarettes. Repentance that is from God is repentance that gives a dynamic that makes that trajectory of change, that redirection of life, makes it stick. And that is the God factor, that is that God has now been involved in restructuring a heart, to quote Jeremiah 31, where he puts his spirit within us and drives us, moves us, to obey his law. Someone, you know, non-Christians can stop smoking. So that's a repentance of sorts, a repentance from one addiction to nicotine I suppose. But what we're looking at as it relates to issues of God, and I'll be preaching on this tomorrow night, issues like your relationship to God's word. I say that, that's just for the teenagers by the way. I'm preaching in Marietta tomorrow night, Lord willing. That is a dynamic that comes from God. You can't manufacture that. You can have an interest in the

Bible but you can't have the kind of relationship with Scripture that God calls for because it's part of the work of his Spirit in our lives. Therefore, to get to the practical issue of what your question is, I say to my kids to be patient to see where this goes. And I make it clear, I'm not going to get overly enthusiastic about your moves toward God, at least not in the sense that a lot of parents do saying, "Hey, I know you're saved. Your name's written in the Lamb's Book of Life, no doubt. You're a child of God. We're brothers in Christ." I'm not going to say that right away. I'm going to have a kind of caution about people who have, even adults, who have a confession of faith. Well let's see where that goes. Pastor Pete often gives his testimony and disparages me a little bit, I suppose, in the process by saying that when he became a Christian, a very smart, successful businessman, I said, well maybe I was busy that day, but I said, "Look me up in a year and we'll see if it sticks," or something like that. And I know, that's terrible of me. We're good friends now. But the point is that anyone can have an immediate, you know, like the Bible says in the parable of the four soils, can receive the word with joy and spring up as though he's got life, but when trouble comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. So, time is going to tell whether this is a divine repentance, a repentance that is genuine. The only problem I have with the way you've stated the question is every bit of repentance is going to take every bit of our strength. Right? We say it's God, not me, but that to me is training a child to think that there is some kind of passivity in their volition and there is never a passivity in our volition. So I don't want to make that kind of discussion with my children that, you know, this is a God thing, it won't be repentance in your strength. Every repentance feels like you're going to sweat. It's difficult. But the reality whether it's successful or not, that God is really involved in it, is whether or not it lasts and it sticks. And God says, the trajectory of those, Hebrews Chapter 2, who are really his children, they prove that by enduring to the end. And so, I want to tell my kids, I love every move you make toward Christ, but I'm not going to be overly enthusiastic in the sense that I'm going to start giving you verses of assurance right now, because I don't know whether or not what's happened in your life is cultural, as I like to say, a kind of conformity from the outside in, or whether it's a genuine conversion of your heart from the inside out. And that's the distinction that's super important. So, I hope that helps. Back in the back.

Question: According to Second Corinthians 5:8, the Scripture says that if a believer dies before Jesus' second coming, we are ushered immediately into the Lord's presence. Also, First Thessalonians 4:17 Scripture says that if Jesus comes again while us believers are still alive, we will be caught up or raptured into the Lord's presence along with those believers who have died before us. Could you please explain to us, according to your understanding of Scripture, the order of events at the End Times. And also, where us, as a body of believers, will be included in this timeline. Where I get it confused is after we enter the Lord's presence, what is our involvement in the rest of the End Times? Specifically, in the millennium kingdom and the New Jerusalem.

Pastor Mike: OK, but before you leave the microphone, is your concern about the statement of being present with God, being absent from the body in Second Corinthians, is the concern that it looks like they are not present with God because they are being resurrected there in First Thessalonians? Is that what you're saying? Is that the concern? Is there a tension there first?

Question: No.

Pastor Mike: OK, this is your question, right?

Question: Yes.

Pastor Mike: You're asking. Okay, it is not someone else's.

Question: I'm wondering after we're with the Lord whether it's before his coming...

Pastor Mike: Right. I got you I've got the second part of the question very clearly. But what you asked is a question that some people ask about. It looks like if the dead in Christ are going to rise, where in the world have they been after they died. Is that your question?

Question: No.

Pastor Mike: OK. Well, I'll answer the second half which was super clear. Yeah. Does anyone have that question? Yeah. Okay, let me answer that one first that no one is asking. It's always great at Q&A to answer questions no one's asking. The whole of who humanity is, Mike Fabarez wants to be encased and enmeshed in humanity. When I die my spirit separates from my body. Paul calls it, in Second Corinthians 5, being naked. Much like you would be uncomfortable coming to church naked tonight, at least I hope you would. You are going to be uncomfortable in the sense that you're not teleos, it's not right for you to be disembodied. So, we go to be consciously with the Lord as Christians the moment we die. Right? Just like Jesus on a cross. His body went into a tomb but he said, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." He's like Stephen in Acts. He's turning his spirit to the Lord. He's going back, Jesus said to the man on the cross, "Today you'll be with me in paradise." But his body was in Joseph's tomb all weekend. So how are you today with this man in paradise? Well, they both died and their software, their spirit, their conscious awareness went to be in another realm where God is. But their body, they get to be back into their bodies at the time of the Rapture. That's when the dead in Christ rise. It doesn't mean they're unconscious like the Adventists or the JW's teach. It just means that they are not whole, they're naked, their nakedness, so to speak, will end and they'll be back into a resurrected body just like Christ was on the third day after his death. OK. So the End Times sequence. OK? Let's go to both of those passages because I see how you use those references now. I die tonight. I'm not predicting that but let's just say that happens. I get separated from my body. My wife buys a nice coffin, from Costco perhaps, and buries me. I go to be with the Lord. Let's say next Tuesday the Rapture takes place. OK? My body won't be long in that coffin. I'm now going to have that body raised and it will be transformed just like Christ's body was transformed and my body and my spirit will be reunited just before my wife gets raptured, because the dead in Christ will rise first. Then she will go to meet the Lord in the air. The Lord is meeting his people in the air. Then she'll be with me because she gets instantaneously changed, as First Corinthians 15 says, she didn't have a separation from her body. Her body gets instantaneously changed and she gets that resurrection body. I get my resurrection body. She just got... I lose it today and get it back next Tuesday just barely before she gets her's because it goes from an old body to a new body. One to one correspondence. She doesn't leave one behind and get a new one. She gets a remanufactured, reconstituted, glorified body. Romans 8. What do we do? I believe that for seven years, whenever that clock starts soon after the rapture, we get to enjoy God's presence, in God's presence, in Christ's presence. Let's assume the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place during that period of time, a rejoicing, a gathering, and hell breaks loose on earth, almost literally, so to speak, and we have this great tribulational period. The end of the tribulational period, after lots of people get saved during that period of time, because God sends these missionaries, then we come back with Christ, Revelation 19, and we come back to save Israel, Israel physically, in a battle, Revelation 19. And those folks, without resurrected bodies, they now populate the millennial kingdom. We are already in resurrected bodies. Well, we get to live on the earth too. It's not the new earth yet. It's a bit of a renewed earth because Satan is now, it says in Revelation 20, chained up. So, he doesn't get to tempt the nations. So I have a resurrected body, my wife has a resurrected body,

someone over in Jerusalem or it could be anywhere, gets saved during the tribulation period. They now make it through the tribulation, if they do, there'll be many who die as martyrs. They now are living in un-resurrected bodies. They have children. Carlynn and I don't have any children at that point. We have some now but we don't..., we won't have anymore, we won't be propagating any..., we won't be going to Babies R Us. None of us will now. Right? It's out of business. We won't be doing that in the millennial kingdom. Well, how can we coexist? Well, we are going to coexist just like Jesus sat there with the disciples and had meals with them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as I preached on last weekend in John 21, and in the Upper Room, you know, after where they were locked in that room rather and Jesus showed up, they eat together, they meet together, they talk together, he's touching his scars. All of that is happening and no one's going, "Well, we can't have this conversation because you're in a resurrected body and I'm not in a resurrected body." All that's going to go on for a thousand years. People will be born and after that thousand years is over, as we rule and reign with Christ during that period of time, then Satan will be released for a short period of time. It doesn't tell us how long. I don't know how long. I can only assume it's because all those folks born during the millennium kingdom have never had that opportunity at all to even be tempted to sin. So at that point it says many will rebel against God at that time and they will be lost, they'll be judged by God. Then comes the Great White Throne judgment at the end of that thousand-year period. And that's when everyone is gathered together. The lost are all gathered together and they go before the Lord at the Great White Throne and they are assigned a place in a brand-new environment, because God now has taken the old Earth, gotten rid of it, the old heaven, gotten rid of it, he's got a new heaven, a new earth. And the lost are judged and placed in what's called the Lake of Fire. We inherit a new earth with a new city coming out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband and we start a whole new reality there in the Bible. So that's a thumbnail sketch of it. Did I miss any part that is of interest to you? Is that good? Anything else? No? OK. I mean, because I can't really explain all of eschatology in five minutes, but that's the thumbnail overview. Great question I'm sure. OK.

Question: When I was reading Matthew a few months back, I think it was like in January, it talked about Jesus Christ saying, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay it." But a few months later, I was reading First and Second Samuel, and all the way up to Judges, where it talks about Samson and all that. And I recently learned that God actually used people for his judgment or revenge, I guess. So how was that possible even when God said, "Vengeance is mine"?

Pastor Mike: It's a great question. You're probably conflating a couple of passages because the passage you're quoting comes from Romans, which is given to a bunch of Christians sitting in a church in Rome who are like us having conflicts with one another, and he says, listen, don't take any revenge, God will take revenge and even the people who are outside trying to persecute you, don't take revenge. And you probably are thinking about Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount when he talks about turning the other cheek. Same concept. I get that and that's exactly right. It was like, OK, if you come after the church and you insult me and kick me in the shins, the Bible says I'm supposed to not take revenge upon you. I'm not going to return insult for insult. Peter says, I'm not supposed to retaliate, that's the biblical command on my life. The Bible says, even in the New Testament, there is one that brings vengeance upon people and it's called the government. See? And if you have that clearly in your mind and you know this: that the government, Romans 13, it holds that sword to bring judgment on people, then I know this: that if I look back in the Old Testament at these situations I'm looking at guys who were working for the government, if you will, in Israel. They were raised up, whether it was Gideon or Samson or whoever might have been to say, okay, you're gonna now be used as the leader of Israel. That's what they were, leaders of Israel, that's what "the judge" meant. They were not just kind of sitting in a courtroom with a gavel and a robe, they

were military leaders to take Israel out of the oppression of these foreigners who had come into their land and had invaded their land and had, many times, enslaved them and conscripted them to all kinds of unfair things. And now he was raising up the governmental leaders to take revenge. So, I can't take..., if you come and steal my car stereo, as I often say, which now it's almost impossible because it's part of the car. You'd have to steal the whole car, it seems. I'm sure you can get stereo out. I'll be corrected on that. But the point..., follow me. I can't go to your house and steal your car stereo but I'm going to pick up the phone and called the sheriff's department on you, because they are going to try and make me whole in that act of injustice. So, we just need to distinguish between personal revenge, insult for insult, slap for slap, that's not what I'm to do, versus the governmental role to bear the sword for a reason. And the sword wasn't used for gallantry, it was used for judgment. That's the distinction. Great question.

Question: Pastor Mike, I love these sessions by the way, the questions and answers, because I know I'll get straight answers from you as you always teach your sermons to us. What I like about them is because you're not afraid to talk about hard truths in the Bible. The question I want to ask you has to do with what's not uncommon anymore in today's Christian churches, and that is divorce and remarriage. There are verses in Luke, there are verses in Mark that talk specifically about divorce and remarriage, whether or not a person should get remarried once you are divorced, if your spouse is still alive. And I got into some discussions with some guys about that recently and we were all confused. I'd appreciate your clarification of what that really means because they are very restrictive and hard verses to stick with. And so if you could please respond to that. Thank you.

Pastor Mike: That response right there was the same response the Apostles had when Jesus said them originally and it's recorded in the Gospels for us. They said, "This is incredibly hard, it's better if you don't get married then." And Jesus goes, "Oh no, this is just the principle." No, he didn't say that. He said, "If you can do that, do that." That's not the answer you'd expect from your pastor. Right? But yeah, this is such a binding covenant before God, he says, "Man, if you can't live by the terms of this you shouldn't even get into it. If you can avoid it, you should avoid it." The problem is most of us can't avoid it and it's very clear in First Corinthians 7 what that means. Right? We're wired to be sexual beings, and so if you can't in terms of your self-control, well then you should, if you're a romantic, you want to be married, then definitely be married. But before you step into marriage you better know what kind of covenant this is before God. And God takes that seriously. Of course there are many reasons. Now I hate to give this publicly, this is not a pastoral setting and your situation may be very complicated and complex. But on the surface of things, I could be married to 14 women in my life by the time I die, if the first 13 of them died, Romans Chapter 7. You probably wouldn't want to sign up as the 14th gal to marry me if I've had my first 13 women die. But I can get to heaven having 14 wives. Right? Now, I'm sounding like a Mormon right now, but I'm just saying I can have a history of having all kinds of wives as long as it says in Romans 7, every one of them died. And of course I can't be a murderer, so I can't kill them, but the point is I am freed from that covenant at the moment of their natural death. OK, that's one. Matthew 19 has the exception clause very clearly. If you divorce your spouse for a reason other than adultery, the Greek word "Pornea", which is not to be so broadly defined as you just think of the words that come in English from that word. It has to do with sexual unfaithfulness and then there's a whole set of biblical principles surrounding that in the Bible about restoration and forgiveness and all the rest. So, we can safely say that unrepentant, adulterous... I could get to heaven with... This is a bad illustration, but if I had 14 wives while I was on earth and my first 13 all were, you know, unrepentant adulteresses, then I'd be in the clear. I know the Bible talks about a one woman, one man for life covenant but technically that, and again I don't think you'd want to sign up as the 14th woman in line in that situation, but there's another one. First Corinthians Chapter 7, a third one, and

that is a statement of a non-Christian. If I'm married to a non-Christian wife, she does not want to live with me because I am a Christian, and she decides to abandon me. The Bible says, well, first it talks about trying to maintain that marriage as best you can, it's a lengthy context, because I don't know, I'm not going to give up right away because I may be the agency of her salvation. I don't know if I'm going to save her or not. Plus my kids, it's going to massively impact my kids so try to stay married he says in First Corinthians 7, that's the summary. But then he says if she leaves, let her leave. You're at peace, you're called to peace, you're not called to constantly be chasing this down. So, at the end of that passage he rejoins that concept of being free and at peace, and he says you're free to remarry. He brings up another example, same basic verbiage, concept though, he says you're free to remarry but only in the Lord. In a context it's very practical and helpful. It all needs to be read and it all needs to be weighed against your particular situation. But those are the situations in Scripture. A lot of people like to add a lot more to that. But Jesus didn't and when he said it this is a lifelong commitment and you ought to keep it. And if you say, well, I don't want to get into a covenant that's that, you know, harsh and determined, well then, he says try and avoid it if you can. But it's only to those to whom it is given, those who have the gift to do it. And Paul says, one man has one gift, that is a spouse, and one person has another gift, and he says that's the gift I have of being content as a single person. So they're both good grace gifts from God. But when you get married that's a big, big covenant. So, yeah, there are some exceptions to it in the Scripture but it's like saying, is there any time I should cut my arm off? Well, you'd say, generally no. Right? Keep your arm on your body. But of course there are times in extreme situations where you'd have to cut my arm off and it would be the right thing to do and it would be advised by doctors. Same thing with divorce. Rarely are we advising people to get divorced. But there are few situations in Scripture where that is biblically allowed and in some cases, I suppose, it might even be advisable.

Question: When you did your live broadcast "To Every Man an Answer" there was a caller who called in about leaving your salvation versus losing your salvation. And the other Pastor Mike used, I think it was Revelation 22, to explain it. Being blotted out of the Book of Life, meaning that you were once in the Book of Life. I didn't think that I heard your perspective on this.

Pastor Mike: I don't think I had an opportunity to give my perspective on that. Yeah. No, I don't agree with that position. I wouldn't put it that way and even the way you stated the passage was exactly the way my cohost stated the passage, which is not what the passage says. It doesn't say that he will, it says that he won't blot you out of the Book of Life. So, the Book of Life in the Old Testament is different than the Book of Life in the book of Revelation. The Book of Life in the book of Revelation is defined as the Lamb's Book of Life. So, this is a book that's open, you're going to find out whether you're saved or not at the end of time, you should know that by then but, because your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I assume that what's going on in that letter to the Church of Sardis is it, that, you know, he's referring to that same book, but he speaks of the fact that he won't have his name blotted out of a Book of Life. People say, "Well see there. He said he was not going to do it, so I guess that means he could do it." Well, yeah, I suppose, but that's not what it's saying. It would be like in John 10 talking about having given these gifts from the Father to the Son, these people, the sheep, he's the good shepherd, no one will snatch them out of my hand. Well, if he's committed to not having anyone snatch them out of his hand, well maybe sometimes he's not committed to doing that. See the commitment in that passage is he's committed to NOT blotting your name out of the Book of Life. So, yeah, Mike and I on our Tuesday show, I hope you see great respect and deference. He's the boss. He has me on as a guest. I don't always get a chance to chime in, particularly because he knows some of my positions are a little different than his on a few topics and that's one of them. Yes. Wherever we're at now.

Question: I was just wondering, back to Corinthians. I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I know it's God-breathed. But, Paul sets himself apart in that one part. He says, "this is me, Paul, talking here." When he does that in Corinthians, how does that go together?

Pastor Mike: The same exact way I just did it, and that is by saying that in Matthew 19, very clearly Jesus gives us some instruction regarding marriage. The Apostle Paul, even that word apostle, very clearly he defends at length in Second Corinthians, he now distinguishes the fact that this wasn't the teaching of Christ. This is a very early letter from the Apostle Paul predating, depending on your dating schemes, to what we've got in the Gospels. So he's saying, "This is not something that Jesus said. This is something I say." Then he adds this: "and I have the spirit of God." Well, what's the point? "I'm telling you these things." Early in the book he puts it this way: he defends the Apostleship of him being an agent of revelation to these people. You know when we talk about that passage we sometimes quote, you know, "Eyes have not seen, minds have not conceived what God has planned for those who love him." And we go, "Oh look, that's so great. It's just inconceivable." He goes on to say, "But I've revealed these things to you." In other words, I am the agent to this revelation. So when Paul sets himself apart, he's only distinguishing to people that don't have the red-letter Gospels in front of them, this was not a teaching of Christ. "I'm not daring to put these words in Christ's mouth. But I'm telling you," and he goes back to affirm his own authority, "I'm telling you this: I have the spirit of God and I'm telling you what's authoritative." So it's not like me saying it, like I did earlier, you know, here's something the Bible says and, you know, there's not a verse on this but here's Mike's opinion on it. Paul's not making that. If you put yourself on par with Paul you make a huge mistake. And I guarantee you you're not on par with Paul, so you and I can't, you know, we would say those things. Well, the Bible says but, you know, it doesn't say this, but I say this. When Paul's saying that we got to remember who he is and we've got to remember what's going on in terms of his topic of marriage and the covenant of marriage and a very unique set of instructions regarding not being married and when the covenant is one you could walk away from, in that context, needs clarity, and he's making that. But he has full authority, he has apostolic authority. I can not obey Christ and I can not obey the Apostles. The Apostles are his prophets, New Testament prophets. Good question.

Question: Thank you. I honestly forgot tonight was Q&A and I didn't write down the Scriptures that I was going to refer to on this subject. But, could you speak to the subject of the dead unborn. For example, those who die in still-birth or otherwise. Where are they?

Pastor Mike: I just wrote someone right before I walked into a prayer meeting that was asking this question. Of course, you know, prenatal information is not being addressed in Scripture. Just like our solar system in terms of details or orbits are not being addressed in Scripture. They didn't have that insight, that knowledge. It doesn't mean that they don't speak clearly or God hasn't spoken clearly throughout the Bible regarding the value of human life before it's born, the pre-born. This guy who wrote me a question, you know, kept referring to the fetus, the fetus, the fetus. You can call the person whatever you want, but we're talking about, here's how I put it in what I just wrote, this is both scientifically a human being, no one denies that. What the modern debate is, is it a person? Because, if it's not a person then I can kill this human being. Everything scientifically, for all the people that love science, and it's the great high priest of our culture, the scientists, this is not a dog, it's not a cat, it's not a rat, it's not a cockroach, this is a human being. It's got all the DNA, it's a human being from conception forward. OK? Now we have to argue, "Well..., it's not a person. If it's a person then it's worthy of my defense and dignity and protection." I'm just telling you once you disengage those two things and bifurcate those two things, then you and I are on..., we're in Alice in Wonderland. I mean, at what point do I grant someone personhood? I can go to the other

end of life. At what point when grandma can't talk, she can't feed herself, at what point are you going to say, "Well, you're not a person anymore. I'm going to drag you off here into the corner drown you." You can't do that. Right? This is a human being. So, I cannot, and here's how I put it, at any other point after conception come up with some kind of standardized, performance based, arbitrary line that says, "Now you've become worthy of life." I have to say life must begin, and then it does begin, there's no debate about this, at conception. Human life. This is human life. I also say that that human life is a person. There's personhood. There's the dignity a personhood there, and therefore it's worthy of protection. What does the Bible say about it? We can go all, you know, examples. God's discussion up to Jeremiah, in Jeremiah Chapter 1, about his plans for Jeremiah and what he knows, what he's going to do, talking about it before he's born. Psalm 139, the discussion about the pre-born. Right? Where David talks about being knit together in his mother's womb, all with dignity, all with personhood, all with pronouns that are clearly human. And Luke Chapter 1 about John the Baptist and being born, and the things that he talks about doing, which are a very special case for John the Baptist, being filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born. I mean, these are clearly examples we have human beings scientifically and we have human beings morally, which is what the world wants to say is human being scientifically, just not human being in terms of personhood. I have to define life beginning at conception, I have no other choice. Either that or who's going to decide that for me? Right? And right now, of course, the states define it differently and everyone's trying to figure that out. But I'm saying this is absurd. The Babylonians, the Assyrians, you can go all through history, the Greeks, people have always recognized pre-born as human life and worthy of protection. And there were great penalties for abortion until recently in our day, which is a travesty.

Question: How can you help someone I know? She thinks her deceased brother is coming to her.

Pastor Mike: The deceased brother's not coming to her, I can assure you.

Question: I don't think he is.

Pastor Mike: Well, I can I can assure you that your thoughts on that are correct. The dead brother is not coming to her.

Question: She sees him and she makes up messages which is expression...

Pastor Mike: But, it's not him, but I understand. She thinks that, she claims that, but that's not what's happening.

Question: So I want to know how can I help her...

Pastor Mike: You need to tell her, you need to stop in any way, giving any kind of acceptance or welcome to that kind of communication because it's not your brother.

Question: I have said that to her.

Pastor Mike: OK well, then you said the right thing.

Question: So she comes back and says that Jesus, Moses and Elijah have come...

Pastor Mike: She said that what?

Question: That Jesus, Moses and Elijah have come before to give messages. So she gives me that answer of why she thinks my brother can come too.

Pastor Mike: When has Moses and who did you say?

Pastor Rod: Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

Pastor Mike: OK. Oh, on the Mount of Transfiguration?

Question: So, she's saying because they came, my brother can come too.

Pastor Mike: Wow, that's a high view of your brother. You know and I don't mean to be dismissive but, yeah, her brother is not Moses and Elijah being particularly called by God to come to the Mount of Transfiguration to affirm the disciples that the Messiah is the Messiah in the first century, before he fulfills prophecy and dies in our place. Your brother doesn't fit that category. I mean, I'll certainly understand that there was a unique situation going on at the Mount of Transfiguration. That's not what's happening here. OK? The only access to knowledge that could possibly in any way manifest itself that would be supernatural in this situation is only left to one category. Because I know it's not angelic and it's not him. There's a chasm fixed, her brother is not going anywhere. Her brother is stuck right where he's at. There's only one other means by which that could be if it is a true phenomenon. Right? For something actually happening and it ain't the angels, because God has made very clear he hates this, he hates any kind of necromancy, any kind of fortune-telling, any kind of soothsaying, any kind of contact with the dead. God drove out the Canaanites, in part for that, along with child sacrifice and other things they were doing. But he says these are an abomination. So God doesn't like this. OK? God was not sending Moses and Elijah to their widows. Right? God brought those two down on the Mount of Transfiguration. So the argument that had happened there, therefore it's going to happen with my brother, or that's why I think it's not a demon in this case, which is the only category left other than your imagination, I'm just saying you need to run from that, run from it. I'd say to God, "God, I know this isn't of you, it's not right, and therefore I don't welcome it, I don't want to accept it, I don't want anything to do with this anymore. And if you tell God that, I think God will, as I've seen in many very odd situations in my ministry over the years, he will put an end to these things. So it's part of her interest in continuing it and I would say, I wouldn't quote the Transfiguration as a reason to keep wanting this experience. If she does or doesn't. I don't know what her wants are. Sorry. Yeah, that's hard.

Question: So several years ago we had an opportunity to have a conversation in what was formerly known as a home fellowship group.

Pastor Mike: Don't say that.

Question: I know, so I said formally. In this informal discussion at a person's house we had our own kind of special Q&A, it was really great at the time. And it got me thinking about the conversation we had at that time and kind of led to earlier question about the resurrection and those who are caught up in the air, versus those who were already in the ground. And you know you kind of went through the Costco coffin and the conversation we had at that time dealt with the increasing amount of people who are being cremated. And just what the difference was about the idea of the human body versus those who are being cremated and just the differences. I think to me that's just something that came to mind. It was worth probably bringing up.

A book that I just finished up that's coming out August the 7th and I dedicated an entire chapter to that topic. It's the 10th chapter of the book, if you do get that book. I mean, I think I'm gone the weekend it comes out but maybe they'll be... I'm sure there'll be some here. That chapter will give a more thorough explanation of the reason that I don't think cremation is the preferred means of, as I like to put it, setting aside the body until the resurrection. So, I would pastorally advise you to follow the biblical pattern, follow the pattern of the Christian church for centuries until recently and, unless there is some pressing, overwhelming reason to the contrary, which again like amputating my arm there may be those situations. But if you have an opportunity I wouldn't say, "Well, it costs more to bury me at the El Toro cemetery versus cremation, it would be a lot easier and quicker and cheaper." I mean, let me help you financially if that's what it takes. I have much more to say on that topic. I'm not in any way trying to instill any guilt for anyone who's cremated their loved one. And I'm not trying to mess up your plans if you plan to do that. Not that you would change your plans for me but I think if this is the biblical argument that can be made, perhaps your plans ought to change. That you ought to lay aside your body just like they did with Christ's body until the resurrection. Because just like Christ, your body may only be, as I said in my illustration, in that coffin for three days. Who knows? We don't know. And just like I don't think you would have voted with the Apostles to cremate Christ's body, I don't think that you should be cremating mine either. And now I'm here and my wife's in the front row. Be sure she doesn't cremate me. That's not the biblical pattern. I think she's committed to that. We kind of pinky-swore on that one, that we're going to not do that to each other. So, yeah, and there's much, much more on that I suppose. I mean, I say a whole chapter, the book's not that fat, couple hundred pages, but, I don't know, 20-25 pages on the topic of why I think burial is not only the preferred means of dealing with your body and your loved one's body when it dies, but that cremation is a recent pattern of a church that has lost a bit of its bearing on what death and funerals are all about. Much more can be said. And the reason I wrote that in the book is not only just hack people off, I know it's going to hack some people off, but because I don't find much written on it that's all that clear. I mean, I read what I could find before I wrote my chapter on it. But so I hope it's a helpful offering to those. The book's called "Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife." It's out there on Amazon and ChristianBooks.com and all that now. But it won't ship until August 7.

Question: When someone dies and comes back to life like Lazarus, for example, what happened to the consciousness? Obviously, they don't remember, so what exactly happened to the spirit?

Pastor Mike: Why do you say obviously they don't remember?

Question: Lazarus wasn't too upset, I guess, that he left the presence of God.

Pastor Mike: What makes you say that? That's an argument from silence.

Question: True.

Pastor Mike: OK. You don't know what he thought.

Question: Correct.

Pastor Mike: There's nothing said about what he thought. Other than that he was now on a hit list, they wanted to kill him, because he was an evidence of Christ's power. So, I wouldn't go to that place. We'll wait to find out what Lazarus thought about coming back. We don't know. But anyway,

go ahead.

Question: So do we know what happens to the consciousness for a person like that or even today when someone medically dies and then comes back to life.

Pastor Mike: I have a chapter on that in the book as well. I mean, this has been, in my mind, the bane of gullible Christians writing these books and buying these books. They've always been New York Times best sellers. I think we've got to be super, super skeptical about the kinds of things. Not to mention, I don't know how many of these I actually had time to talk about and how they were recanted and people saying, "Well, we just made it up." But, I would say there's no reason to except Lazarus from what the rest of Scripture teaches us, that to be absent from the body in that case, is to be present with God, or at least, if you're going to say, "Well, this is pre-Christ's going and proclaiming release to those in prison, well then at least you're going to say, as in the parable of Jesus about Lazarus, that he's with Abraham being comforted and having him, you know, some kind of a banquet. So, that, I would say, was no excepting in Lazarus's case, you know, he comes back, what did he think? I don't know. I'm interested to know, and I want to talk to him about that one day. But I don't see any reason I would come up with a new category for Lazarus. Now, do we make up a new category for people who are on talk shows or writing books about what they say they experienced? Well, I go through some of these in that chapter in the book talking about, here's what people are saying. Now let's look at what God has said and what God has proved and the God who tells the future and shows us with predicted prophecy that his word is reliable. Hey, if they're telling me one thing, and they can't even agree, and God's telling me another thing and it perfectly agrees, I'm going to go with what God says and say you don't know what you're talking about or you're lying or whatever else. So I'm going to stick with what I know. So, I don't want to make up a category every time someone comes back with a new experience from being clinically dead. All I know is it to really be dead, fully dead, dead by definition being gone and gone out of your body, I think only was accepted less than ten times in the Bible, less than ten times. And we can't count what happened in Matthew 27 when it says some came out of the tombs. But besides that passage, less than ten individuals spoken of it being raised from the dead. So what happened in those cases? I'm assuming what happened and everyone else's case. They went to be wherever dead people go in their particular epic or time or dispensation and they came back, which, right, I would say, must have been a drag. When Samuel came back just in an appearance, which I guess is another exception to a situation of someone being sent back to tell the king of the chosen people of God that he was going to die the next day, Samuel was frustrated that he had to come back and deal with that. And that was just for, what, a half an hour. So, I assume that Lazarus, contrary to your assumption, I'll bet he was bummed out. Although he's coming back to see the Messiah and see the rest of his ministry. Maybe that's a wash then. You know, it's great. I want to see this. So I don't know. That's a good question. But, I can only assume.

Question: Pastor Mike, recent polls said 33% of America believes that we're in a coming civil war.

Pastor Mike: Where did you get that poll?

I believe it was Fox.

Question: In that, I have friends and relatives who are preppers, both in disaster and revolution. But, as I read what Paul and Peter told the church, as we prepare that there could be the time when either the government or other people could possibly, here in the United States, could come and take us from our homes. What should the church's response be if that ever occurs from a biblical,

New Testament perspective?

Well, there was a revolution coming, if you want to call it that, or at least the conscription of the people of Israel, in the first century and Jesus had a whole audience to turn them into preppers and they didn't turn into preppers, nor did he give them any instructions. He keeps telling them, "I know what's going to happen in Jerusalem, they're going to surround the city and besieged the city, I know what's coming, it's going to be horrible." And then he preaches to them, "Don't worry. Don't worry about what you're going to eat, don't worry about what you're going to wear, don't be anxious about anything." What's going on here? He certainly didn't create preppers. Jesus knew that Rome was going to smash Jerusalem. And certainly he cared about what happened to them, as he says in Olivet Discourse, "It would be great if you weren't pregnant then, it would be great if..." But he doesn't say, what do we do to prep? He tells them, "Don't worry. Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Seek first the kingdom." Matthew 6:33. That to me is the prep. That's what I want. I'm going to prep. If we're going to have a civil war, they're going to come and kill me, whatever, I'm going to prep by sharing the Gospel the day I die. Right? I want to bring the priorities of Christ to everyone. Now, I'm not saying I don't care about, you know, my home not flooding or my country not turning upside down, but I have a priority. There are a lot of people caring about a lot of things that I could care about but they're never going to care about what I'm commissioned to care about. So that's what I'm saying. I want the church to rise up and be what it's supposed to be. And in my mind, we can merge a lot of, though they're very important, short-sighted concerns and start to put so much energy into that, and I'm saying no. I don't want anyone to be a pepper. I was a pastor during the whole Y2K thing, which now you can grin and smile at. It was serious. Right? I mean Dobson was preaching this, I think Sproul tap danced with this. It was people talking about the world's going to fall apart in the year 2000. OK? Go back and listen to my sermon in 1999 as I was dealing with all this from the pulpit. I said, "Listen, I could be wrong." I put together a committee of some folks who knew a lot more than I did, had worked at Norad and a lot of stuff. I tried to figure out what is really going to happen? I want to know as best I can. So I got their input. I dealt with people in the power grid and, you know, a lot of smart people. And then I came up and I said, "Listen, I can be wrong but I'm pretty convinced nothing's going to happen. That's what I think. And number two, even if it does, I'm going to preach to you from the Sermon on the Mount and tell you there was disaster coming for them and here's what Jesus preached. Now, he didn't just preach to not worry. He preached a lot of other things, but I preached that Sermon on the Mount message. And I said I know one thing about the church throughout history, beginning in the catacombs all the way back to Rome when God was letting them be persecuted, the church pulled together. And together, they did all right, even when they were martyrs. So, my line from that sermon was, "Just meet me here. If all hell breaks loose in society, meet me here. OK? We'll do the best we can together as a church. But right now I don't want you building bunkers and moving to Montana or whatever." I mean, Montana is a great state but I don't want you to go there just because you can buy a bunker there. And you know what? I had people in my church, after I preach that message, they didn't like me anymore, obviously. Pastors are great until they disagree with you. That's when they're no good anymore. But they bought their bunkers and they went to Idaho, they went to Montana and they were full-blown preppers in 1999-1998, it started to happen in my church. So, I'm just saying, I don't think that's the right response to all this. I'm not against it, I hope you know me well enough, I'm not against protection, I'm not against, you know, I'm not against Second Amendment, I'm not against all the things that I would expect you hear me preaching about that you'd say, "Oh this seems consistent with him utilizing the government, utilizing the rights the government gives us." But I don't want us to be overwhelmed with concerning ourselves with what's going on in an impending civil war, even if that is coming. I want to preach the Gospel. Let's all sign up in the pending civil war to be chaplains and win people to Christ. That's my priority.



Pastor Mike: All right. We're out of time. I'm so sorry.