



Q&A 2021 - Part 3

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Question: First of all, Pastor Mike, thank you for doing this.

Pastor Mike: Of course.

Question: My question is this. In Tozer's book, he starts out with the statement, "What you think of God is the most important thing about you." And also, I've been reading J.I. Packer's "Knowing God," and if you remember, he starts out with the illustration of a student who's been rebuffed in some way and says, "Well, they don't know God, they know of him. I know God." What I'm asking is if you have a library in your head of theology, doctrine, apologetics and such as that, those are facts about God, how do you transition from that to that deep personal knowledge, not of God, but knowing God at that personal level?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, well, when Jesus confronted the Pharisees about their mastery of Bible data, he said, "You don't understand those Scriptures bear witness of me, but you refused to come to me." And I think even the verb you "refused" to come to me, there is a moral battle within all of us to maintain my autonomy, my liberty, my master of my own life and just knowing about God can keep God at arm's distance. You don't have to submit to someone that you only just know about. But there has to be this concession and this engagement with a person who is not just a friend, right? He is the Lord and creator and the sovereign authority over my life. So if that's the case, knowing him, is this breaking down the refusal. Now, I know Christ was talking specifically about the Messiah, but it's the same about God. They can know a lot about God in the Old Testament times, like the Babylonian captivity before they went into captivity in the 5th century B.C., 6th century and have them say, "We got all of our information right, but we're not willing to submit." Better yet, let's go to the post-exilic period. Right? You've got Malachi saying you guys are doing all the stuff, but you're refusing to do it right because you don't honor me. I think knowing God, of course, this is assuming the fact that we're repenting of our sins, putting our trust in Christ, we're justified before God. We're engaging in a relationship, which means we're learning about you in this book so we can relate to you. And to relate to you is to submit to you, to be devoted to you, to love you, to care about your cares and your priorities. And of course, that's all expressed through our devotion in prayer. It's all reading the Bible differently than just absorbing data. It's always about trying to have that data change my behavior, my life, my expression of that truth. As Paul said, you can have a lot of knowledge and know everything, but if you don't have love, you're nothing. And the point is you're not... love is not a feeling, by the way, it's I'm putting that to work. We put it to work not because we're even just dutifully doing what he says, because the Pharisees would do a lot of what he said. Right? They were tithing even down to the spices in their cupboards. But when there was a need and they needed to show compassion or they needed to give or sacrifice in some practical way, they didn't want to do that. "I'll give you my tithe of my spices, but I'm not willing to help someone I don't like." But a love relationship with the God who is our King is going to submit your authority to them. It's like knowing about someone on Wikipedia, but then being in a relationship with them and then they want like to go get tacos and you want to do Italian, you know, you have to change your



life. And that word "refuse," "You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have life," I'm quoting Jesus here, but you don't understand that these all "bear witness and testify to me." They're speaking of me and "yet you refuse to come to me." So there has to be this brokenness of our will. And if you really engage in evangelism with people enough, you'll find that's usually the problem. It's not a problem here. They know enough about God to respond. They are not willing to submit to the King of kings. Yeah.

Question: Yeah, this is a fantastic opportunity, but he's holding the mic, unfortunately,

Pastor Mike: That's because he wants to hold on to it. He wants to have it.

Question: OK. My question is, oh, you know, where can I give a reference to people when they don't show spiritual maturity in spite of knowing the Bible by heart. They will give references, they will talk and, you know, I will feel really small in their presence. But in their behavior, in their attitude with others showing kindness and respect to all Christian brothers and sisters is lacking. And I come across, you know, a good number of people, not one percent. So I would like to give them some references, "Why don't you work on this," you know, et cetera, et cetera? How do I do that?

Pastor Mike: Right. Well, I can tell you this. There's a lot of concern about what do we do in terms of how can we construct some kind of plan to reform this person when I think the thing we need to spend our biggest effort on, depending on our tightness of the relationship, is we need to be praying for them and interceding for them. Because the battle, much like our first question, is a spiritual battle. It's a battle in their hearts to really put the truth into practice. Therefore, I got to be praying for God to do that. Because I can give them more information. Now it's my information and my commentary on the biblical data that you already have in your mind. It's more data. I need to be praying that their heart would be softened and to say, well, you need to soften your heart, soften your heart, soften your heart. I just think it needs to be more than telling them what to do or here's the plan. So what we want, I think, is a deeper prayer life of intercession for people who we see know a lot but aren't loving God enough to do what he says. And of course, if there are opportunities for, you know, a correction, depending on the relationship, yeah, then you go and you point out the distinction. And I even like you quoted in the title of the book, but "Knowledge of the Holy" by A.W. Tozer, a Chicago pastor since deceased. But that book in trying to show that a knowledge of God should always lead to a kind of expression in your life. They need to read those kinds of books, not just the Bible data books. Because there are a lot of systematic theology books and I'm all for those, you should read them all, but you need to read books, too, that are going to take that information and challenge you to do something about it. Because again, if we know everything, but if we're not responding appropriately in our lives we're nothing, Paul said.

Question: Hi. This is a question that my former colleague wanted to ask last service, but we ran out of time. And so for someone who does not want to get the COVID vaccine, but has an employer who's requiring it. How would you guide them when they have the option to put it in a religious or medical exemption?



Pastor Mike: Do what you want. Don't lie. Get another job if you want to not take it. Take it, keep your job. Yeah, I mean, you are going to have to make some decisions, right? Yeah, you're going to have to decide whether you want to take it or not. Yeah, maybe a follow-up there.

Question: So if they're going for the religious exemption, how would you... Is there any, like, scriptural passage that you could kind of use to, you know, help your argument or...

Pastor Mike: Well, some theologians would put it this way. There's the religious exemption, to borrow from Doug Wilson here for a second, there's a religious exemption that says I better figure out something that the government or the authorities will think, "OK, that's your religious thing and it works for you, whether it's blood transfusions for the Jehovah's Witnesses or Sabbath-keeping for the Jews. OK, all of you believe that." OK, they are going to stand in judgment as to whether or not that's something within your religious system that works. And so for a lot of people, they're looking for like is there embryonic, you know, embryonic dependency in this vaccine? And therefore, I'm going to say that because I'm pro-life. And so to try to find that and then they can check that box in terms of conscience, OK, well, that's one way to go about it if you want to make a religious exemption to it. But it's going to be harder and harder to make those. The Christians with fortitude who are going to say, "I'm going to make a religious exemption on the fact that you're not the boss of me." You can make that ultimately to the government if you'd like. There's a lot of that that took place in the American Revolution where they basically said, "You're not the boss of me." And there were a lot of preachers and Christian theologians who work through the problem of the American Revolution. "Well, I thought we're supposed to submit to the king." You had a lot of Christians making different arguments, I believe there were six different Christian arguments were made during the American Revolution to decide why I'm going to say yes or no to that. And that's a different answer. But the point is some Christians are saying, "You're not the boss of me as a governmental entity. You can't tell me what to do." And they'll defer to passages like the two-drachma tax when Jesus was asked to pay the temple tax and he asked Peter, you know, "Who do they tax? Their own kids or they tax the citizens?" Peter replied, "They tax citizens, not their kids." Well, OK. Well, that's how it is for us too because we're really the heirs of the world and I'm the king of the world, and "but pay it anyway just so we don't offend anybody." That is used as the basis of, listen, the government doesn't own you and they can't tell you what to do. Well, this is not a governmental agency. This is an employer. And the employer can ask you to wear, you know, earrings. And if you don't wear earrings you're going to be fired. And I'm saying if they tell you to wear earrings and you're going to be fired, well you either wear the earrings or you find another job. Where you can't just find another job because this is where we live and this is our government. I guess you could go to another country. Well, then the argument for some, particularly the post-millennialist, if you know the theology behind all this, they're going to say, this is Christ's world, Christ's kingdom and I believe all that. But they're going to say, "The religious exemption argument is you're not the boss of me. You can't tell me what to do. Christ is going to tell me what to do. You're overreaching and so I'm not going to do it." Religious exemption. I'm a Christian. I don't have to obey you. They're not going to buy that. But that, for some people, is a consistent religious objection to just about anything. But I've had them in our church, long before COVID, saying, "That's why I



don't pay taxes." And I'm like, "OK, I'll visit you in federal prison." And I'm not kidding. I've had a few of them from our church, not recently, end up in federal prison for not paying their taxes. So you got to make wise decisions living in this world. I do know that the government is not the boss of me. I get that. I know that my employer is not the boss of me, I get that too. I answer to God. Ultimately, I'm God's servant. I get all that. I have to function in the world. When it comes to this you have reasons for not taking the vaccine and they may be good reasons. And you may say, "Well, I'm not going to take it." Well, then don't take it. But I can't sit here and say, well, magically say these words and your employer will change their mind about making you take it. Or if you say, I want to make a religious exemption, what should that religious exemption be? Well, you could find something and say, well it's this. Even though I don't think even the embryonic carrier that constitutes basically the soup, if you will, that builds the vaccines throughout a lot of the vaccines people take. That's a different answer you're not asking. But the point would be, yeah, you could do that or you could just say, like a lot of people, I'm just going to say no, because I'm a Christian and I don't answer to you. And they'll say, "Great. Well, you're not going to get a paycheck from us either." So that'll end that employment relationship. I get it. I don't like what's happening, but I'm just telling you, I don't know how to help that person other than to say if your employer requires it, which more and more governmental employers are going to require it, then you either take it or find another job. And it's happening in all kinds of industries. Right? Whether you're a teacher or a medical professional. And I'm not just talking about the COVID vaccination. I'm talking about all kinds of things that they're saying. If you don't do this, if you don't support this or engage in abortive medications, you could be a pharmacist, who knows what... And you can say, "Well, I can't do that based on my conscience." You're going to have to lose your jobs. And we're going to have less Christians in a lot of industries for people standing up on principle. I'm not sure the COVID vaccine is on the same level as someone objecting to like abortion or whatever it might be that I'm forced to assert the sexual ethics of our culture. But I don't know that I can help that person other than to say, find a new job or take the vaccine. That's your decision. If you have an objection to it or your conscience doesn't allow you to take it, then don't take it. But I can't help you with the fact you're going to lose your job. I can say that's bad. I wish you didn't. Did I miss anything in that? OK, that's the best I know. Yeah, that's a problem.

Question: Hi, good morning Pastor Mike. It's a little bit related to the last question. I know that Scripture teaches that we are to respect and submit to governmental authority as long as government laws don't force us to go against God's laws. Now, how does this apply to masking and vaccine mandates? Are we to submit and be vaccinated or should we exercise our individual right to make medical decisions? And as a follow-up also, to what extent should churches take a political stand? Politics ranging from Critical Race Theory on one end to QAnon on the other seems to be overshadowing the Church's Christ-ordained mission. Could you comment on that?

Pastor Mike: Well, I can't say that all these things, just because they're discussed in a political setting, like Critical Race Theory, do not have a theological answer that needs to be loudly and assertively expressed by the church. I'm going to talk about Critical Race Theory because it impinges on my theology. And I'm going to tell you, here's why it's wrong. Here's why we don't support it. Here's why it should be for us as Christians, something we fully



reject. That's an easier answer for me than the other. The question is when does the government overreach its bounds of authority in telling us what to do? And I think we're in that period right now where this has obviously been tested beyond measure. And it's gone to the courts, not that the courts are our authority, God is our authority. But in this whole process, we've seen the hypocrisy of governmental restrictions, ones that we haven't kept here at our church. The difference is we haven't engaged in the political process of being on the front page of any of the papers because we've hired attorneys and we've made it a case and we've done... Not that I'm not grateful for the churches that have been on the cutting edge of that. We've gone about our business here and some people have asked me, "Why haven't you done what this church has done or that church has done? And they held this political rally and they did this." I'm not interested in that. But if you look at what we did, there's no material difference between what they did other than we didn't clang a pot and put a flag behind us and say, we're going to fight the government. When you say we can't sing in church we're going to go, sorry, we're going to sing in church, certainly when you got all these people at the casino who are pulling slot machines and you say that's OK and governmentally protected, but this isn't, we're going to say you're not even consistent with the rules. There is obviously a governmental overreach. So I'm going to say I think you have to... And again, not that many of us understand structures of authority the way we ought to, but we have authority in the church and that the pastors should be... you should be looking to your pastors. There's a time to leave a church if you think your pastors have lost their minds. But you may not even agree with your pastors, but if your pastors in your church, there's not a good biblical reason to leave that church, you ought to trust their leadership. And if they say we're going to meet, even though the government just told us not to meet unless you have a personal reason of conscience not to meet, then you should meet. If we don't demand masks, and I've had plenty of angry letters, certainly when they were all demanded in Wal-Mart and they weren't here, like, OK, well, if you're concerned about that, don't come or we sit outside if you'd like. We're going to do this. And we think because these are not consistent mandates. So all of that, you could say is political in the sense that we are choosing not to do what we've been told to do by our government officials. Right? But do I pay my taxes? Yes. Do I stop at the red lights? Yes. Do I keep the laws and ordinances? Do we get permits? Yes, all of that's true. But we have to be careful, at least in thinking Christians understanding where the kind of blatant inconsistency is and then say, here's what we're going to do. I think we've done all that. Not intentionally quiet, but we haven't been in the news. You don't see me on Fox News, maybe because they don't think I'm articulate enough to be on Fox News. But you haven't seen me representing the Church of Christ. You've seen other guys doing that, right? You've seen MacArthur and Jack Hibbs and all these guys. And I know these guys, they're friends of mine, but we've saved a lot of money on attorneys by just going about our business and doing our thing. And as I told our pastors at the beginning, I think we need to pray through this every day. We used to meet every day to look at everything. We were tracking statistics. We named a COVID czar among our pastors who carries a scepter and does all his research every day. And so we figured all this out as best we could. We made decisions and our church has, I think, done wonderfully in saying, OK, we haven't forced you guys to do anything and we haven't been, you know, starting a revolution. I don't think it's our job to start a revolution. Our job is to preach the gospel, teach the word, and that's what we're trying to do. (audience applause) But people are going to have to make decisions as to where you get to a place of



personal conscience and go, this is absolutely absurd and you're breaking your own rules that we as a country rely on. Rights that were given to us by God. The whole point of this is that we understand government does not own us as we started, and it is, you know, there are times our government can tell us to do dumb things. And at certain points we go, we're not going to listen to what impinges on our gathering and assembling together as a church.

Question: Good morning, Pastor Mike and Compass family. My question has to do with the Bema Seat Judgment. Second Corinthians tells us that we're going to stand before Christ to receive rewards, whether what we've done in the body, whether good or evil. Romans 14:10 and 12 clearly says all of us will stand before the judgment seat of God to give an account of ourselves. And then the passage in First Corinthians, which talks specifically about the works and Corinthians in verse 15, that "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." So clearly, Scripture teaches we all stand before the judgment seat of God. You've taught us on more than one occasion that what we do "here and now" matters in the "then and there," and that the judgment that a Christian stands before God is not about our determining where our eternal destination is or standing before God, but to give an account of how we stewarded our life here on earth. So here are my questions. The first one, does Scripture say when the Bema judgment will occur? Is it when we die or is it some sort of a group event? And then can you specifically comment on First Corinthians 3:15, the "suffering loss" part. Those descriptors, suffering and loss, seem almost antithetical to somebody who has finished, you know, across the eternal line, they're in front of Christ, they're in heaven. But that just seems sort of antithetical. So can you expand on that?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, well, it's not antithetical because it's there and it's clearly taught. So there's no way around the fact that there will be suffering, a kind of suffering that's not an active penalty. Right? But a passive, deprivation of reward I would have otherwise received. You look at your life as its analogized in First Corinthians Chapter 3, wood, hay and straw - gold, silver and precious stones in varying amounts. Right? If I get there and I realize, "Listen, I got all this wood, hay and straw, I only have this much gold, silver and precious stones. These were the good works I did. This is the storing up of treasure in heaven that Jesus talked about. I did not apply myself. I didn't even, if it was another night out, I didn't even want to go to church. I didn't want to serve. I didn't do the stuff I should have. I did a lot of this and that. But I've spent a lot of time learning to surf or whatever. And I spent, I wasted..." Not that you're wasting time surfing, but you can, not to do it every day. Anyway, I'm sorry. So all of that piled up stuff, if all of that then at the judgment seat of Christ is all that's a waste, burned up? It's like when my kid, let's say multiple kids and Friday night and I said, "I'm going to reward you with a great set of things if you do this, that and the other." And so now I surprise them with all the great things. And I say to one kid, because God is not like your parents who try to treat everybody equally, God is not going to treat everybody equally. And for one kid, I give him, just to indulge, a bowl of ice cream and I give him a jar of licorice and I give him red vines. I give him a, you know, a pizza and I give him a root beer float. And here I give him a bag of pretzels. Right? Another kid. And the other kid I give him an orange, right? Now none of them are going to starve, but I say, "Do you see why this first kid did so well?" This kid is over here and doesn't feel good to get an orange when my brother gets all that. And the point



is you're going to suffer the loss of what you could have had, right? Now does that mean you're going to be taken to the basement and whipped? That's not what that means. There's no active punishment in that. There's a passive suffering in that. Then I think the Bible's very clear. He's going to wipe away all of our tears. We'll get past that. And just like in any organization, just like in our church, and I illustrated this way all the time. We go on the parking lot, there are all kinds of cars out there, some beaters and some super nice cars. OK? We all sit here in church right now without any real concern about that. Right? None of you, I hope, are worried about the car that you drove today as long as it got you here you're OK. We can all sing worship songs. We can all think about the Bible. We can all think about God-thoughts. And it's like we had a good morning. We'd go out to the donut table. We're all enjoying fellowship. We go to our cars, you're getting in a beater, your A/C doesn't even work and you're driving in the latest and greatest and you're driving in style. There's a differentiation of the experience in this afternoon, but there's no difference in us being privileged as Christians to gather together. So we're going to get God, as I wrote in that book, "Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife" the longest title ever given to a book in the modern era. We get the ultimate prize, which is God. But with God, you can have your favorite celebrity, I think this is how I illustrated it in the book, and I say I picked your favorite celebrity and I got lunch with you and it's a box of chicken at the park, or it's the Ritz Carlton with an ocean view. Either way you are thrilled to be with your celebrity friend. Right? You spend the afternoon, ask him all the questions you want, it's a great time. But it's a different experience. And all I'm saying is when that's initially meted out, it will be a bit of a wake-up call, a splash of water in your face. "Wow. I could have done a whole lot better." That's what God is trying to prevent us from.

Pastor Mike: OK, when is it going to happen? The Bible's not clear, but I think most people would suggest, as you look at all the data, it seems to fit best after the rapture of the Church. Is it going to be a group event? I don't know. What really matters is you and God. So if other people are there and see it, whatever, I know we're afraid of that. But whatever, everyone is going to be a sinner in heaven and going... getting into heaven, were not going to sin anymore, but, I think that's probably the best time to put that on the timeline. So we've got the taking up of the Church, he meets us in the air. I think there's the Bema Seat Judgment, then I think there's the Marriage Supper of the Lamb while all the junk is going on in the time of Jacob's Trouble. And then we have the establishment of the kingdom. So that's my guess as to when it is. I can't be definitive about that, but it seems to fit best there. I could be wrong and it could be everybody gets that Bema Seat experience the moment they die. I don't know, but the rewards are not meted out the way that they will be when the eschatological calendar picks up.

Question: Pastor Mike, my name is Paul and I grew up in communism. My father was a pastor and one of the problems that we had during those times, but it was just because it was communism only, I learned the same thing was happening here when I came to the States with many churches, they were preaching Replacement Theology. So there are large parts of Scripture we were deprived of being taught and understood because that was the norm. And people who dare to do otherwise, they were considered apostates and they had problems with authorities for preaching of a so-called wrong gospel. I wanted to ask you how important



is it that the churches understand the Bible and that we need to employ correct hermeneutics so we can understand the Bible from the very beginning to the very end and how understanding it right affects the state of our preparedness individually and as a church for the second coming of the Lord.

Pastor Mike: Well, I would be careful not to differentiate the fact that if you don't share our view of eschatology or even our nuances of Old Testament hermeneutics, that somehow you are apostate. I do think there are problems and I'm on the same page just based on the way you worded the question. A couple of the definitions of the words. You used the word hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the way we read the Bible as it relates to the context of his questions. It means about how we read the Old Testament. Replacement Theology is a label that is used to describe people who believe that the Church replaces Israel and all the promises to Israel in the Old Testament. And to do that, that affects your Old Testament hermeneutic, how you're going to read the Bible. Talk about the Valley of Dry Bones and God taking a stick of Ephraim and Judah and putting them together and raising up this nation. And then you read the book of Revelation, 144,000 Jewish missionaries from all the twelve tribes. It all seems to fit for us who believe God is not done with Israel yet. And he's going to fulfill his promises not only in the time of Jacob's Trouble or the seventieth week of Daniel or what Jesus called the Great Tribulation, like no other has ever been on the earth, that's still coming. And that after that he sets up a 1,000-year reign, Revelation Chapter 20. It's repeated six times: a thousand years, thousand years... That view of thinking that God has a set of promises he has yet to fulfill to Israel is non-replacement theology. Replacement Theology is we've just spiritualized all those promises of the Old Testament to Israel. Let's just say we're all meeting those now. There is no millennial kingdom. If there is, we're living in it now. It's why they call them a-millennialist "a-" means "not." No millennium, no literal millennium. So how important is that? It's important. That's where every pastor on our staff is. That's what we believe. That's what we teach. I don't think you're a heretic if you don't teach that. I do think there are some dangers in how you read the Bible, in the Old Testament in particular. And I'm not sure and I may need to have you get the mic again how that relates to communism. There is a sense in which post-millennialism may relate directly to the communistic socialistic view of things and that's a perverted version of it, because good evangelical post-millennialists don't believe that. But is there a connection to Replacement Theology and communism that you're making that I'm missing?

Question: Maybe I didn't say it very clearly, but the way all denominations are controlled by the government.

Pastor Mike: Oh, I got you.

Question: So all the teaching has to be according to what they wanted to hear. And the government was anti-Israel.

Pastor Mike: Right. Right. OK, I got you. So that's much better. Yeah. Yeah. It's more than just hermeneutics then. This is an issue of politics as it relates to Israel and state control of religion. Yeah. And this is a theme in this service. Yeah. We need to understand communism



has a lot of problems, both economic, philosophical and its claim ultimately in theology, which it does because of its governmental assertion of authority. But the point is that the Church and the people in the Church should recognize that we do not submit ourselves as an entity under the jurisdiction of the State. That's why it's been famously discussed in our country, a distinction between the two. Not that that's in our Constitution, although people think it is, it's not -- the separation of church and state. The ideas are these are two different institutions of God and one is clearly primary to the other, the Church is primary to the government, the Church is primary to the government in a million different ways. Communism, of course, there is no room for that. The Church is subservient to the State. And so if you are believing in Replacement Theology, you may in some way at least pile on Israel, which of course, if you believe that Israel has no prophetic future as a nation, it's easy to be against Israel. Everyone is, it seems. But yeah, I guess to piece some of those things together, we don't submit to the government as an entity, as the Church. We should never let the government usurp authority over the Church. And that's part of what drove... I talked about the revolutionary Christians who struggled with the revolution. Some of them supported it wholeheartedly because of the Church of England. And they said, listen, we cannot have a state-run church. And part of what a lot of the preachers were doing during the colonial period, the American Revolutionary period, was saying, that's one of the reasons we have to rewrite this thing. We need a constitutional republic and this organization that we live under that recognizes that this is about civil limited government and the Church is the heartbeat of the nation. Right? As de Tocqueville said, you can't have this freedom, this nation of freedom without good, you know, a good, salty, light-bearing Church. It's definitely a paraphrase of Tocqueville. But all I'm telling you is we can't fall under North Korean thinking or old communistic thinking and the Church should never concede that. And I think that is part of the fight that went on at least within one branch of theology during the revolutionary period. Another tried to find utopia in America. They thought this was the fulfillment of the millennium. And I think their eschatology was wrong as well, because we're not post-millennial, at least not here Compass. But yeah, there's a lot to that question. There's probably more to it. But let's for the sake of time, get another one in.

Question: In the churches today, I hear so many, so many places, not here, which is one of the reasons I'm here, you hear about all we have to do to achieve eternal life is accept Christ and to accept forgiveness. But what I don't hear as part of that and I don't know why, it doesn't seem to be taught anymore, is repentance. So does God... And I've heard one place called it Christian Universalism since Christ died on the cross, he forgave all sin and therefore everybody is forgiven and everyone goes to heaven, which I think is they haven't read very much of the Bible. But you do hear that and people seem to live that way and it seems to even be in the church where you can achieve or go to heaven by accepting Christ but there's no mention of repentance. So basically, it boils down, do you... and I think I know the answers to this, but does God still care about sin? And is there still a place for repentance in us receiving forgiveness and eternal life?

Pastor Mike: Can I tell you why I think the Church got to the place that it did in avoiding it all. It came from the rise in American cult groups that kept saying you have to have the biblical message, you have to respond with repentance and faith. Then you got to do these things



and then you get to be saved. If you were here last night or you were watching online, I know we dealt with this last night, but that equation became the norm and Christians said, "Well, wait a minute, we're saved by grace, through faith. Not a result of our works that no one should boast." So it's not about all these good works and good works, really, if you think about it, is the difference between me not doing them and then doing them. That's called repentance, right? I'm turning from not doing them to doing them, turning from whatever I am doing to doing what God says. So they said, "Well, we're not going to emphasize that because that's what the cults say." And instead they created this thing as to where we'll teach about God's truth and the gospel and Christ. Then we'll tell you to respond to it by trusting or in that case, you use the word "accepting," which is not a biblical word. The closest we get to it is in John Chapter 1 where it talks about received. "He came to his own and they received him not, but whoever does receive him..." There's a lot more to that. I mean, he's talking about a national coming of the Messiah to Israel and they did not embrace him. Well, there were terms in embracing him and Jesus kept using the words "repentance" and "faith," right? In Mark Chapter 1 he came preaching the kingdom of God, he was saying the gospel became "repent and believe in the gospel." So repentance and faith have always been the determinative response to the message. But what people have done is say we'll take the message and take the response and then you get salvation. What they've forgotten is there's the necessary roll of good works which demands repentance. But it doesn't come on this side of the equals sign, it comes on the other side of the equal sign. So it's the message of the gospel. It's the response, the right response, really putting your trust in Christ, right? Which if you want to talk about the words there, it's repentance and faith and that equals you being saved at the moment you do that. And what's going to come out of that necessarily is good works, which means you've repented. So there has to be repentance. There has to be. Without repentance there's no salvation. Right? Luke 13, Luke 24. He went out to give a message of "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." That's what we're calling people to do. Repentance is a two-sided coin. We've got repentance, which means I'm turning from sin to God. The other side is faith. I'm trusting in Christ. I trust in Christ, these are distinguishable but inseparable. We can define them as distinct. I'm trusting in Christ and when I do that, I recognize then he's my King. He's my leader. I turn from my independent way, an autonomous way, and I trust in him. I submit to him. That is going to produce good works. So much so that you could describe it that way. You could describe it as James 2 describes it, "If you say you have faith, but no good works, can that faith save you?" And the answer is no, it can't. That's the whole point of the first part of James Chapter 2. You can't be saved by a faith that doesn't produce works. You think, "Well, wait a minute. That's kind of dangerously close to the cults." Well, no, it's not. You just got to get the equal sign in the right place. I don't earn my salvation by my works, but I read the rest of Ephesians 2:8-9, I read verse 10, which says we were "created in Christ Jesus for good works." We are his workmanship. "Created in Christ Jesus for good works, that we should walk in them." Then that has to be a part of the message. I'm calling people, to quote Acts 26, to repent and prove their repentance by their deeds. Even if you only have a little bit of time, you ought to be proving your repentance by your deeds. With the thief on the cross, did he prove his repentance by his deeds? Yeah, he's telling the guy on the other side of Christ to shut up. Right? You're maligning Christ. He is being a repentant person. He didn't get baptized, didn't give to the church. He never walked an aisle. He didn't do any of that. I bet if he got off the cross, he would do it. Why? Because,



real faith produces good works. So you have to preach repentance. Without repentance, you're not going to seek God without repentance. Repentance is required, right? Some say, "Oh, you're earning your salvation." Not any more than faith. "Well, it has to be a gift of God." It is a gift of God. Matter of fact, it says that, we've already studied this in Acts. Right? He's going to grant repentance to us, just like it says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that this gift is a gift that not only includes salvation, it includes faith. God gives us that enablement to believe him. He gives us that enablement to repent. So, I think and I only went back in time because I think the rise of the cults in America in particular took the American gospel and truncated it into something, which you just have to be careful where you put the role of good works. As it's put endlessly, the faith that saves us is faith alone. Right? But faith that does save us is never alone. Right? It always brings works with it. Good question.

Question: Hi, Pastor, I'm having issues understanding the difference between our spirit and our soul. Could you please give me an example or overview of where the Christians who die today? Is it the spirit or the soul that's immediately present with the Lord? And later, is the body resurrected upon Christ's return? I mean, what do you think? Is there a separation of timeline or why would God place a separation of timeline between our spirit or soul and our new body, joining together as a part of this resurrection? Is that the symbolism?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, I don't think he does. And I say it's not that you can't make distinctions in the immaterial part of human beings. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind." Those are all immaterial parts, right? Even my strength, the energy to do what I do expressed through my physical body. So I have no problem with us using different words to describe those things. But I think we're dichotomous, not trichotomous. They believe that God made us out of the dust of the earth. That's the physical part of us. He breathed into us the breath of life. That's the spiritual part of us. And we became a living being or a living soul. In other words, when a captain is on a sinking ship, he radios to "how many souls on board?" How many people are there? "People" means people who are physically enmeshed and containing a spirit. So that teaching is very common. And as guys like Kim Riddlebarger puts it, this really comes out of a Platonistic pagan, and again, not to be disparaging, but a pagan kind of philosophical thinking about human nature. I don't think we can derive it from the Bible, even though the word "soul" and "spirit" are used in the Bible. I think if you look at the word and the use of soul usually used to describe the whole of a person, spirit, the immaterial part of a person, the body, obviously the physical part of the person. So we've got a body, we've got spirit that makes someone who we would consider a soul. They have a mind. Is that distinct? No. People have built entire theologies, even here locally, some of the big churches have built big theologies on the distinction between soul and spirit. They say soul is connected to human appetites and spirit is connected to God appetites. I just can't find that distinction. That's a lot of creative thinking. In my mind it's imaginative thinking, but I can't root it in Scripture. Good men disagree with me on that. Good women disagree with me on that. I get that. But my view is that I'm a dichotomous, I believe that human beings are two parts. I think you can describe the immaterial part with a lot of different words. I think soul describes, generally speaking, in the usage throughout the Old and New Testament, the whole of a person. Follow up? Yeah.



Question: So why wasn't our body bodily resurrection mentioned in the Old Testament or was it?

Pastor Mike: Progressive revelation? Oh, it is, Daniel Chapter 12. It says "those who sleep in the dust of the earth will arise, some to life," Daniel 12. But that's late. Think about that. That's exilic. That's a 6th century B.C. revelation from God. I don't think we had that early on in the book of Genesis. We don't have it in the Pentateuch. We don't have a lot of that. God did not hand Moses 66 books of the Bible. Right? We got this in installments, increasingly. None of its contradictory. It's just that we didn't have all the detail. And I think by the time we get to the end of the monarchy, which is the beginning of the exilic period, God makes clear in Daniel while they're in the doghouse of Babylon, there's going to be a physical resurrection. And I think you get hints of that elsewhere. It's like the Trinity. How clear was the Trinity? Well, it wasn't super clear and yet God left room for it all over the place in the Old Testament. Then progressive revelation made it super clear. Sometimes God in progressive revelation changes some of the rules. You could marry your sister before Moses, right? And then you couldn't. Well, part of that, I think, was practical. There are a lot of problems with a degenerating, you know, genetic pool. But it was all fine and not a sin until God said it was a sin and then it became sinful. That's progressive revelation for a practical reason. God gives us more information. Even plural marriage, I think was part of that as well. And God says, "No. Let me clarify what we're talking about. Adam and Eve, you should have followed that pattern. Let me make that clear. You can't even be a pastor and have more than one wife." Old Testament, all kinds of heroes of the faith, multiple wives, not an issue. There are a lot of issues, I think, you could try and maybe explain why God might have done that. But it's all just guesswork. The point is progressive revelation about things that are going to happen to us afterlife, God gave us more and more information as time went on. But at the time of the New Testament, Jesus is giving us all kinds of information we didn't have in the Old Testament. So that's why it wasn't there very clearly. It is super-clear in Daniel. And there are other places too, even that metaphorical use of the dry bones in the Valley of Dry Bones. You have the picture of this. God is going to raise the dead. You have so much clarity that by the time Jesus asks Martha in John 12 about the resurrection, she says, "Yeah, I know he's going to be raised up again." She knew that. Where'd she get that? The teaching of the Bible. Was it very clear? Not very clear. But Jesus made it clear, the apostles made it clear. Progressive revelation.

Question: Hi Pastor Mike. Thank you for your service. You know, I drive from South County to Los Angeles. I see a lot of homelessness. Pre-pandemic it was bad. Post, worse, and I think it's going to be even worse than that. In James 1:27 talks about that we should minister to the widows and the orphans. And then in Matthew, what is it, 26:11, Jesus says that "the poor will be with you always. You know, you need to be looking at me." What do you say the Bible says about ministering to the homeless now?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, well, that's a very, very difficult thing for a couple of reasons. If you really understand Scripture, Scripture helped the problem of the poor, not by giving them a handout unless you were absolutely incapable of work. For instance, built into the agricultural system of the Old Testament was I couldn't even reap my fields to the corners. I had to leave the corners for anyone who wanted to come and glean from the corners of my field. So if you



were poor and you didn't have any food, you could go to the corner of any field of anyone's property and you could go pick enough food to eat and live. But you had to work for it. That's a principle that we see throughout the Scripture, all the way into the New Testament in Second] Thessalonians 3] Paul says, "If you're not willing to work, you shouldn't eat." Are there exceptions to that? Well, yeah. If you didn't have Social Security, if you didn't have insurance, if you didn't have social services, right? If someone was paralyzed and couldn't work, someone was blind, someone couldn't see, they became dependent on the charity of other people and other people were to give to them. We're in a day that's super different for two reasons. One is we're in a huge social safety net culture. Right? There is not a person who can't get a warm meal in our culture today. You can see all the commercials about children starving and all that. I would challenge the statistics on that. I've looked at all that, and I'm not saying everyone gets to eat whatever they want, but I am saying there are a million things both in government and in charitable organizations that take care of all that. But it comes with stipulations. Like when I've been preaching at the Rescue Mission, for instance, you have to come in and you can't be on drugs and you have to listen to a sermon and you've got requirements to get your meal and your free warm bed to sleep in at night. Most people who are on the street don't want to do any of that. That's one part of it. So for me to say, "If I see someone who is poor, I'm going give me some money. If they're at Costco in the parking lot. Oh, man. Here's a twenty." By the way, the studies on that are people are making six figures, no tax, by the way, doing that kind of stuff in our culture. "Yeah, but she had a sign and had a kid in a stroller." OK, I understand. But I'm telling you, the Bible addresses that, it's a third-person imperative. I cannot enable someone to forego their duty and responsibility in life to provide for their own family. They're worse than an unbeliever the Bible says, we are as Christians, if we don't do that. Therefore, my encouragement should always be for people to do their jobs. Are there some people who can't? Right? We live in a society with a lot of different organizations to get that done. The Church, let me quote First Timothy 5. Again, I know I'm getting in scary territory for some of you. "Oh, what a heartless Republican you must be." Listen. First Timothy 5 says this about the Church. He says you shouldn't put a widow on the list who in the first-century culture was dependent on someone because she couldn't go out and get some administrative position somewhere. Maybe she didn't have any children. She's in a tough spot. Paul says have them get married, OK? Don't put them on the rolls of the Church. Don't let them be a financial burden to the Christians in Ephesus. That's what Paul is saying in First Timothy 4 and 5. The point of his concern is there are ways to solve this, including extended families and the Church should be focusing on and investing in the mission it's sent to do, which is not the social gospel. Right? For instance, if someone has a flat tire, I'm going to stop and help them. Right? We need to help people. We need to be compassionate people. Right? But I'm not going to aid people in not doing what they ought to do. That's one whole issue and we could go a lot further on that.

Pastor Mike: The other issue is the mental health crisis, to put it in secular terms that we have in our culture. Back in the day, we could commit people who are crazies and put them in a place where they would be cared for. Today you can't do that. Right? All the rules have changed. So now we're dumping people who are nuts, to use the technical term for it, out into society. And I'm not disparaging them. Right? I'm a little nuts myself. But the point is, there's no way for us to fix the problem with our current policies in our country. We have to get back



to some reasonable standards. If you went down in Anaheim, you could go along the river there, the flood control, whatever it was, for miles and see tent cities. Do you want to allow that like they do in L.A.? Of course, it happened in San Clemente. Some of you live in San Clemente, right? The tent cities down there. All I'm saying is there needs to be a reasonable response to that and the Christian is not going to say, "Oh, we're supposed to be compassionate. If anyone asks for something we are supposed to give it to him." Right? No, you need to understand, I'm told by the Scriptures not to give in particular situations. Am I to give in some? Absolutely. I just got to be intelligent and know what those situations are. I'm not going to give my money that I should be giving to the Lord for his work. Right? In situations where I know this is a violation of Scripture, I cannot aid and abet someone in disobeying God and I shouldn't. But I'm not going to let someone starve to death on my front lawn either. Right? I'm not even going to let someone who's got a flat tire not get where they're going, I'm going to stop and help them. We are going to help each other in our societies and we ought to. But the Church needs to understand it's not as simple as, "Oh, there's someone who doesn't have a home. I'll have them live in my condo." That's not going to solve the problems that we have today, certainly with drug addiction, mental health issues, as the world calls it, and people who just say, Paul calls them busybodies in Thessalonica, who say, "I'm just not interested. I can get everything I need here and I'll sleep on your beach." I know that's complicated. I could go a lot further on that, but I know it's hard. Here's something I think Christians think. The default should always be compassion for everyone whenever they say there's an issue. And all I'm telling you is the Bible says you can have misplaced compassion and you need to make sure your compassion is put in the right place and it's biblically allowable. For instance, if someone was caught doing something capital offense and they go to be executed in Israel, the Bible says show them no mercy. I should not have pity on them, even though it's going to be hard for me to watch them be stoned to death or to be executed or to have a sword put through them. I'm supposed to say I got to understand right now, this is not the time for compassion. And there are times when we have to say, "can't do that." Some exclaim, "What about First John Chapter 3? If you see your brother in need and you close your heart," you got no compassion, "how can the love of God exist in you?" You can quote those passages in isolation and not understand the rest of Scripture that says there are times when he says just the opposite depending on the circumstance. If my brother is in need, I'm not going to shut my heart toward him and I'm not going to shut my heart even toward my neighbor. I'm the first one at my neighbor's house if something shows up. I will be there to help them. It is not about that. It's about understanding the larger situation and knowing sometimes the best thing we could do is if we didn't let any of these things happen, which I know individually we can't stop it, there would be a necessary change. We'd get back to some certain policies that have prevented this for centuries and it has prevented it in most of the civilized world for centuries. And the social safety nets have helped people who would be otherwise sitting there begging. And even if they were, we could get back to the time when they did beg because they needed to and we would say, "OK, well, that's part of the system." But even in Israel, you had to take a triennial tax for the orphans and the widows that went to the government and the government supported them. It was the early social safety net of Israel. And that was something meted out by the leaders who would help those people, because every third year you had to give 10% of a three-year wage to the government so that they could deal with the widows and orphans of the culture. And right



now, we're giving a lot in our taxes and there's a lot out there. And again, I don't want to go too far down this road. I know I've hacked half of you off already, so I'm sorry. But I can expand on that at some point, maybe I should preach on that and we can go deeper on that.

Question: Alright. Maybe a lighter question. Asaph's beautiful psalms. Some of them certainly in my mind seem to point to a future time from Asaph, from David's times, Psalm 74-79. Do you attribute them to some member of a future choir of Asaph or are they prophetic and from the Asaph of David's and Solomon's time?

Pastor Mike: OK, I need more on that. Yeah, I do think they're the Asaph of David's court musician. Yeah, that's who I think Asaph is.

Question: Prophetic in its thinking. Even the remorseful time like seeming to point to the exilic time when you know...

Pastor Mike: Well, I do think the Psalms are a collection that includes exilic periods...

Question: From written from Asaph?

Pastor Mike: Well, you've got to remember, some of these are dedicated... Well, first of all, go to a Bible dictionary and look up Asaph and you'll find it about, I don't know, I'm guessing six of them in Scripture? So you got to be careful which Asaph we're talking about. But there was an Asaph with David, contemporaneous with David, who was a chief musician, and even psalms that are said Psalms of David, that genitive as we call in grammar, it doesn't necessarily mean that David wrote it, right? Because some of them are clearly prayers about David the King, right? To save the king. I don't think those are necessarily coming from David's pen. And I don't think all of the ones that are dedicated with a superscription to Asaph necessarily were written by the Asaph of David's musical court. Some are prophetic, clearly. And if you see the cycles of pain within the Psalms, some of them clearly are replicated nationally in the exile. And I've done the study before and I can't remember off the top of my head, but I do know there's an Asaph later than David's Asaph that I'd have to look all that up. But, yeah, I do think plenty of the psalms are prophetic. Psalm 110. I mean, there are so many psalms that are looking toward the future. You're talking about the nearer future, which is the exile, which, if you think about it, is 500 years after David's time. Right? So, yeah, it may necessitate me sitting down... Well, you can sit down and do all the work, but just looking through the Asaphs of Scripture, looking at the particular psalms you're looking at and then seeing whether or not this might be a dedicatory superscription or whether it's a superscription that attributes the writing to the Asaph who is contemporary with David. Yeah, that's a hard question. One more, let's do one more. Where are the mics? In the back. OK, there you are. It's got to be a good question because it is coming from someone sitting in the back corner of the auditorium.

Question: It's probably a much shorter answer. I don't know. It's a Bible question, but it's not even theological. OK. It's just something I've wondered about for a long time and cannot find



an answer for it. This is it. Why did the children of Israel beg and plead for meat when they had all their cattle and flocks with them and permission to eat meat ever since the flood?

Pastor Mike: Well, they didn't ask for meat because it was prohibited on the kosher list because that's true. So to answer the last part of your question, that's not the reason. The basic answer generally given to that question is that when they left Egypt with their flocks and herds, you could not sustain this traveling multitude by us just eating all of our milk-producing, hide-producing animals. In other words, you weren't grazing in a pasture with a multiplying flock, right? Not that they couldn't eat some of that, but they pled for something beyond the manna because they wanted meat. Could they have eaten some of their flocks? They could have. But I think they're a lot smarter than we... They're not knuckle-dragging dummies that think, "Hey, let's just eat all this today, because tomorrow, well, we'll just let tomorrow figure itself out." They're wandering around in the Arabian Desert. So I think they were very judicious about their flocks. I think they saw them as essential for travel, essential for sustenance, essential for the dairy, essential for a lot of what they did. And they weren't going to slaughter them all to have hamburgers. And I think that's why they were craving a supplement, an answer beyond the flakes of corn flakes that they got off the lawn.

Pastor Mike: Well, it's 12:30, and we've been everywhere in this conversation. But it's time now to come in for a landing. So let me pray with you and then I'll let you get on with your Sunday. God, thank you for our church. Thank you so much for our desire to know what you say in your word and how to rightly understand that. We've covered a lot of topics, but I pray that some of it would be a catalyst for us to love you more, to serve you better, to understand you in this world against the backdrop of a lot of different opinions better. Give us clarity. Even though people in this room may not agree with everything that was said here, I pray at least it would be a motivation for us to study your word more deeply and to think more openly about how we might understand and apply your word. And God, I just I thank you for the church that I get to preach to every weekend, for their receptivity. We do pray now, right now specifically for what's going to happen on the stage soon as we're out of this building and they set up for Revival. And there are so many things going on with our high school students and our junior high students this week. Give me grace to preach to them well the next five days and I pray it would be an awesome opening night to that here tonight. Pray even if we have needs, that our church would step up with personnel needs or whatever might be left as we've scrambled to move our reservation from the mountain to this business park. And that's going to be hard. But I pray you bless it, make it the most spiritually significant week for our teenagers all summer, if not in their entire lives to this point. So we commit the week to you. We thank you for our time of talking about a variety of topics. Dismiss us now with your protection and your blessing in our lives.

Pastor Mike: I pray in Jesus name. Amen.