



## Questions & Answer Service 2022 – Part 3

### Pastor Mike Fabarez

**Pastor Mike:** All right. We've got some pastors with microphones. You also have Jay Wertin, the Director of Focal Point Ministries. I didn't know who it was going to be when I looked over there. Are you always on my left? On most people's right. But my left. All right. They've got microphones. It's Q&A weekend. That means that your questions, whatever they might be, if they relate somehow to the Christian life, to the Bible, to Christian theology doctrine we're happy to talk about those here this morning. Waive down a microphone and when one microphone gets in one hand, the other one here, Pastor Doug's got a microphone to get over on this side, so don't be shy about that. We're going to start in the back row. I just asked that they would be your question and not someone else's, and that they would be sincere and somehow related to the Bible in some way. All right. Yes. Question, ready?

**Question:** Thank you, Pastor Mike. This question stems from a debate I was having with a Catholic family member. My Catholic family member refuses to read or even pick up the Bible. Is it a sin, or would you say it's necessary for those who profess to be believers, I'm not talking denomination, just in general, believers to not read the Bible?

**Pastor Mike:** Say it again.

**Question:** Yes, it's necessary. But would you say it could even be a sin for those who profess to be believers to refuse to read the Bible?

**Pastor Mike:** Yes. I mean, a sin. I mean, what is a sin? A sin is falling short of what God has asked us to do. And he says, I mean, Peter says, "We ought to crave the pure milk of the word." Hebrews Chapter 5 says, we ought to not even just drink the basic milk of biblical doctrine, but we ought to move to the meat of Scripture. Psalm 119 says it ought to be something we thank God for seven times a day. Psalm 119 says it should be the thing that we crave and it refreshes us like candy or the honeycomb. To say that I'm a Christian, but I am not interested in reading the Bible is oxymoronic. That just makes no sense. And I would question someone saying they know Christ and they don't have an interest in the book that he wrote us. It's like saying, "I'm in this relationship with this gal and she writes me letters and I never read them. It's a great relationship, though." So, yeah, so a problem, sin? Yes. If you haven't been reading the Bible and you're a Christian, you should confess that. That means it's in the category of sin. Yeah.

**Question:** Hi. So there are a lot of growing churches recently that believe in modern-day spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and divine healing. So what does the Bible say about this in modern times? Is this a salvific issue or is it something that's like secondary, like eschatology? And then what is Compass' stance on this issue and why?

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah. Yes, it is a secondary issue, although it can be parlayed into something that they become exclusive in saying if you don't do this, you don't have the Spirit of God in you and that would be an accusation that we would say is a huge issue. But let me just



correct the way that you stated the question, because everyone seems to put it in those terms. I'm not faulting you for this. But I'm saying it's always principally like "spiritual gifts." I don't believe in spiritual gifts or modern-day spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues, and miracles and prophecy. Listen, the Church has always believed in spiritual gifts. This church has always believed in spiritual gifts. We all believe in spiritual gifts. The question is the few spiritual gifts, and there are just a few that suspend natural law, they break the laws of nature. OK? Those endowments of God to break the laws of nature, are those something that is normative for every generation of the Church after the apostles? And my answer is no. Those are the signs of the apostles. Right? Second Corinthians 12:12, "The true signs of apostles were worked among you." Signs and wonders. Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4 that God is affirming the truth and attesting to the truth. First generation of people who brought us the truth through signs and wonders. The miraculous gifts are parts of the signs of the apostles, just like Second Corinthians 12:12, that are the foundation of the Church, Ephesians 2:20, that the church is then built on. So even if you went back to the second century and started reading the history of the Church in the second century, they knew the day of the miracles was over because the apostles were doing them in the first century. And this was immediately after the generation of the apostles. Yeah, the miraculous we understood was a part of the attestation of the prophetic ministry. And I say prophetic because they were writing down these words from God. And that was the attestation, as I often say, the imprimatur of God on that. So on the codifying of the word. Just like it was in the time of the prophets in the middle section of the Old Testament, Elijah and Elisha in particular, and Moses and Joshua, when the first five books of the Bible were written. So the law, the prophets and the New Testament were characterized by the breaking of natural law. Our church wouldn't function without the spiritual gifts. And that's put this way First Corinthians Chapter 12 verse 7, "The manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" of the church. Right? If God has endowed me to teach, then if that's good for the church, right? That's the work of God in the church. If the sound tech can run that fancy board. That's an endowment of the Spirit and his skill and his knowledge and his ear to serve the church. If the singer's... We know these are endowments of the Spirit, not limited to just the short designated examples that we have in First Corinthians and Romans and First Peter and Ephesians 4. But these are the small segment of them where you're breaking natural laws. The gift of speaking in languages is a suspension of natural law. It was a sign that was clear to the people who were listening to those Galileans in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, they were hearing these mighty works of God in their own language. And that was an attestation, not only in Acts 2, but when we see in Acts Chapter 10 the conversion of the first Gentile Italian, at least the proper expansion of the Church from the Jewish center, Jerusalem and Judea, to the first foreigner. And then we have it again in Acts 16, where they spoke in those languages and everyone knew this is the same Spirit, giving the same attestation to the fact that this is happening here the same way it did in Pentecost in Acts 2. So, yes, I think the pattern of Scripture is those miraculous sign gifts that break natural law are associated with the giving of prophecy and Scripture. And that went away in the first century. And it's some people say, "They're going on today. They're going on today." Well, they're not going on today the way they were going on then. Right? If so, it would be on the front page of the Orange County Register. Right? Because it's just not. And to say what someone is in an ecstatic experience saying things and babbling and it's weird and they're not themselves and say, well, there's a miracle. Miracles are signs and



signs aren't in gibberish. If I can be kind of double entendre there, they are clearly directing the fact that this is a supernatural thing and God is involved in this. So speaking in tongues as most people modernly define it, which is getting myself into a position where I'm just babbling things that don't make any sense or I call it a prayer language, or I'm saying it's just an ecstatic eruption of speaking in something that no one understands, is not the gift of tongues, as I understand it in the New Testament. Prophecy, well there is a category of moderns today who say, well, we have prophets in our church and they speak things about the future, but they're not always right. And what's called... and I'm not trying to make fun of them, that's what they say. They believe in fallible prophecy. Now New Testament prophets, we say, well, those New Testament prophets who wrote the Bible, this is infallible, right? It's given to us without error. But there's a category here. So you can see the compromise, I think, in trying to say, well, yeah, when Peter walks in and a guy who's been paralyzed from birth, he walks in and says, you know, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I you: and stand up and walk." Right? That's not happening at the church down the street that says, "We believe in the miraculous gifts and that Compass Bible Church does not." It's just not. "Well, I know someone on the mission field and, you know, he had this thing and it happened." Okay. If the Church is endowed with all of the gifts that the first century Church had when we had a New Testament need for prophecy without a written New Testament, then I think we would see this attested and clear, it would be on videos and streaming and everyone would be going, "Look at the miracles happening at the church down the street that believes," in what they would say in spiritual gifts, "while Compass does not." No, of course we believe in spiritual gifts, but there were a few of those gifts that were miraculous gifts. And I'm saying, yeah, the age of the miraculous gifts as a normative experience for the Church ended in the first century. And that's our view. Is it a secondary issue? Yeah, it's a secondary issue. I'm not saying people aren't saved because they believe that when they're saying ecstatic things that don't make any sense, they believe it's God and I believe it's not. I'm not saying they're not saved. Not at all. Right? But see, often the accusation comes the other way. The other way is that you don't have the Spirit of God. The Spirit is not at work in your church. I want to go to a church where the Spirit is at work. Well, the Spirit is at work. The greatest ongoing miracle of the Church are people's hearts being changed. Ezekiel 34 and 36. Their lives are becoming new from the inside out. The miraculous Second Corinthians Chapter 5. Right? They're no longer who they were and they become new from the inside out. Right? Anyone in Christ, they're a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. So we believe in that ongoing miracle of regeneration, but it's not marked by an external expression of a breaking of natural law. That's not our view here. It's not my view as the pastor and our pastoral team. We all agree in our pastoral team on that. Does that help? Okay.

**Question:** I was wondering for the young, well, any age single in the church how to biblically navigate like being really intentional. Like trying to guard hearts and stuff, like taking it maybe too far and maybe offending or isolating someone versus maybe like, what's the line versus not being intentional enough and causing hurt by not having guarded hearts kind of thing?

**Pastor Mike:** Let me ask you a couple of questions. Intentional about what?



**Question:** Like I've heard... So I'm like from a different culture kind of. I'm from the South where things are a lot more relaxed.

**Pastor Mike:** An alien culture (smile). Yeah, we don't understand the South at all.

**Question:** So since I've been here on the West Coast, when I've heard the word "intentional," it's been kind of like... I've heard it a lot from the young men, like, "I want to be intentional. I'm not going to hang out at all with young women unless I'm pursuing them." And I've seen, you know, some feelings get hurt because it's like, well, I just wanted to be your friend. Like, that's kind of harsh, but it's like the intention is pure and good, but like, how do you navigate being like walking that line of either being too intentional that it's hurting people in the sense of like isolating or like closing a door even to friendship versus like not being intentional enough and like maybe accidentally leading on a brother or a sister and then they're hurt. Like, what's the fine line to address that biblically?

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah, well, biblically, I just think we have our principles about the issue of marriage, and that is that if you're not called to be content single, romantically, sexually, then you should be pursuing marriage, right? Just if you're calling is to be married, which, you know, if you have the absence of contentedness without romance and, you know, a desire for sexual contact, well, then, you know, then there's no issue. But if you're not in that category, which most of us are not, we want romance, we want sexual encounters, we need a wife or a husband. And so we need to be, and I hate to use the word you're talking about, but we need to be thoughtful and strategic about saying we need to get there. If you're called to be a provider for your family and get a job, well, then you ought to be out there putting in resumes, finding out the jobs available and trying to get a job. If you are not called to be a single for the sake of Christ would be the ultimate desire to serve Christ with undistracted devotion as First Corinthians 7 says then you need to try and find a spouse. And how do you do that? Well, you've got to have social interaction. You've got to have a one-on-one time of going to dinner and Starbucks and movies or whatever to have a chance to see if this is the person I could be in a relationship with. So that needs to happen. And I would say in Christian subculture, it needs to happen probably more than it's happening. We're always playing footsies, I think, with each other in church contexts about like, "Well, I don't know, you know, I'm not going to go to Starbucks with you unless, you know, I think you're going to be my wife," if that's how you characterize it. And I'm overstating it. But yeah, I would say if guys are thinking that in this church or any other Christian church, they need to stop thinking that way. It's ridiculous. You need to put yourself in a context where if you are looking to get married, you're in a context where you build those kinds of connections and relationships in dating relationships. We need to have single Christians willing to date unless they're called to be single. Right? And they know that because they're contented without romance and pursuing sexual commitment of oneness in marriage. And you need to be doing that without all the drama of like, you know, who's dating who and you got to stop with all that. You know, this has just got to stop, right? (audience applauds) But then everyone condemns that. If you have a singles group, college group in a church where there's a lot of dating going on then it's like everyone castigates that as well. They say, "It's just like the meat market and everyone's sizing each other up to see who they're going to date." And I'm like, okay, you can't have it both ways, right? You can't



say, here is a ministry within our church or sub-congregation we call it where these people are all single and most of them, 95% of them are going to end up being married one day. Here's the place to find a spouse. So there's nothing wrong with that. Right? And you need to get to dating. There should be more dating probably going on in our ministry. And then you got other people saying, "when then they all going to have sex and have kids and..." Right? Of course, I'm not talking about any of that. I'm not talking about promiscuity or fornication. I'm talking about above board, like, you know, in public and with the full glass windows at Starbucks and you're not going to be under the table, you know, having sex. So I think there needs to be more dating and there needs to be more connection because you're going to end up down the road saying, "well, I never really looked for a job. That's why I'm unemployed at 40." Right? So you've got to work at this. You've got to be strategic about it. People don't sit around if they're called to get a job and go, "Well, I'm just waiting for the Lord to bring me a job." Right? No, no. What are you doing to get a job? Right? God is going to be the one who gives you that job, and I'll give him credit for that. But he's asking me to get up and do something about it. So I know that's not a full, complete answer because there's a lot to it and there's probably a lot of things to address, I suppose, in the subculture of singles in churches like ours. But I just think there needs to be more people asking more people out to dinner and coffee and just get to know each other and then don't get offended when you're moving on to another date because that one's probably not the one. There's going to be hurt feelings, right? All of you guys who are married who went through this, there are hurt feelings along the way. And a lot of times we want everything to be so clean and nice and it never hurts our feelings. There are going to be hurt feelings. But we can be big boys and girls and we can get through all that.

**Question:** I am just reminding you about having a group for 50+ so people like me can have a friend to go out with. Just different, right? Just a friend looking to go out for dinner or chatting and sharing and then talking about you. (audience laughing) That is question one. Question two is we are supposed to be like Jesus. Jesus loved everybody. That means we are to work towards feeling secure from within. From inside. Secure within. So we, you know, we should be able to know everyone means you have spoken on that subject, not to have envy, jealousy and all that. And as you know we are human beings. So those feelings are always there. You have done such a good job, but unfortunately we need a little more than that from you (audience laughing). So I will find some people, especially more women, you know, trying to pull me down. We all experience it. I'm not the only one. So we need more help from you. Thank you.

**Pastor Mike:** Okay. We need a group of 50s and older singles. Right? You need someone to take you to dinner. That was another thing in the list. And we need more from me on kind of navigating how to do this. Is that right? Noted. All right, we'll work on that here. Yeah. Thank you.

**Question:** I have a question. I have a friend who recently invited me to a charismatic church, and she claims to have spiritual healing in a matter of a day. So I was just wondering what your thoughts on that are. I have people say that's not something in this church that we believe in. I was just wondering what your thoughts on that are as far as spiritual healing in a matter of days when she says that Jesus helped her.





**Pastor Mike:** Spiritual healing or physical?

**Question:** Well, she said she had an event in her life that caused her trauma. And she said she did some sort of therapy session where she saw Jesus. I don't know how to explain it in better terms. But she said she was a different person the next day after that, or she felt like God helped her or Jesus helped her with that problem to see, I don't know...

**Pastor Mike:** And what was her problem? I didn't catch that.

**Question:** You know what she didn't share that with me.

**Pastor Mike:** OK. Didn't say, but some kind of trauma, some kind of hurt. She had some experience, claims to have seen Jesus. And then she's better in 24 hours.

**Question:** Yeah, she said that he walked her through it.

**Pastor Mike:** Okay. And then she's saying, I have the gift to be able to help others do this.

**Question:** She didn't claim that. She just said that she went through a therapy session that helped her work this out.

**Pastor Mike:** With Christ. Okay.

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah. And he didn't charge her for that.

**Question:** I don't know.

**Pastor Mike:** Okay. All right. And I'm just saying now and the question is what to do with that information or what?

**Question:** I'm just curious, is she just you know, like I said, she invited me to her church for, I guess, to learn more about the Holy Spirit and how to work with the Holy Spirit in that sense. To walk through life and things like that.

**Pastor Mike:** Well, we're trying to do the best we can to take the Holy Spirit's information, because he wrote a whole book on how to get through life, it's called the Bible. And we're trying to take that information and give it to you in understandable chunks every week so that it will help you get through trauma and life and direct you. So we're doing the work of the Holy Spirit here by trying to illuminate his words that he's put in writing. And I think that is probably a, I would argue of course, as the pastoral of this church, a better path than us sitting around and describing subjective experiences as we claim or think we've had without testing the veracity of the things that we're saying, "Well, I had this experience," "You had that experience." And I'm just telling you that I know one thing for certain. The Holy Spirit wrote a book, and that book is filled with things to help you get over and get through and get around



and get on top of all the things that we're supposed to be doing. So I think people can say, well, we're missing out on so many things because in my small group all we're doing is talking about the Bible and how to apply it, instead of where did you go on your therapy session with Christ last Tuesday? And I'm just saying, I think this is a better path. It's an objective path. It's a path which Christians have been doing for 2,000 years. It's really only been in the last hundred years, since 1901, that we started a little tiny movement in downtown L.A., Azusa Street, where we started this movement of this very subjective, which came out of, as I talked about last week, this Enlightenment movement, this existential kind of philosophy that made its way into religion, where now it's about the experiences that I have versus us thinking through what God has said and by God's Spirit applying what he said, and then living in step with the Spirit, because we're walking in keeping with what he has taught us in his book. So, yeah, here's what I know about my experiences and feelings and emotions. I can't always trust them, right? Because it's sometimes it's based on what I had for dinner last night. I can't always know my feelings. I can only really blame on God if they comport with what his book says. Right? So if I have a conviction and guilt over something I did wrong and the book says, yes, it's wrong, that's why you're feeling guilty, well, then I know that's the Spirit of God convicting me. I feel guilty about some things that I look in the Scriptures and say I know I shouldn't feel guilty about that because it's the right thing to do. So now I know to tell my emotions, you're crazy. I built a Volkswagen with my dad in the garage when I was a kid, 15, and the gauges never worked, which is not good and know most parents today would never let their kids drive a car if the gauges didn't work. The speedometer worked and I guess that's all my dad cared about, the speedometer worked. But, you know, I couldn't trust the gauges. Sometimes a gauge would do crazy things on this little car that we built, this Volkswagen. And so I learned not to trust them. Right? So I had to check to see if the engine was on fire when the temperature gauge went up to, you know, 300. So I didn't trust the gauges because I know they're notoriously unreliable. And I think that's the thing about my emotions, right? They're all over the map. And my experiences and feelings and all kinds of things I feel. I just think we're in an age where we have, unfortunately, for the last hundred years plus put more and more emphasis on what do you feel than what do you think? And I know why this has come up in every service. But Carl Trueman has written a good book called "The Triumph of the Modern Self," and he's written a smaller version of it, which is the same information called "Strange New World," obviously, based on Huxley's "Brave New World," but "Strange New World." And he talks about how we got here philosophically from Darwin and Freud and all of the philosophers to get to a place today where all that really matters is what experiences you've had. And it's really not a book about charismatic theology, but it certainly is tangential to that. It relates to that because I think now you can't argue with anyone's experience. Even if I've got a book here that says clearly, this is God's word, and you're telling me something that doesn't comport with God's word. Even Paul when he was caught up in the third heaven, God's throne, he didn't even give us any information on that. It's like I think people are writing books and giving stories and doing things that are irrelevant. When Paul's talking to Corinth, he says, "Here's what God said. I'm not going to tell you what experience I had in the process of getting revelation. I'm telling you what God's truth is." So, yeah, I think you're better off in a Bible-teaching church, whether it's this one or another one, where the centerpiece of everything is all is going to be judged not only other doctrines and theologies, but even my feelings are going to be judged by the clear teaching of God's word.



**Question:** This last week you spoke on unity in the church, which is ultimately, you know, of huge importance and how the letter was delivered to the church, and that helped unify. My question is, how can we unify with some who might believe in replacement theology?

Well, I mean, we can unify around the gospel. First, let me explain what Replacement Theology is. Replacement Theology, maybe terms you've heard more frequently is the distinction between pre-millennial eschatology and a-millennial eschatology. A-millennialism means, if you look at what God is doing, not only in the time of Jacob's Trouble, which is the tribulation period, but in the millennial promise of Revelation 20, that all of those things are fulfilled now, either, like they'll say, the tribulation was in 70 A.D. and the millennial kingdom is now, it's spiritually being fulfilled. So the Church, what we're doing now has replaced Israel and there's no future plan for Israel. So that's called Replacement Theology. Therefore, they don't care anything of what's going on in Israel, at least eschatologically they don't care. And they care politically when Biden shows up there. But they say, listen, it doesn't matter what happens in Israel because it's not the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. It's just irrelevant. It's like what's going on in Greece or what's going on in Chad. It doesn't matter. It's just all part of geopolitics. It matters only insofar as it affects people. But the Church now is the replacement and fulfillment of all the promises to Israel. We are not that. Right? We believe that, I say we, the pastoral team here, teach across the board in our teaching posts all over that we believe there is a future for Israel. We would look to passages like Romans Chapter 11 that says there's a time of the Gentiles. It's going to be fulfilled and God is going to turn his attention back to Israel. And as Revelation Chapter 6 says, and I have 144,000 Jews as the catalyst of this, each from the 12 tribes of Israel, and God's going to fulfill the promise of the "time of tribulation," Jesus said, "that's coming from the world that's never been as bad as this, and it never will be." It's a horrible time, the time of Israel's trouble. It's the 70th week of Daniel, and it's coming in the future. And then the millennial kingdom, where God fulfills the promises to Israel and the temple that is described in the book Ezekiel is going to be built. All of that is, no, we haven't replaced Israel and God's got a plan for Israel and he's going to fulfill that in the future. Some people see that as regressive in God's prophetic plan, but I'm saying I think it is reading the Old Testament as normally and literally as I can to say a lot of these things are not fulfilled. Ephraim the Stick of Ephraim and the Stick of Judah have not been put into one, with David on the throne as the prince of Israel and Christ on the throne. Those things haven't happened yet, but it's going to happen, I believe, not spiritually, it's going to happen literally. So how can we have unity with a group? That's your question now after the background, how can we as, at least me, I'll speak for myself, pre-millennial Christians have unity with a-millennial Christians or people who believe in Replacement Theology. I would simply say, well, we can in so far as we agree on the essentials and central issues of the Christian faith. But we're going to part ways on how we read some of the Old Testament. We're going to part ways and how we read some of the New Testament, and we're going to part ways on where we think we are on the prophetic calendar. So we can have a church that has people from both sides in that. But in our case, I've got a super gifted a-millennial guy who was from SoCal here who wanted to work at our church. We interviewed him. We loved him. He was a great, talented guy, and I wished him the best. But I thought, we can't have you on our team because on our team here, and we're not castigating you, we're not looking down





on you, we're not pooh-poohing your ministry or anything, but we're saying we are pre-millennial people who are going to read the Old Testament the same way together as pastors. So at least I would say you got to go to a church it would be helpful if all the pastors would agree on whether the church has replaced Israel or whether there's a future for Israel in a coming kingdom. So that's one thing I've done as a commitment to you to say at least our leaders are on the same page. Right? But are people welcome in our church who don't believe that? Sure, you are, right? But there is a sense in where when you get to a particular point in leadership in ministry here, we want to be able to read the Bible the same way. This is what is called hermeneutics. We're going to read the Bible with the same set of rules. And that really we start to see some cleaving there between the replacement theology people and pre-millennial dispensational people. So we do the best we can. It's kind of like the starting question, right? The charismatics or spiritual gifts. It's not like we're saying, "Hey, you guys are lost." We're not making hard distinctions, but we are saying we can only unify so far, if you're thinking the Holy Spirit is taking you to therapy on Tuesday, right? And we're saying, no, that's not how God's working and he's not raising the dead as a normative experience in the Church. So, we do the best we can and we center on the things that we can. And our pastors and our leaders in the top levels of teaching ministries here, we all have to agree on those kinds of things.

**Question:** I have your election free will question. I've studied this endlessly and I'm going to use two examples, which are Judas and Pharaoh. Judas was born for a specific purpose to fulfill the prophecy that, of course, someone would come and betray Christ. He didn't have a choice in the matter. He was predestined, let's say, for that purpose. Jesus prayed to the Father for the other disciples and said, except for the one that was destined for destruction. Is it fair to say that he had no ability to change his mind? So if he was born for the purposes of fulfilling that prophecy and did God's will, is he in hell or is he in heaven? And the other example is with Pharaoh. Real quick. God said, I'm going to harden Pharaoh's heart, as did the devil, and he hardened his own heart. It's a little more complicated, but you know what I'm saying is he really didn't have the ability to genuinely repent, let the people go and change his mind. So again, if he fulfilled the prophecy of God and his purpose for being born, was he born just to do what he did and go to hell or is he in hell or heaven as well?

**Pastor Mike:** Okay, great question. I get it. Yeah. If I were to take a lawn mower and gas it up, fire it up and mow my lawn with it and then say this lawn should not have been mowed and it's wrong and now you're going to be punished because you as a lawn mower have done wrong. You'd say, well, that's not right, which is basically how you posited the question. Like, if this was God's plan, I mean, God was making this happen. Right? Then it's not fair for me to blame my lawn mower for me gassing it up, starting it, pushing it, cutting the grass with it and saying, "Ahh, you cut the grass, I'm going to damn you to hell now." When we think of it that way, then you're right. It makes no sense. That's not how the Scripture views it. And you said when you look at Pharaoh, it complicates it because there's this interlacing of God hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened heart. God hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart. And I don't think it complicates it. It helps us see that the Judas example is more complicated than we think. In other words, there is in the Scripture, when we look at Romans 11, again, think about the example starting in Romans 9. When the discussion about Pharaoh shows up,



which starts with Israel and how's Israel, you know, hardened this time of hardening comes this time Israel or the Gentiles can come and were grafted in. And if their rejection meant our blessing, what's going to happen when their reception is? And there's all this discussion about God's plan. Romans 9, 10 and 11. The point is that God is saying, here is my plan. It's working out and everyone in the plan is culpable for their sinful decisions. That's why when he says, how can God still find fault with Pharaoh because he was raised up for the very purpose, as it says in Romans 11, to demonstrate God's power, which was through a miraculous set of events so the first five books of the Bible can be written. And I'm saying it does complicate it, but it's the complication that we need, because God is saying people in their decisions to do wrong are dignified enough by being created as human beings to be responsible for their decisions, and yet the responsibility of their decisions somehow in God's plan comports with his plan to work that out in that direction. And so God is saying I am sovereign over the plan and using Pharaoh and raising him up for a purpose and raising up Judas for a purpose. I have a sovereign plan in that, and I'm working that out. You can drop the word "sovereign" if you struggle with that. God has a designed plan to make this happen, as it says in the beginning of Acts, as Peter's preaching in Acts 3, this whole plan is according to God's predetermined plan. I mean, this is what he planned to do, everything after his definite plan. And yet the people who crucified Christ will be judged for making those decisions. How does that harmonize? This is the problem we have. How do we see a God who's working out a plan determined ahead of time, enlisting, as it's put in Romans 11, pots and vessels to get that plan done. And yet those decisions are still made and they're responsible and punishable for those decisions. The Bible says both of those are laid side by side in Scripture, and they're true. It is not just a mechanical device that I'm pushing across the lawn and saying, "I told you not to cut the grass." Right? These are very complicated beings, human beings who are given this ability, this volition, we call it, to make decisions. And when they make bad decisions God says you are responsible for that. It's like I try to illustrate, I don't know where I got this, some book, maybe Doug Wilson's book on "Easy Chairs, Hard Words." But when you're building a building and the architect draws it out a certain way and people then build it according to the specifications, right? Which we don't do consciously, there is a free like wielding of the hammers to knock those nails in or in our day, the nail guns. And that's happening. Right? And it all works out after the plan of the architect. And yet those work crews who went on the scene were doing their work and from the perspective of the workers are freely doing their work, although they can't build things in any direction that they want. Here's the thing. When God is asked, how can you still blame Pharaoh for the decisions he makes, the answer, much like with Job in Job 38 through 40, right? You've got this discussion of God saying, "Who are you to answer back to God?" Can God not make "one vessel for honor and one for dishonor?" God can do what he wants, but it still does not mean there's some automaton. There's some kind of robot, there's some kind of lawn mower that God is pushing through the grass and then saying, you shouldn't have cut the grass. Because God is not the author of evil, he is not the author of sin, he doesn't tempt anyone to sin. But he takes sinful creatures and in working them in the parameters of his plan, they wield the hammer and cut the 2x4s with rip saws to accomplish the plan that he has. What's miraculous is that anyone would choose to do good because Romans Chapter 3 says we are all sinful, we're all wicked and if God didn't intervene, everyone would do the sin that they're programmed to do. But what happened and the amazing thing is not the one apostle



who denied Christ. What's amazing is the 11 who didn't. And God is then actively engaged in steering these people who were dead in their transgressions and sins, making them alive together in Christ and giving them this merciful, gracious salvation. And we're saying, well, if we just do what we want to do, if we do what we're designed to do, if we do what we're by nature going to do as fallen human beings, we have bad, malicious software in us. And the only way to fix that is an injection and an infusion of God's determinative grace to change the direction of these people. So we can't make it as simple as like it's like a lawn mower, and I've just made that example up, and I'll probably dread it tonight when I go to bed. But the idea of something mechanical, this is not as simple as some inanimate object. These are human beings who are made in the image of God. They have power. They're above every other part of creation. And yet they're held responsible for their decisions. All I'm saying is people who see it as such a black and white issue of, well, you can't blame someone for doing wrong if they're destined to do wrong and that's the plan that God has. All I'm telling you is then God would be guilty for punishing them for that. And yet he says, I do punish them for that and I'm not guilty for doing that. And if you're saying, well, I know better than you, God, and you did do wrong there, all I'm telling you is both what J.I. Packer says in his little book, "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God," or what Carson says in his book on "Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty." These are two truths that are laid down beside one another in the Scripture. And as Carson rightly said, if you've got a better way to take all this biblical data and come out the other side without saying these are both true at the same time, that you are fully responsible for your decisions, and yet God is working out a plan that he works out that he in the end accomplishes according to his definite plan. Well, I'm just saying both have to be true. And we as human beings like to say no, if God's got a plan then he's not responsible. And that's what you're saying. You're saying, well, he's not responsible. Judas isn't responsible. And the Bible says, no, Judas is responsible. That's why he's going to hell because he's responsible. And that's where we can't make this such a simple concept. And I would start with those two books, by the way. The first one I'd start with is Packer's book "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God," which is a short little primer on why would we do evangelism if God's got the elect and he's going to save him. And everyone has that question when they start grappling with God's sovereignty. The other one is much more dense. But Carson's book, a clear, crisp thinker, trying to deal with the issue of how do we take all the data of God's sovereignty and all the data of human responsibility and agree that they're both true, even though we have, as what Packer said antinomy, two things that seem very difficult in our minds to resolve when we point them at each other, but they resolve in Scripture because they're parallel concepts. So I just want to say, if it's simply defined, whether it's the Trinity or whether it's human responsibility and divine sovereignty, if you get it simplified to where you're talking about an egg and a yolk or water and vapor and ice, we know we're wrong because these things are too complex. And it does make it complex when God keeps saying, harden Pharaoh's heart, God hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, God hardened his heart. This is God's plan. He did compound the sin of Pharaoh simply by allowing him to wallow in this rebellion against God and therefore worked out his perfect plan. So yeah, it's the one question in every service on sovereignty and, and it's not an easy one, but I would dig a little deeper instead of saying, well, I think I figured it out. He's not responsible for his sin. Then God is unjust. And that's the whole point of Romans 11. God is not unjust to hold people responsible for their sins. And we've got to somehow put those side



by side and be able to go to bed tonight and say, these are both true, and we'll figure this out, just like there's one God in three persons. "Well, if it doesn't make sense to me, then I want my God to make perfect sense to me and all that he does." Well, we don't know how Romans 11 ends, verse 33. His ways are not... We can't trace them out "they're unsearchable" from him and through him and to him are all things. This is a God who is much bigger than... It's not like figuring out how to put together a, you know, a thing I bought at Costco. All right. That was a bad illustration.

**Question:** This isn't really a personal question, but for some reason, I just want to know. What should a believer who has just come to faith in Christ do in a situation where he or she is married to an unbeliever?

**Pastor Mike:** Yeah, well, you should start by reading. First Corinthians Chapter 7 and say you should not leave your spouse. You should do your best to be an influence on your spouse, to bring your spouse to Christ. And as the Bible says there, if you think, well, "She's not a Christian," if it's a she and you're a he, then not a Christian, "I'm just going to leave because I need to be married to a Christian and be equally yoked as Second Corinthians 6 says. It says, "For how do you know if you'll be the tool to save this person or not?" So you hang in there and it's difficult. You're going to be in a marriage that's going to be a little bit more challenging than maybe a good Christian marriage where both are saved and pulling in the same direction. But that's your cross. That's the challenge. And you're going to do your best to be salt and light in that home. And if there are kids involved, which Paul starts to talk about in First Corinthians 7, I mean, just think of the damage you do in dividing that home, saying, "Well, I'm not married to a Christian so I'm going to break this home up." Don't do that. And that's the instruction of the Apostle Paul. Do not leave. Right? If they want to leave and they say, I can't handle you being a Christian, well, then the Bible says, then let them go. But you ought to do what you can because God is pro-marriage even if the marriage in the situation that you find yourself in is I'm a new Christian and my spouse is not. A lot of testimonies in this room and in our church, the people that come to faith in Christ as the first Christian in the relationship and in time the other one comes to Christ, and often it's through the ministry of the saved person. So don't run out on it is the instruction of Scripture.

**Question:** I'm around a lot of Catholic people, coworkers, family, etc., etc. and naturally we lock heads a little bit. But one of the questions that's posed to me is how can we trust the Protestant movement if you're so fractured, Methodists, Baptists, evangelicals? I mean, it's kind of a fair question and I'm not exactly sure how to answer that question.

**Pastor Mike:** Well, here's how I would frame it. Like picture a triangle, I'm thinking of this off the cuff, so bear with me, at the top for Catholics is the Roman Catholic Church, which says we are an authority which is two parts, the tradition of this church and the Magisterium, the official statements of this church. And of course, the Bible. And then within it, you have all these people, right? With my twisted arthritic fingers. All these people. And if you look at all these people, like look way down here, people who say, I'm a Roman Catholic, but you find, well, they don't believe in purgatory or they don't believe in the veneration of Mary or they don't believe in this or that or something that happened in church tradition that you're





supposed to believe. You've got, for instance, the official statement of the Roman Catholic Church, the catechism of the Catholic Church from the 1990s, here is the official statement. And I can talk to ten Catholics today and find people who are spread all over this triangle that don't affirm all the things that the Catholics would say in Rome at the Vatican, you should believe this. You should believe in purgatory. You should believe in penance. You should believe in confession. You should believe that the Eucharist brings you spiritual life. And you should believe that sprinkling your kid makes them a child of God. And I can find Catholics who don't believe in it. And they would say, well, they're bad Catholics. Right? They should be there. Well, invert it and put it on its head and say, over here are the Protestants. The foundation for Protestantism is we believe in Scripture alone is our authority. Okay? Now, within Protestantism you find people who are going to disagree about things that the Bible says. There is disagreement there. But in my mind, it's not a lot different, because Catholics have a huge spread. Go online. I mean, I do it all the time and I look at the Catholic sites and the Catholic apologists and depending on what they think of this papal bull or that encyclical or, you know, what happened at this council, there are all kinds of views that they have. I mean, there are people in Southern California who are pre-Vatican II Catholics. They believe in the Latin mass and they believe this is the right way to do it. And they can look at church tradition and say, well, that's why we do this and those modern Catholics down there in Dana Point, well, those guys are messed up. Okay. The same thing happens in Protestantism. But Protestantism has one source of truth, the 66 books of the Bible and that's our truth. And so we're saying, yeah, not everyone sees every passage the same. And sometimes there's debate. And I'm telling you, what makes it better to be a Protestant is we have one source of authority at the bottom of this triangle. Do you like my illustrations for it? Up here what you have is three. And the Catholics are saying by their catechism that we have tradition of the church, the Magisterium of the church and the Bible. So they have three sources of authority which are all equal. And as they say, and I quoted it not too long ago in a morning service, not one can stand without the other. So you can't have one of them. And Protestants say, "No, there is one and it's just one." So yeah, do the Presbyterians agree with all the Baptists and the Baptists agree with all the, you know, the Evangelical Free and the Lutherans? No, there's debate. I get it. But at least we're all debating one thing as opposed to, I remember sitting at a table at the Triton College in Illinois. I had like, I had I think six, it may have been four, but it seemed like 12 Catholic priests all dressed in their Catholic garb. And they were there. I was the one 21-year-old, you know, on fire, young evangelical evangelists on the campus there. And I'm talking to them about Catholic doctrine, you know, purgatory, for instance. Right? When I talk about purgatory with Catholic priests face-to-face, I can sit there and argue from the Bible and they'll say, "Well, it doesn't matter what you're telling me from the Bible, because the church says..." Right? At that point, I'm in a hard position. Right? Because you've just now split this source of authority into three pieces. And at least in Protestantism, the value of Protestantism, even though they'll say, "Oh, you guys are all fractured because you don't have a Vatican, you don't have a pope, you know, you're not unified." I'm thinking, dude, have you talked to Catholics in America? They're not unified. Right? Think about it. They're not... I mean, Joe Biden claims to be a Catholic. Right? And he's out there pitching a lot for that... Right? He's the number one abortion advocate in our country. Well, go talk to a priest. Depending on what priest you talk to he's going to say yes. Like, you know, Pelosi, they won't even serve her communion. Well, you know, you can go to Rome and get communion served





to you. It's just all over the map. And all I'm telling you is, yeah, you can blame us for being fractured, but I only have one source of authority. We're all going to study the Bible. You guys have got to study three competing sets of things: the Bible, the Magisterium, and the tradition of the church. And whether it's Mary, whether it's purgatory, whether it's praying to saints, whether it's the Eucharist, whether it's baptism, all these things, I got to go to three different places. And that to me is an inferior position to saying Scripture alone. That's what I would say.

**Question:** So, the two first people named, Adam and Eve, ate a forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge to learn good from evil as their lust for knowledge. And when they disobeyed everything on this planet died. And they were forbidden from re-entering the Garden of Eden due to the devil's plot. And when everything was reconstructed, which leads to a new plan, is everything now all part of God's plan or both God's and the devil's plan?

Yeah. If I understand your question right, both. And I say that only because Second Corinthians 4:4 clearly says that Satan has been given a domain here on the fallen earth. Right? He's called the god of this world, right? The god of this world. Jesus put it this way at least twice. "He is the ruler of this world." So in that sense, the fallen world, post-Garden, post curse of Genesis 3, you're right, is under a domain, here's another passage I'll give you, of Satan, First John Chapter 5. Right? "We are of God but the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." So in a sense, you're right that I would say, yes, there is a domain and a plan that's being worked out that is under Satan's jurisdiction. Right? He has some authority there. But I would say God has made it clear he's got a higher jurisdiction. And as Martin Luther used to say, that Satan with his plan is on a leash and God has a leash and only lets him function within his, you know, like I see these people walking their dogs, sometimes they look like little rats, little tiny dogs sometimes. But they have these little... And I know, I'm not a dog person. Sorry, I'm not a cat person either. Trust me, I'm not a cat person. (audience laughs) But they have these leashes that, you know, you probably have one that goes like super long. Right? I see the little dog, you know, minutes before I see the owner. And, you know, I guess there's a little thing on it, you can stop it or whatever. I don't know how it all works, you know. But if God is like that, there are times when Satan is on a leash and like he can't touch Job in Job Chapter 1. And then they have that board meeting and he goes, "Oh, Job only loves you because you're good to him." And God says, "Fine, I'll let the leash out. You can go after him. Just don't kill him." Right? So that takes place because God is letting the ruler of this world wreak a little more havoc in an area that he's allowing to take place. So we believe that, yes, it is God's plan and God is working. Here's another passage, Ephesians Chapter 1, "Everything after the counsel of his will." So God has an overarching plan. But is it his plan to have rapes and murders and thievery going on in Orange County? No, not his plan at all. Right? His revealed plan is clear. You shouldn't rape anybody, you shouldn't steal anything, no unwholesome words should come out of your mouth. And yet that's happening all over Orange County today. But because God has allowed the ruler of this world to exercise dominion even though he's on a leash. So yes and no, if I understand your question. Does that help? Okay, good.

**Question:** Good morning, sir. When will there be an ocean in the new earth?

**Pastor Mike:** No. (groans and laughter from the audience) But if you like surfing, maybe the lake will have some really big waves. I don't know. Yeah. I mean, there'll be no night. There'll be no sea. I mean, there are things that I think, "Wow, you know, I really like sitting out on a porch at night and stars and it's going to be terrible. There's no night there." And I'm just saying, okay, you paid a lot of money to get an ocean view and there's not going to be an ocean there. This is the way it's described. And unless there's a reason for me not to take it literally, then I won't take it literally. But it seems to be that's a literal description of the place. So I'm stuck with the fact that the lights are always going to be on. I'm supposing I can have, you know, blackout curtains in my, you know, my house, and yet I'm not going to be tired, First Corinthians 15. My body's going to be filled with "Dunamis," with power. Right? And so now I'm always going to be energized, never going to feel like I'm just exhausted, I got to take a nap. So, yeah, whatever it is that we like, there's plenty of water there. Think about it. It says in the book of Revelation from the Throne there's coming this crystal river. And on both sides we have the trees that are bearing fruit for the therapeutic, that's the Greek word, the therapy of the nation, the healing of nations. There's something sustaining about the food there, even like in the Garden. Right? The Tree of Life is there. But yeah, but if you're an ocean lover, I'm sure God will let you have your little seascape up in your house if you miss it. But you'll have plenty of things to do. If you ask will there be water sports there, I would yes? Yeah. But I mean it'll be fresh water. That's just my thing. All right. One more, at least.

**Question:** I was just going to have a question and then it was sort of related to what this young lady over here said about Jesus, you know, or having totally changed. And I think this agrees with what you were saying is that when I became a new Christian, I was convicted by the Holy Spirit of my sin. I repented of my sin and I asked Jesus and I wanted Jesus to become Lord of my life to the best of my ability. And sometimes it's worked better than others, because I hold on to so much. I think that's agreeing with what you're saying. I felt confidence in that experience because it matches the Scripture. It just says, you know, if you repent and let Lord Jesus be Lord of your life and you become a new creation. And I actually had people saying, "Well, what's wrong with Bill?" They were asking each other, "What's wrong with Bill?" And I go, "Well, nothing was wrong with Bill." I think that's what you were saying is people can have a change, but it has to match what we understand from the Scripture. And so what we do here is we start with the Scripture and work our way out instead of the other way. And then my question is sort of related to that is I heard it put a way as the "accept Jesus" heresy where there seem to be churches out there that basically say, accept Jesus, accept the salvation that Jesus wants to give to you. And there seem to be churches or groups that say that you can accept Jesus without anything else. So basically you accept salvation without conviction, repentance and those things.

**Pastor Mike:** And if you talk to people who see that language and downplay it, which I would be in that group as well, it's only because the verb is such a weak word to represent all that repentance and faith are. Repentance and faith are what God is calling everyone to do. And he's the one who empowers us and gifts us and drives us to do it. But to accept him, the closest language we're going to have to that is in John Chapter 1, when it says, you know, "He came to his own, but his own received him not. But whoever did receive him, he gave



them the power to become children of God." Even that as a national descriptor of the Messiah of Israel coming to Jerusalem. And as Jesus said when it was happening, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How many times I would have gathered you in my arms like a hen gathers her chicks, but you wouldn't have it." So he comes to his own, presents himself as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament and they didn't have it. And in that case the verb is used, "receive." But that's not the common word in Scripture to describe an individual's response to Christ. But as John loves to do, he says, "Well, anyone who does." And the point is, this is not just a national thing for Israel. It's for all the Gentiles, slave or barbarian, Scythian, freeman, it doesn't matter. If you respond rightly to Christ. Well, I don't think he's trying to pack in that word "receive" something that leads us to think, "Oh, you just kind of, you know, just accept this offer you got." And as I like to say, salvation is not an offer, it's a command. And what is it a command to do? It's a command to repent of your sins and put your trust in Christ. And that is something that is much more whole life. It's much more Luke 14 where it's a sense of surrendering to the King, than it is to say receive, receive or accept, accept. There's nothing wrong with the word "receive" it's used, but I do think we need to understand the context. The context has to do with the national offer of the Kingdom to Israel and Jesus being the Messiah. And yet other nations are receiving Christ. And I don't mean that as nationally we can receive Christ, but individually they're embracing it. You won't hear from this platform very often, except I just said the phrase, "receiving Christ" because it's very rarely used. It's only used there in First John Chapter 1. And it's used in a context that is not like describing what is usually described when it's here. If you got to respond to Christ, repent and believe, and that's not even a great translation of the word "Pisteuo," which means to trust him. You can use it in a weaker way and James tries to differentiate, the demons believe but believe in the sense they just have an acknowledgment of the truth. In that sense do demons accept the theology? Yeah, they do. Well, that's not possibly what John could have meant in First John 1, receive, "whoever receives him to them he gave the power to become children of God." I mean, obviously receiving the information or receiving the sense of, yeah, all of this is true, which is what a lot of people mean by "receive Christ." And in that sense, if you mean it that way, it is heresy. That's not true. And that's why I would prefer and I think we talk around here a lot more often about the verbs that are used repeatedly for the response that you're supposed to have to the gospel, and that is repenting of your sins, turning from your sin, and trusting in Christ. Right? Putting faith in Christ. And I do think that's a better set of terms than using one passage's word for an individual when it's describing a larger context.

**Pastor Mike:** All right. We're out of time, but I hope there is something out of this that you can take home and chew on. And if nothing else it can spur you on to, I hope, just digging deeper on whatever topic that we dealt with or something you heard you didn't agree with and we can all study together, study God's word. And as Paul said of the Bereans, we want to search the Scriptures daily, dig deeper. And that's one of the prayers I have for this every year. All right. Thanks for doing it. We'll wait till next year to do it again. Some people said, "Oh, it's so good. I wish you did it more often." Well, I could do it more often if I didn't do the other stuff I'm doing the rest of the year. Right? And I think of that because it's so much easier. It's like, "Ah, yes, I didn't have to prep today, just come to church." But I'd have nothing to answer your questions with if we weren't digging in the Scripture every week as we do. We got some great weeks coming up, by the way, at Compass and don't miss a weekend if you're here in town and not



traveling somewhere, it's going to be a great rest of July and August. And I look forward to unfolding some of that good stuff in a couple of guest speakers that you won't want to miss. We got J. Warner Wallace coming. I don't know if you know who he is. Yeah, he's going to be doing some training for our ministries and then he's going to be preaching in the main service here. He's that L.A. detective, he's got a great apologetic ministry right now and we got a couple of others coming and I think will bless you on the weekends.

**Pastor Mike:** All right. Is that Eric Zeller walking into the back of our church? What's happening? (audience applauds) You know, it's so funny, I was visiting a church in San Diego and I walked in and they did that to me. And I thought, how embarrassing, how rude. You know, they pointed me out like, "Is that Mike Fabarez in the back of church? Come on up here." And the guy made me sit in the front, but I just did it to Eric. So touché. It was Jonathan Rourke who did that to me. Packed house, Sunday morning and he made me sit in the front row. Have you guys been here the whole service? Ah, I missed it. Good to see you guys. The Zellers are over in Dubai. I actually mentioned Dubai last night in our Q&A. You weren't here for that? No. Anyway, say hello to the Zellers. They do a great work. One of our missionaries over in the United Arab Emirates and doing a great ministry there. So great to see you. Did you get up and leave and come back just so I could notice you there? (audience laughing) That's awesome. So see our VIP here and greet him and thank him for his work. Let me pray for you and I'll let you go.

**Pastor Mike:** God, we are grateful for our church. Thank you for our hunger for your word. We want to crave it as your word says, as Peter wrote, like newborn babies, this word that was preached to us. We want to crave more of that. As Hebrews 5 says, we want to move from our milk ingestion to more meat. We'd like to chew on the truth of your word and leave the elementary principles and build on that foundation. So, God, I pray that even this weekend that we do this in all three services might be a catalyst for that. Help us to be increasingly with our nose in your word and less time doing frivolous things that don't build our faith up, don't strengthen us. Let us spend good time fellowshiping together even before we run to our cars, just to have that sense of spurring one another on to love and good deeds. Thank you, God, so much for all that you're doing among us. Pray for our teens out there at Revival this week. Make it a great week for all the teams of people going out to serve and spend their vacation time to volunteer to make that happen. I pray you bless them and encourage them and make them real fruitful this week. Thanks for just your love and grace toward us. We appreciate it, God, and want to appreciate it even more.

In Jesus name. Amen.