



Q&A 2023 – Part 2

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike Well, as you've been told it is our annual question and answer weekend. A chance for you to ask questions about the Bible, about the Christian life, about application of the Scriptures, about something that's plagued you that's related somehow to Christianity. We got three microphones running around the auditorium. So it's a free-for-all. It's unscripted. And if you have a sincere question we want to answer it. So flag down one of the pastors, one of the people with microphones. Yeah, we've got three pastors here with microphones and we will jump right into it and see where this takes us. You never know.

Question First, I want to say how blessed we are to have you and how much we appreciate you.

Pastor Mike It's very kind of you.

Question So I've been around here a long time and I've never heard this subject discussed and I'm curious. How do Christians deal with birth control and artificial insemination?

Pastor Mike Right. Yeah, that is a new question in Church history. Right? Because for generations pastors didn't get that question asked. We don't want to abortifacient product of any form of family planning or birth control. We don't want to create human life and then destroy some of that life to try and accomplish the pregnancy that we want. There are so many issues of taking one step away from what is part of the natural process of bearing children that every step away from that natural process complicates the matter. Actually, we have a task force among our pastors right now, a subset of them, working on kind of rethinking even the traditional pill that has three methods of preventing pregnancy, which usually is preventing they say ovulation, thickening of the uterine wall so that there's no implantation, and such chemical response that it becomes a spermicide in part. I mean, that's an oversimplification, but if the pill is taken appropriately, you still have a whatever the percentage is 4 to 7% failure rate, which then the logic is and we have to dig deeper into this as it's becoming an increasing discussion among Christians. It's always considered you take the pill that's it's clearly going to prevent conception because it's preventing ovulation. Well, sometimes, obviously it does not. And if there are three ways in which they say that this takes place, well, then what happens if that's assuming all three of these fail? Sperm does not get killed in the process, the uterine wall does not reject the implantation and ovulation clearly takes place. Well, what if ovulation takes place and conception takes place, but implantation doesn't take place well then the pill becomes an abortifacient means of reproduction. So we're digging deeper into that because that was not, I would say, standard pastoral theology throughout the modern era. We know the pill comes with a lot of other complications and many people have trouble with that. That's kind of been the go-to because we're not Catholics and Catholics have a different view on this. And yet it seems that Protestants may in time, conservative evangelical Protestants, start finding more correspondence with Catholics. Catholics in part, have a problem with their theology and their magisterium, their doctrinal position on this, because part of their logic in the way that they state that there should be no



interference with the process of natural conception is that the logic and argument is about function. And to me, just like Jesus gave up the function of his reproductive organs for the sake of his ministry, which is unique. But then he says to his followers, you should do the same if you're able to. And of course, Paul exalts singleness. Well, that's a forgoing of the function of male genitalia in that sense. And all of that's fine because there's a higher purpose for the sake of the kingdom and that's what Paul's advocating. The same can be true for having children. At some point you can say for the sake of other compelling, godly reasons, we're going to limit the number of children we have. How you limit it becomes the issue in reproduction in trying to prevent it, family planning. So those are two different things. Obviously, IVF and in vitro and all the things that we're trying to do. Surrogate parenting, all of that is trying to have children. And I do think there's a desperation in trying to have children that goes back to the book of Genesis where anything and everything is tried, including, you know, here's my maidservant, have a baby with her. Yeah. I just think we need to be careful about the desperation that will lead us to a couple of levels removed from natural reproduction that usually ethically complicate things. And there are lots of questions about it. Depends on what we're talking about. In IVF, you know, there are issues of how many embryos are you going to create, how many are you going to implant, what are you going to do with the others? And of course, we have people in our church, you know, the snowflake adoption where they take pre-frozen embryos from other people and adopt them. So there's some give and take in this in that sometimes we have a good outcome. But the world doesn't care about any of that, they're just trying to have children and, you know, they will create as many embryos as possible and freeze and get rid of others if they get what they want, which is a baby. So of course we would say anything post-conception... Here's the reason why. If you don't assume, which scientifically we must assume, that life begins, human life begins at conception. All the pieces, all the, you know, everything is there, the design is there, the conception is there. If you don't assume that life begins at that point and is worthy of protection, then you have to define it at some other point by performance or by function and that just is a horrible place to be. Even as the Supreme Court backed *Roe v Wade* in the day, you know, started to create this trimester thinking was all based on arbitrary numbers. And, you know, people say, well, is there viability outside of the mother, you know, would there be viability of this pre-born life? There are a million arguments that if you drive them to the logical extreme, they don't work. Any baby, even that's three months old is not viable unless there's intervention from human beings. So, yeah, I would just say and you got me with a really deep question out of the gate, obviously it's got me stumbling and bumbling here a bit, but I would say you need to definitely... I would recommend this: if you're part of our church, a highly committed participant here, I would seek pastoral counsel before you go down the pathway of doing anything to try and have a baby that stretches beyond, you know... When you go to your fertility doctor and he has all of these plans, it would be smart for you to have some discussion with our pastoral staff because there's a whole ethical range of issues and every process has different problems. That's been going on since the technology began, it hasn't been an issue in the church in the past. Children are a blessing from God. The issue to prevent them, the issue to have them, both of them, when we start getting technology, can create a lot of ethical problems. So thanks for that hard question that we started to throw out. (audience laughing) Maybe that's the reason you've never heard it discussed, but there's more on that. But anyway, yeah.



Question Hi Pastor Mike, I thank you for this and hopefully this is an easier question.

Pastor Mike Thank you. But that's alright. No we want the hard questions too. It's just usually I warm up before we get to the hard ones.

Question Very appropriate that my biblical Greek instructor... So it has to do with language. I don't know why this has been on my mind, but maybe just every YouTube I see it's been Tower of Babel this and Tower of Babel that. And so I'm thinking, does Scripture reveal or have anything to say about what language in the New Kingdom will be? I mean, I don't know why that question was on my mind.

Pastor Mike Yeah, yeah. No, that's been asked many times. Yeah. And that's a good question. And we don't know. We don't know. And of course Israel in its sanctified ethnocentricity thinks about Hebrew as the eternal language. And since I didn't do as well in studying my Hebrew as I did my Greek, I'm hoping that's not the case. But no. The point, of course, is whatever was pre-Babel was not understood after Babel. This was a miraculous event to scatter the people just like took place in a microcosm in Jerusalem when the Church was gathering, when they were supposed to scatter, scatter, persecution, scatter the Church in the book of Acts as we've studied. And so it is that God says, I'm going to do this by confusing language, which was very effective. So what was it pre and what is it post? What is it at the end? I don't know. And it wouldn't surprise me if we had, you know, multilingual realities because we certainly continue with the ethnic distinctions. There won't be prejudice. There won't be, you know, issues of envy or class or caste concerns in the kingdom. But perhaps we'll have various languages but we can only speculate. So I don't know. Yeah, probably not English. I don't know. We'll see.

Question There's a well-known story of William Carey when he wanted to be a missionary to India a couple of centuries ago. And he was standing before the mission board and he was stating his desire to go be a missionary. And one of the gentlemen said to him, "Young man, if God wants to save the heathen he'll do it without your help." Well, we know how that story turned out. But anyway, we know that God has invited us into the salvation issue in praying for, well, unbelievers, but praying for the believers reaching the unbelievers. And we can certainly pray for the unbeliever's salvation. But my question is this as we're getting into Ephesians and predestination in our men's Bible study. How does that kind of play out? God's sovereignty from before the foundation of the world, including people in the kingdom and our prayers. And I say that I don't have a problem with praying because God told us that's all I need to know. But just in your way of thinking, how have you worked out that whole process of trying to put those two together, maybe in an encouraging way to keep us just well encouraged about continuing to pray, even though God did it a long, long time ago?

Pastor Mike No, I understand it. In that Northamptonshire meeting where the young William Carey responded by just going and doing it, he did it in obedience to the command to reach people with the gospel. And I would say, just like you said, I don't have a problem with prayer, which we're all and God is very happy to hear. We need to continue to do what God told us to

do. And here's what he said. "Ask and you will receive," right? The reality of an "effectual prayer of a righteous man accomplishing much," is the way that that's laid out to us as an imperative and an instruction. We then in our theology say, well, wait a minute, now God is a God, even if you don't have a high view of God's sovereignty, at least you'd say, well God knows everything. God knows what's going to happen. I go beyond that as you should. We've looked at Ephesians, talking about Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 11, "God works everything after the counsel of his will." So we understand God has a plan and it is a creative plan, and it's working that plan out. And then you think, well, okay, how can that be? If I can choose what I have for lunch today, or in this case, why would I ask God to do something if he's already mapped this out? And that's just a standard question that is always asked. And I always would say this is that God normally not only decrees and appoints the ends of the matter, like would Christ be crucified on Passover in A.D. 33, would that happen? Well, I hope so. God just kind of was hoping it would happen. No, according to the predetermined plan of God that happened. Yeah, but those guys made those decisions as the Sanhedrin met, they made those decisions. Were they robots? Are we fatalists? No, they made free decisions. But those free decisions are all part of God's plan. God was working out a plan. How those two work together is the age-old question of my human responsibility and decision making volitional choices and God's predetermined sovereign plan. And those are laid side by side in Scripture. As J.I. Packer says in his book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. And we don't blush at saying this is how God says this works. The question is when prayer, if I'm supposed to ask and receive, if God is a God who says, ask me and I'll respond, then I got to ask, well, how does this work? If I'm thinking with my theological hat on that I'm asking for things that he's already determined or he's already decreed or he's already working out? Well, it's just like every other decision of my life. The decisions of my life that I'm making are real decisions. Those real decisions I have to recognize they're not just God looking forward to see what would happen, but God is working through the circumstances to accomplish his will. Let me put it this way. To pray, I'm supposed to approach this as ask God and God is going to respond. That's how this is presented to me. Well, there are a lot of examples where God is asked for something and it doesn't happen. And it's including godly people like Paul praying for the thorn in the flesh to go away. And it doesn't go away. And you start to think, well, okay, how does this work then? Very selectively it seems that if you ask, then God responds, right? If you ask according to his will. Okay. Well, there's the big caveat. If it's not his will it's not going to happen, then why am I asking? Well, here's what I learned about prayer in Scripture. We're not only called to ask, Matthew Chapter 6, I am called to, James Chapter 4, I'm called to examine my motives. If I'm not getting, I need to look at my motives. "You ask and you don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, you might spend it on your pleasures." That's James Chapter 4. So if I'm supposed to pray, I'm supposed to pray and then I'm supposed to say, well, wait a minute, why am I praying? So I'm supposed to examine my motives. So God is ordained not only the ends, but the means and the means is prayer, but it's prayer in light of my motives. And then I'm also told two chapters earlier in that book, three chapters early, Chapter 1, I'm told to ask for wisdom and God will give it. The example of Paul asking for something to go away. He's sick. He wants to be fixed. He prays for God to fix this illness. It doesn't happen. He asks three times. He, I'm sure, examines his motives. That's the godly thing to do, he asks, I'm sure, for wisdom, because that's the godly appointed means, it's godly praying, asking motives, wisdom. And in all of that, then he concludes this: it's God's

will for me to be sick, and I need to look for how wisdom would appoint this roadblock for my personal desire to grow my ministry, which, of course it did. Humility, God's grace is sufficient. I'll glory, therefore, in my weakness, which is another way to say I'll glory in God not answering this prayer. So what is that? This is God's will that Paul is sick, right? This is God's decreed will. His prayer is not going to change that. But what prayer did is it changed Paul by having him question his motives, by having him seek wisdom and coming to a place where God now did what he wanted to do in Paul. And so I guess that's the longer answer to the short, pithy answer is that oftentimes prayer changes me to pray differently, changes me in terms of character, changes me in terms of looking at circumstances. And even aligning myself with God. Right? God is a God who's looking at the world to quote Genesis 6, "grieved in his heart" over the sin. I'm praying for sinners to be saved, and I'm grieving like Jesus did in Matthew 9, "Like sheep without a shepherd." Look at them. They go on and on. His heart is breaking, it's the Greek word "splanchnizomai," he feels it in his gut. And so here is this sense of me being more godly when I pray for lost people that still continue and persist in their ungodliness. So prayer becomes an avenue through which I'm walking in the path of God's counsel and will. Now, if you got a better answer than that, as Don Carson says in his book on the topic, well, then you just got to make sure you're including all the biblical data. And that's why I think good theologians have always said, here's what we do with this. We have an antinomy. That's how it's described, and that's good. That's not a paradox, but an antinomy. These are two seemingly contradictory truths that parallel in Scripture, which is we are making decisions, making decisions about how to pray, making decisions about what to have for lunch. God is a God who works everything after the counsel of his will. My freedom and my choices in terms of my choices are not completely free because I'm certainly a fallen person and I have limitations. I can't choose when to be born. I can't choose to touch the moon today. Lots of things that limit my choices. But within that function of what it is to live as a human being with volition, it all is going to work according to God's plan, whether that's the Sanhedrin or the Romans beating Jesus and whipping him and nailing him to a cross which they're fully culpable and responsible for. That's the fullness of their freedom to choose those things, but also God working out his plan. And that's the mastery of a God who's got a bigger toolbox than we do. And when you say, "I don't like that, I want to understand his ways." I would just go back to Isaiah. "His ways are higher than your ways and his thoughts are not your thoughts." People complain, "I don't like the mystery. I want to understand everything." Well, OK, yeah. Who's God's counselor? Who's ever been his counselor? You're not going to be the first one. So we have to deal with this. And if you say, "Well, that's why I don't like Christianity." You want to take Christianity and God and theism and move that off the table, I guarantee you, whatever you bring in next, naturalism or... You have all kinds of problems in trying to reconcile things that fit nicely into your mind. And so it is included with what I believe is reality. And the reality is that there is a God. He's created us and he is a God who's fully in charge. He is not deity if he's not fully in charge and sovereign. So we continue to pray and we pray, asking earnestly, we pray without losing heart, we pray without losing heart doesn't mean I keep praying even if God says no? Sometimes I'm questioning my motives, I'm seeking wisdom, and God ends up changing me or aligning my broken heart with his or my joy with his. God changes us in our praying. But here's the deal. Even if you have the theological struggle because you're such a scholar with your theological hat on all the time, which I'm not saying you are, but if that's where you're here, I'm just saying, hey, God said to



do it and you could not pray too much. So keep praying and you pray and you seek and you understand, just like you would ask a person to do something for you at work as you get sweaty palms and you ask, I would like you to do this, do this extra project, work overtime, take this promotion, do this business trip and you're concerned how they're going to respond. Well, you live out your life in real time. Live it out. Live it out in real time even in your prayer life. Ask God. Ask wholeheartedly. Ask sincerely and watch what God does. Always checking your motives and asking for wisdom. That's a long-winded answer. Sorry, but hopefully that helps.

Question I do have sweaty palms. Okay, just so you know, asking the question. When everybody is on the bus, you said the rapture. What happens? I have a lot of friends and family who don't know the Lord. Can you expound upon what's going to happen after that?

Pastor Mike Yeah. Well, if I understand the Bible correctly, there's going to be the time of Jacob's Trouble, the 70th week of Daniel. Something the Bible calls the Great Tribulation. Matthew 24, the greatest tribulation ever on the earth, never has been or never will be. And that terrible time is going to take place. Starting in Revelation 6, there's going to be a series of things that God is doing to express his wrath on the earth. So it's going to be a terrible time. Now, you say you're concerned about your friends and family. God is concerned about everyone that you do and do not know. So I know we feel on a personal affront to think, well, if we get raptured and taken out of this thing today, even if you're not, you know, a pre-millennial, you know, preacher relational guy, you still think at some point the clock's going to run out, this thing's going to be over. Historic pre-mill, whatever you are, Christ is going to come back. And at that particular point opportunities cease. And I say that for those who have not responded to the gospel, as Paul said to the Thessalonians, they chose to believe the lie. And therefore those who have been exposed to the gospel, at least I can make this case, we don't hold out hope for them in this next period of time. But there's lots of salvation in the tribulation. Lots of salvation I think that corresponds to the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, which is that there's going to be the gospel that goes out all over the world. I think every person is going to hear, and I think there's going to be, as it says in the book of Revelation, a kind of exponential evangelistic effort, particularly to those who have not heard the gospel in that generation. And you can have a lot of people saved from every tongue, tribe and nation as it says in the book of Revelation. And of course, it starts with the 144,000 Jews in Revelation Chapter 7 and they're doing God's work, servant work. They're called the servants of the Lord. They're special. They're vocal. They go all over the planet, or at least they're active in reaching all kinds of people. So there is salvation. But I wouldn't say, well, if you know my loved one who's heard the gospel from me endlessly and I leave the planet tomorrow and this stuff is actually going to happen in Revelation 6 through 19 for seven years, I'm sure that they'll get it in round two because this will be a big emphasis that they'll say, "Oh, everything my crazy brother said is true." I **lost** a ton of hope. I think the concern we should have is that now the door of opportunity is open. That's the urgency of the present age of the evangelistic mission. And if you say, "Well, that's not right, I'm bummed out about the people that I love aren't going to be there." Well, God has an intimate relationship with every person he's created. And I just want to say you drive past a lot of people on the way to church who are lost and you whistle while you go to church. And I'm just saying it's interesting how

we're just concerned about other people I know, people who I share some genetic material with. And I want to expand my heart a little bit and be like Jesus in Matthew 9, because I already quoted the passage sitting on a hill going look at the masses of people. And I'm not saying you can't have your favorites among God's created beings. Of course you can. But I am saying it doesn't mean like if I just had my whole family saved and let's go, right? Because every other person in the auditorium doesn't have all their family saved. So there's going to be the lost people. And that's a reality we need to grapple with. And all the way back to the book of Genesis, you know, "Won't the judge of all the earth do right?" God's going to do right and no one's going to be shaking their fists at God, saying, you're doing stuff that people don't deserve, as the angels say as they pour out the bowls at the end of the book of Revelation. They deserve it. And I think when they go to the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20, no one's going to shake their fist at God, like Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, right? He's not there going, "I don't deserve to be here. This is terrible. This is not right." He's in agony, the Bible says. But then he says, "Can you send someone to tell my brothers so they don't come here?" His concern isn't that this is unjust that I'm here. I think it'll be crystal clear for the lost after this life is over. They don't get it in the tribulational period because they're shaking their fist at God in Revelation 6, saying, you know, why are you doing this to us? And yet they recognize it's the wrath of God, the wrath of the Lamb has come. So, yeah, that's what's going to happen and it's a sad fact, but that should just redouble our efforts in evangelism. And it's part of why in the Northamptonshire pastors meeting, when William Carey just to quote this historic story, he cared about the lost who he didn't know. And I think a lot of the smug old pastors in that meeting who said "if the Lord wants the heathen reached, he's going to reach him without you." I think there is a big problem of an uncaring lack of splagchnizoma, a lack of compassion for people who are lost. And if we had that raised and elevated in our church, I guarantee you this: we'd have more people going into ministry. We'd have more people being sent out to plant churches. We'd have more people going to foreign mission fields trying to reach people for the gospel. So we need that. And I think our forefathers had it a lot more than we do. But all of our technology, all of our creature comforts, all the things that we've got that make us really comfortable, have lessened our concern for the lost. And now all we're concerned about is just a few people who we know. And I'm saying that's a good place to start, but we need that concern for everyone you pass on the streets.

Question My question is out of Job and I hope it's an easy answer. Satan was allowed to touch Job and take all his possessions, his children and his health. Yet he left his wife. And I'm wondering, what does that say about his wife? And that's the first part of my question.

Pastor Mike Well, but you do know the story. Let me interject in the first part of your question. When she says to him, "when he holds his integrity, you should just curse God and die." So I think we know why, you know, if Satan is torturing Job, he leaves his wife, because...

Question I thought a man might answer that question like that. I wasn't sure.

Pastor Mike Well, I could be a woman and answer it that way, because that's how the text reads. She's not a blessing to him. Neither are his three male friends. He says, "Miserable comforters are you all." So this is an equal-gender slam. They're all a curse to him.



Question And then the second question is, in the second part of his life, God blessed him and he had ten more kids. Same wife?

Pastor Mike Yeah. But he had a great man cave in the big house. (audience laughing) Yeah. Yeah. There's hope for wives who are all bitter. There's no indication that it's a new wife. I would assume it's the same wife. The wife doesn't have a lot of airplay other than at the beginning when she is not very helpful.

Question Kind of expanding on time specifically, end times. But God obviously created the universe, which would I assume means he created time. So, expanding on it a little bit in your words but also specifically, does that mean that when we all pass at the same time? Even like so Abraham Lincoln died hundreds of years ago. And I'm going to die, hopefully let's say 50, 60 years from now. Does that mean that we wake up during the rapture at the same exact time meaning that we just gain the knowledge of prior history?

Pastor Mike No. But that is a popular theory. But popular, it is not the majority theory, because the majority understands the Scripture pretty clearly that to be absent from the body, Second Corinthians 5, is to be present with the Lord. And it's not the doctrine of soul sleep is not biblically grounded. So yeah. Time, I don't want us to think just because I die time no longer exists, even though I am open to say my reality is very altered when I'm apart from the body. But I'm designed to be enmeshed in the body and I will be reconnected with the body at the resurrection. So I do think that intermediate time that Paul calls the nakedness, I don't want to be naked, my temporal house is going to be destroyed. That's my body. I long for my eternal dwelling that's made from God, which is his new body, based on the old body and from the material of the old body, whatever's left of it. But that nakedness period, we call it the intermediate state. There is some question about what that's like. But to go to the place where you go, which I've heard many times, isn't it just then we don't have a sense of time, I'm going to say no. And I say no with biblical authority because in the book of Revelation during the period of time when the people who are slain during the Tribulation are under the altar, they're crying out to God, right? How long is this going to continue? So they have a sense of time as disembodied spirits. And so I know that time and I would say even for angels, I think time is a reality, although I understand time and space, you know, go together. We understand something about the time. Which is freaky the more you study time. Time is a strange concept and God is beyond that. And that is unique. God is what we call transcendent in that there's something so ontologically different about the nature of God, he is hard to understand, but I think angelic beings and human beings, particularly enmeshed in physical material, certainly have an experience with time that's very unique. And yet I do think angels and disembodied spirits have a sense of time-based on biblical examples in Scripture. But no, I don't think when I die, it's like immediately I'm waking up at the time of the Rapture. I know the euphemism of sleep makes it seem that way because a body in repose or a body in the grave looks like they're sleeping or whatever. But that's not the reality because death is defined as the spirit leaving the body. And the spirit then I got to look at in Scripture, how does that function? Does that function with a sense of time and the answer in Scripture is yes. So I will have a sense of time and I will even perhaps with those who were slain in the Tribulation, say, how long, O,



Lord, till this is done. Let's get on with the kingdom, which I think we should all have an impulse to want.

Question So were people in the Old Testament born of the Spirit? And also, how does somebody get the Spirit to enter into them to become born again?

Pastor Mike Yeah, well you've got to understand it is a spatial analogy. If I said the Spirit is in me, that's an analogous way to talk about the closeness of a relationship because, like, what part is he in? If you say, "Well all parts." Well then if I really get really big and portly, will I have more of the Spirit in me? Right? And I feel bad for those short people because they don't have that much Spirit. That's not the reality. It's a sense of even as Jesus says, "the Spirit is with you, but then he'll be in you." The distinction of the preposition moving from "with" to "in" is speaking about something that is intimate, something that is close, which again is relational. You can say, "I've grown really close to this friend of mine. We do a lot together. We're close now." Well, close is a spatial analogy, right? You're saying relationally kind of copacetic on the same page, harmonious. So you and the Spirit are supposed to be so harmonious that it can be analogized with you're just so close now. Close that he's in you. The reason you sit here today as a Christian that you may be genuinely indwelt by the Spirit as the Bible uses that analogous word and not feel all that is because you're still left with this unredeemed body that has, as Peter said, "it's passions and desires waging war against your soul." So your soul is embattled, your soul is under attack, and your soul now is supposed to have a new roommate. Well, a lot of times it feels like the odd couple. Like I got a roommate who wants me to pick up all the time and I want to leave my laundry on the floor. It's a hard relationship. That's why Galatians says the Spirit and the flesh they battle each other. And my spirit even can't do what it wants, as the Spirit wants to have this joyful, harmonious, close relationship with me. Close, harmonious relationship with me because I'm struggling with my flesh. So if you think of it that way, you think, okay, that's a relationship that can be distinguished from Old Testament saints. The Old Testament saints are not unknown for the Spirit to be even described in Hebrew as being in them, but not as a normal course of discussion. When David sins, Psalm 51, he says, "Take not your Spirit from me." Right? It certainly hearkens back to when Saul had the Spirit removed from him as the king. So there is a sense in which even the Spirit within someone is described of the artisans who built the furniture in the tabernacle. So I do know this: the Spirit was actively involved in people's lives in the Old Testament. But there was something unique speaking of Ephesians Chapter 1, by the time you get to verse 14, you have this picture of the Holy Spirit saying now "he's the seal and the promise and the guarantee of your inheritance." So there's something about the permanence of the harmonious connection with the third person of the Godhead that is supposed to convict me of sin and righteousness and judgment, be the comforter, the "Paráklētos" strengthening me and that should be something that keeps me moving in the direction as it's put in Ezekiel of walking and keeping his precepts. Right? "I will move them to keep my decrees, my ordinances, my laws." So that's an internal motivation that says, though it's my desire now. And that's how Paul describes it. The old man, new man. So my life is so redone, we called it regeneration, which is really synonymous, at least with the concept of the Spirit now is so harmonious and tight with me, tight is a spatial analogy, that I'm wanting to do the God stuff. So, when we just throw out the question and I get it because I use that



language too, the Bible uses the language of the Spirit in you, with those in the Old Testament, in some of them. In us, though, if we're Christians, what does that mean? It doesn't mean he's filling, you know, your thoracic cavity. Right? It means that the third person of the Godhead has taken a special interest in you. So special that it's distinguished from either the fleeting in and out of the connection of the Old Testament Spirit with a person, or something that would in any way make me think that he's not, like, completely about me as one of his own. Does that kind of help a little bit? There's more to it? Good. Get him a microphone because you asked that question for a particular reason. Are you more concerned with the Old Testament distinction and how they were saved?

Question Well, I believe that the definition of a Christian is somebody who's born of the Spirit.

Pastor Mike Correct, absolutely.

Question When Jesus is talking to Nicodemus he says to Nicodemus that you need to be born of the Spirit. And he says, "You're a teacher of the law and you do not know these things?" Like, kind of criticizes Nicodemus for not knowing that this is the way it's always been.

Pastor Mike Well, not the way it's always been "that you don't know these things" because it was the promise of the New Covenant to be born by the Spirit. And the Spirit would be placed within you, and that you would be cleansed of your sin, cleansed with water. So the idea is not baptism, but it's the analogy of water cleaning something and the analogy of the Spirit being so tight with you that he's in you. So, yes, he criticizes him not because that's the way it's always been. He criticizes him because he doesn't realize, as he says later, "Don't you know the times?" Can't you distinguish and understand that the fulfillment of God's promise is now in the New Covenant age have come upon you, that the Kingdom of God is here and with you? So the criticism is that he is a scholar of the Old Testament and should know that this was a promise that was coming. And if you look at all the promises of the New Covenant about the change of the relationship of the Spirit with the individual, it's always coming. It's coming. Now it's arrived. So I don't think he's criticizing it because that's the way it's always been.

Question OK, but like, let's say Abraham, Abraham had faith. Right? How did faith get from God to Abraham without the Spirit?

Pastor Mike The Spirit is active in creation from the beginning of creation, "the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the earth," Genesis Chapter 1 verse 2. So the Spirit has been involved. The question is, what distinguishes Old Testament salvation from New Testament salvation under the rubric or the heading of pneumatology of the Spirit? And I'm going to say it's the way the description is of the Spirit's relationship with us, which is speaking to things like Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 14, that there is a "seal and a guarantee." There are like nine analogies in Scripture of how the Spirit relates to the New Testament believer, and they have shades in every one of them of a distinction, even though it's not absent in the Old Testament. So salvation, God can save Abraham by, as it says in Romans 4, by imputing to him



righteousness when he has faith. The activity of faith in Abraham, I'm going to grant you, you're right. I believe that's generated in the gift of the Spirit. But does that mean that he has the same description of how the Spirit functioned in his life as we do? I think there are a lot more parallels, but you can't say that if you look at the promises of Jeremiah 31 or Ezekiel 36 and 34, you're going to find there is a distinction between the Spirit...

Question And so what you're saying is God didn't start regenerating people until Pentecost.

Pastor Mike I'm going to say that's the terminology. But again, I just think the flaw in what you've said is that you're looking at Jesus telling Nicodemus you're a teacher of the law and you don't know this. When you say that "knowing" is an indicative, ongoing reality, but it's not about the fact that this is the way it's always been. He should know that the New Covenant promises were analogized by the Spirit indwelling and water cleansing you from transgression. Those are the things he should have known and everyone was looking forward to that. The Old Testament saints were looking for when is the time of that New Covenant reality. And I do think there is a distinction there. So I'm going to say the Spirit regeneration is New Testament language. It's New Covenant language, even though the Spirit's active, involved, granting faith. I agree with all that. I've lectured on the functions of the Spirit in the Old Testament, and I might recommend that. And if we're disagreeing on that, that's fine, we're brothers, we can disagree on this. But at least listen to my lecture. You'll find it on pastormike.com on the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. And what I'm doing to most people in the room is saying there's way more correspondence than you would think. But to say it's identical correspondence, I'm going to go, no. I'm stuck with the promise of the New Covenant being distinct, but not distinct in the sense that there's no correspondence. There are lots of correspondence. There's more continuity than we think. I agree with that.

Question So my question is about female pastors. So we were going to a church for a while that had a female pastor. And I was wondering about your view on that based on some of the New Testament, but also how that correlates today. I guess, my question is there some... is it like the name "pastor"? Because there are so many authors and people speaking on social media, women, or is it like, I guess just the distinctions there about female pastors?

Pastor Mike That's a great question. And here's what you need to make the distinction because the arguments being made by a lot of high-profile people are that the function of pastoring, which is a word from an agrarian society, which means "to shepherd." Right? Because that is obviously seen in both men and women and can be identified as a function of spiritual care that because men and women can do that, well, then, of course, women can be pastors. It's like asking this question. Psalm 23:1 "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." Well, the word shepherd is pastor. Okay? So the Lord is my pastor. If I ask is God the Father a pastor? Right? If you said yes, well, when is he going to preach? Does he go to the board meetings? Right? He doesn't. Right? Because he's not a pastor if you're talking about how the word pastor is used for the office within the church. And there is where you need to make the distinction because the guys who are out there on Twitter, it's all about conflating that. And once you conflate that, you've lost it. Every mother I know shepherds her children. I get it, right? Books are written shepherding a child's heart. Shepherding is a great word. It's a great

analogy. But if I ask the question, who are the "Poimén," "Episkopos" "Presbuteros" for the church and who's qualified to do that? And those three Greek words that translate poimén, the word "shepherd," episkopos, is "overseer" and presbuteros is "elder," those are all used synonymously of the ruling class, if you want to call it that, of the church. Episkopos certainly gives us that sense of like a senator. They're making decisions for the congregation. I'm going to say, of course, that's gender specific. Only men are qualified to do that because that's what the requirements are for the office of pastor. Now, does that mean women don't teach? Women don't shepherd, women don't serve. Women don't minister. Of course not. Even because the word "Diakonos," the word that is used for the deacons is used for females and for males in the New Testament. And they're doing a lot of ministry work. We have women on our staff. Not that that's an argument about what God thinks, but we have that because we see in Scripture the clarity of the important roles of women in ministry. So do we believe in women in ministry? Absolutely we do. Do we believe that women can be on the episkopos poimén or presbuteros ruling office of the church? The answer is no. And that's just because that is what God says and he roots that all in creation. Just like there are no men mothers. Right? And I know that's a controversial statement these days, but there are no men mothers. And I don't care what the world says. There aren't any. Well you say, "That's exclusive." It is exclusive. It is. Right? So is the ultimate decision-making group of people who make decisions for a local body who are called "overseers," old translation "bishops, elders or pastors," all the same group. "Can you have women on that, too? We want equal representation." Well, this isn't a democracy. And you didn't write the Constitution and this is God's thing. And he said men should lead in that. And here's what I often say jokingly, half-jokingly, if it weren't exclusively directed for men, we would have no men on that team because it just that's the problem of sin. We don't want that responsibility, certainly for, you know, the headaches that come with it and the pay or whatever. Women are more spiritually attuned generally speaking, I can say that from years of experience. You call a Bible study for women, you get twice as many as you will for men. There's just a lot of reason to be like, let's just let the women lead this thing. And the bottom line is that God says no. Just like in the Garden, Man should have stepped up and said, "You're not eating that. That should not happen." He failed in his leadership position. God said I'm going to redeem a bunch of people, change their hearts and indwell them with the Spirit in a special way in the New Covenant, men should lead this. And Paul says that's the way it's always been. First Corinthians 11, First Timothy Chapter 2. I can't get around the fact that this is what the Bible says, and I'll die on that hill because that's what the Bible teaches and we're not going to have any women in that class, that office of pastor in our church, so long as I'm alive and have any say in it. Yeah. But the women who teach in our women's Bible study teach to more people every week than the men who teach in our men's Bible study. Because there are almost twice as many people that come to that. So it's not a competition so don't clap at that. But if it were a competition, we'd be down several points. But yeah, and by the way, I don't know, there is something about readjusting things the way God had designed in the Garden that I hope is affirming both to men and to women. And there are a lot of things we do here just to try and emphasize that, you know, I hope it's a comforting thing. And if you're a feminist or whatever and think, "Ah it should be..." I can't help you with that. I mean, I can maybe help you with that. We need some counseling to get you through some of that. But I just think there's something that should resonate with regenerate men and women that this is a good thing.



Men need to step up and lead in the church. Men need to lead in the home. And with an epidemic of passive men, Nancy Pearcey's latest book. Speaking of... Here's something. Learning from a great scholar. She's great. I mean, she studied with Frances Schaeffer at L'Abri. Her latest book, I think it's her latest one, is *The Toxic War on Masculinity*. It's a great book and I think, you know... Here and again, we're learning from a very scholarly woman who knows her stuff, right? She was the one who really made Francis Schaeffer's theology accessible to people. Brilliant. And she's making a great statement about the toxic war on masculinity. And a lot of books are starting to come out and help with that because the pendulum's gone way too far. And I hope a lot of people are saying this is nuts. I hope we're saying that about a lot of things. All right.

Question Yeah. So my question kind of revolves around salvation. And specifically Romans 9 is something that I've been wrestling with for a couple of weeks here. So hoping I can get my question across clearly. It's about God's sovereignty so I'll just focus on verse 18. I guess what I've been wrestling with is also Chapter 10, and I'll kind of touch on that. So verse 18. "So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills," right? So he's talking about Pharaoh, how he hardens Pharaoh's heart previously for the purpose of, you know, achieving his plan. Right? But then Romans Chapter 10 verse 9, you know, we know that with regard to salvation, "Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." And so this has kind of just played a domino effect on some other parts of Scripture for me, like First Corinthians 5, where right in the beginning Paul talks about the man who's living an immoral life saying, "You should cast this man out, hand him over to Satan." So I'm trying to understand then with regards to, you know, salvation does God play a part in hardening people's hearts who cannot be saved? And then with the example, like in First Corinthians 5, like, why would they cast that man out instead of work on him?

Pastor Mike "Hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his soul might be saved." In other words, there's always a positive objective in the human call to do good either ecclesiastically in the church, which is a church discipline issue there, First Corinthians 5, or in evangelism. We want everyone to get saved. Right? So that's our concern. Now you look at passages about like in Exodus, God hardening Pharaoh's heart, then issues as an example in Romans 9 and you're like, what's going on here? Well, the key is the word that you used in the verse that you quoted, which I think is the key. And that is its mercy. Mercy is what is given to people who are doing wrong and they don't get what they deserve. And so the default in Romans, by the time we get to Chapter 10, it should be well-established that the problem is sin that is willfully engaged in. In Chapter 3 you get a long list of Old Testament quotes. Look at all the sin. What is sin? Sin is something that deserves death. Sin deserves punishment. He goes through this in dealing with the miracle of imputation in Chapter 4. He talks about the law of sin and death, Chapter 6, Chapter 8. Here's how we see that verse. Why does God like harden this person's heart? And why does he then grant this person the gift? And part of that answer is the misreading of the sense that people are neutral. That's a part of the answer. The bigger problem for American Christians is understanding who God is, right? We're thinking, how dare he? And as C.S. Lewis put it we're putting God in the dock, in the witness box, saying, now we got to question you about this as Job did. And if you ask Job

should we be approaching God's justice that way? Like, why are you not saving everyone? Why aren't you giving mercy to everyone? It's like saying why didn't you marry everyone, right? Why are you so selective about who you marry? It's like, okay, here's the deal. There's something about you as mini made in the image of God functioning in a way that allows you some sovereignty over your corner of the world, including, as I use in the book I wrote, a popular book on theodicy on how to understand the problem of suffering in light of God's justice is... I have a little piece of property in Laguna Hills. I make it sound like it's an estate. It's a house in a tract, in a tract of homes. But I got a rat problem because I got a big hedge and so I got rats. And that's not good because I live with two women who don't like them. Uh, but let's say I had a boy who did like them and I decided to capture one of them, clean him up, give him his shots, feed him, bring him inside, and then let my son kind of play with him as he does his homework. That'd be my prerogative. But I choose to kill most of them with poison and traps. But everyone would say, "Oh, I'm not going to that church. That pastor kills some rats and loves other rats." You'd say well they're rats because you as a human being would look at rats and go, rats! You'd go ughh, rats. Okay? God is a God who looks at humanity and here is sin, Second Corinthians 5, hostility. Here are people who are an affront to his holiness. Right? So all of them deserve to be condemned. God shows mercy to some and he'll show mercy to whom he shows mercy. And that is his prerogative. So there's one side of it, which is God gets to do what he wants to with his creation. Just like you're living here. Do you have a car? Do you have a car.? Do you have a home? Do you have air conditioning in your home? Okay. I can take you to another part of the world. Indra Jaya. and Papua New Guinea. Get a guy your age and he's got none of that. And he's sweating and he's going out and hunting for hogs. You're sitting there comfortable, your shirts got washed in the washing machine. How is that fair? And we start talking about fairness as though it's justice. Fairness is not justice. The justice of God would be that you would be cast into outer darkness because you're a sinner. And the guy in Indra Jaya would be cast in outer darkness because he's a sinner. But instead, God shows mercy even in the terms of what he does materially for you. And even if we're all born a thousand years ago our lives would be radically different. So God does what he chooses to do. He sets appointed times to quote Acts 17. He decides what he chooses to do with his material blessings. And all of that takes place. Now, here's the problem with even saying that in a hyper-jealous culture, we can't handle that on a theoretical level. That's just, "How could God do that? Everyone should be riding in a nice car, and as long as we have cars, that'd be great. But be good if we have, like, Porsches and Ferraris. God so just do that for everybody." And the reality is that's not how God operates. God is free to do with his gifts whatever he wants, which means if he wants to cripple you with a disease, fine. God can do whatever he wants. And yet we don't want to give him that prerogative. Well, ask Job if it's a good idea to demand that God give you a certain kind of lifestyle. Job is going to say no because he learned from Chapters 38 to 42 that's not how it operates, particularly in Chapter 39. God is a God who chooses to do whatever he wants. Job never gets an answer to why is it like this. And we are basically saying the same thing when it comes to looking at Romans 9 and say why did he get to show mercy on these? Now, the one complicating problem that I do have to address is hardening his heart. That's an active hardening of Pharaoh's heart. How does that work? Well go back to the context, which I would hope certainly the Jewish contingent of that church would know well the story, and that is that Pharaoh is described repeatedly as hardening his own heart. And then there are passages alternately of God



hardening his heart. God hardens his heart. Right? Pharaoh has already volitionally hardened his heart and continues to harden his heart and God continues to double down on the hardness of his heart so that he can make a point which is ultimately writing Scripture, because the punishment, the ten plagues established the miraculous signs that God then establishes a prophet named Moses to write the books of the Bible that we still read, we still memorize, we still meditate on, we still recite. This is God putting his Bible together. And he does it in part because he's got a hard-hearted guy who chooses to harden his heart. God is going to keep hardening his heart so we can get to this. I'm working a good through the difficulty of a passage that we struggle with, that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. I have no problem with the fact that God hardened his heart. God could harden all of our hearts. He's got the right to it because he's God. That's the second-tier issue we don't deal with very well as Americans because we've had a lot of things handed to us on a silver platter. But I would say, yeah, God did harden Pharaoh's heart, but it wasn't like Pharaoh was neutral and wanted to serve God, he's looking for Moses, "let's think about God together, can we pray together today?" And then God says, "Oh, no. He's hardened his heart, I hate Christians," you know. That's not how it happened. He was a sinner just like everybody else, but a particularly bad sinner because of his position. I think that exacerbated his sin. He hardened his heart purposely, hardened heart. He didn't like righteousness. And God said, great, in that path I'm going to affirm you in that path so I can get this thing done called the Ten Plagues and the writing of Scripture and the Exodus, I guess if you want to look at it historically, but something that endures on is the writing of the text of Scripture. So yeah, it's a great passage to grapple with. When you said you have grappled with it for a couple of weeks. Well, I've been grappling with it for a long time, and the Church has been grappling with the passage for decades. And I would say we've got to get to the place where we embrace the fact that God is God and that we are, by default, worthy of exclusion from God's gifts, not just material gifts, but eternal grace. A book I might recommend, we've had him here before, Tom Schreiner has edited a book called Still Sovereign. It's a compilation of authors in our bookstore, but that'll help you kind of wrestle with that. And back earlier, the prayer question and other things that we've touched on in Packer's book. I don't know if I said clearly the title Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. Those two books might be a help to kind of work through some of the difficulties of God's sovereign free choices.

Question So in Second Thessalonians we see that the man of lawlessness is being restrained. And from what I've read, he's being restrained by the Holy Spirit. So does this restraining pertain to unbelievers? Can you please talk about if they're being restrained from being as bad as they could be by the Holy Spirit?

Pastor Mike Yeah. And you're just using the man of lawlessness as by way of example. Right? If he's being restrained which there's both a "he" and an "it" in that passage. So I think it's the Church and he is the Spirit, the Spirit through the Church. But that's a macro illustration of, yeah, you're right. Man of lawlessness is restrained because of God's Spirit's work within the Church and the influence of Christians in the world because the Spirit's at work through them. So now the question is, is he restraining evil within the average non-Christian? And I would say yes. Only, I mean, I can think of examples, but the ultimate observation would be just like we see plenty of people who are not as bad as they could be.



Right? We think, well, how does that happen? Well, the restraint of the Holy Spirit is at work sometimes through very external realities like Romans 13. The government is there to restrain evil and some people because of a conscience, Romans Chapter 2, they have a conscience, they don't want punishment either from God or some civil authority so they restrain their behavior. That's the problem with the whole modern approach to letting people just do what they want to do. If you want everyone to do what's right in their own eyes we will have the book of Judges, which, if you read it, 330 years of horrific things. And we see it on our news feeds all the time. But yes, God's Spirit restrains evil. But I would say most of that restraint either is through the imprint of conscience that is still not seared or calloused enough to be ineffectual or its external means that God uses through secular government, law enforcement, judicial system, and the Church. And when the Church is gone, I think the man of lawlessness appears and I do think there's a lot of sin that takes place that wouldn't otherwise take place, because the restraining work of the Spirit through the Church is out of the way. Does that answer your question?

Question So you're saying he uses it so the Church, the government and the conscience are being utilized by the Holy Spirit?

Pastor Mike Well, the Holy Spirit's work of writing the law of God on the conscience of the person, Romans Chapter 2, I mean, that's a work that's complete. That's programming that he's already done. But the active work of the existence that some of our laws in the California penal code still say if you beat your wife you should go to jail as a felon. Those things should make people think twice about doing sinful things other than your conscience tells you you should never do that. So, yes, the external work and that's the work of the Spirit. And I say that because the passage says, do you not know that "he doesn't bear the sword for nothing." This is God's instrument. He's a minister of God. The governmental sharp sword is the minister of God. So God is connected with the work of the government enforcing law. And that is a restraint no matter what liberals want to say enforcing the law is a restraint because, you know, there's punishment that goes with infraction. Yeah.

Question My question is on bunnies and eggs.

Pastor Mike Bunnies don't lay eggs. I don't think.

Question But Jesus referred to, you know, he would be in the center of the earth for three days, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days. Easter, we understand, I understand that it's a pagan holiday. And when Jesus was crucified, he was crucified on the high Sabbath. And with my math, it doesn't calculate that he rose on Easter, which is Sunday. It doesn't calculate three days and three nights. Basically, the way I look at it is he was resurrected on Saturday. And yes, the tomb was, you know, they came to the tomb and it was on early Sunday morning. But the calculation from high Sabbath... Can you explain that?

Pastor Mike Yeah. The high Sabbath was not Saturday. It was the Friday because it was Passover. And here's the problem about the three days and three nights. I get that. There are two things and I've written articles on this, that there are plenty of Judaic examples in the Old



Testament of that terminology being described where mathematically you look at the context, you can see we're dealing with when something happens on the third day this is the Jewish idiomatic way of describing that period of time. So it's not unusual. But then people say, "Well, I'm a Westerner, I'm not Eastern, I'm not Israeli. I want this to be three days and three nights." And they would go back to the fact that Jesus was crucified on the Passover. The Passover was the culmination of God's plagues of the Old Testament and the sacrificial lamb. The penultimate plague was darkness. Darkness was in the book of Exodus when that plague came was a darkness, as it's put by Moses, that could be felt. So it's a dark darkness. And this darkness took place actually at the crucifixion, where God says he miraculously brought darkness on the land when Jesus died. So if you want to count darkness as a night, because it certainly was an artificially produced night, you got night, you got day because that ended when he died. You got night, you got day, you got night, you got day. You got three days and three nights. It's not a night of a rotation of the earth. But even in that I think it works for the Easterner because I've got plenty of Eastern examples, Middle Eastern examples, of how that idiom describes if anything happens on the third day, that's three days, which includes day and night in their calculation. Just like the Sabbath is really starting on Friday. And you say, "Well, the Sabbath is Saturday." No, Sabbath starts at sunset on Friday. And you say, "Well, that doesn't compute." Well, it computes in an Eastern mind. It doesn't compute in a Western mind. And so I'm going to say to the Westerner as I answer the question and I have, that I think we have darkness. We got night, we got day, we got night, we got day, we got night, we got day. We got three days and three nights. It's just that the first night was one that I think reflected the ninth plague, which was darkness that fell over the earth when he died. That's my answer. Yeah, I know there are different views on it. If this is all new to you like the timing of the resurrection, Harold Hoehner wrote a book called Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, which lays out that view. That's one view, and I get it. It's not new to me. And there are other views, and I'm going to buy the view that I think the Church has traditionally held because of I think good biblical reasons that he died on Friday and was resurrected on Sunday. Even though I know that, you know, we can be brothers and disagree on that. But yeah, there are a few views on that. Okay?

Question Would the Church or the leaders of the Church be held accountable if it did... There are so many Scriptures that say, over 50, that teach us to teach in truth. Would the Church, the leaders be held accountable for teaching something that wasn't...

Pastor Mike The truth about the day of Christ's crucifixion?

Question The only thing this generation, this wicked and evil generation, gets is this sign that the Son of Man will be in the tomb...

Pastor Mike Sign of Jonah. Right. But know when he said that, and I would say, listen, we want truth about that passage, and the passage was, "We want a sign." Right? We want a sign. We want a sign. And Jesus says only, "An evil and unbelieving generation demands a sign." The only sign you're going to get, this is not a statement about Church history or Church theology, this is a statement about you guys are demanding something which Paul recapitulates in First Corinthians Chapter 1. You should not be wanting God to do a magic



trick for you. That's not what we base our faith on. And he says, the only sign you're going to get is the sign that's inevitable on the prophetic plan, and that is, I'm going to die and rise again which is going to be the ultimate apologetic sign that what I'm telling you is the truth. But if the concern is wasn't the truth as I define it in your mind I would think is this one thing that I think Christians don't quite get. And if you're talking either about the Sabbath, I'm not sure what the axe is, but I'd like to know, are you concerned about the Sabbath as a weekly observance?

Question No, it's just the holiday itself, Easter.

Pastor Mike Easter. Okay. Yeah.

Question It should be celebrated on...

Pastor Mike The wrong day in your mind. Do you think we should celebrate it on Saturday?

Question Not Easter. The resurrection of Christ.

Pastor Mike Right. So you think we should celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Saturday? Okay. But you say if it's about truth, if that's the truth, then every church should be doing that. And are you saying if God is going to punish all the churches that don't celebrate Easter on Saturday, is that what you would recommend? But you're asking the question, do I think that?

Question Yes.

Pastor Mike No. I don't think that because I don't think it's right for one. I would disagree as a student of the Bible, I don't think that's the right answer. And I think Harold Hoehner's book would help on trying to say, here are all the views about the timing of Christ's death and the timing of Christ's resurrection. There are views that are different. I get that. A lot of it's based on statements like that, that the sign of Jonah, three days and three nights, and it's not the most extensive treatment of it, but it's a good readable treatment of it. And I'm just in the view that he presents and I think he buys it, I don't know, it's pretty objective work, is that Christ died on Friday and rose on Sunday. So Easter and eggs and all of that, whatever. Yeah, we don't do that here, but we celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Sunday because I'm convinced. As a matter of fact, another book I might recommend is Don Carson's book, D.A. Carson's book From Sabbath to Lord's Day, which is really talking about a lot of the practices. And it's a compilation of a lot of scholars, but they're dealing with all of this. And ultimately it's predicated on the fact that Jesus rose on Sunday and they'll make the case in the book. So I would say if I were you and I would be open to the research and the data that may convince you that Christ maybe was resurrected on Sunday. Is that a deal breaker for our fellowship? No. But the good news is we have a Saturday Easter service at our church. (audience laughing) So come to that. Yeah. All right.



Question Yes. Some friends were having a conversation about demonic possession. And I don't know if that still occurs in this age. And also, the big thing was can a Christian who is sealed with the Holy Spirit be possessed?

Pastor Mike Yeah. What do you mean by possessed?

Question Like the demonic possession where they're, you know, I don't know, spitting out thing. That the Bible describes as possession.

Pastor Mike Yeah, I know what you're saying. I'm just trying to get to the words. Because here's the thing. The word "possession" is a word that we use when the word itself that describes these demoniacs is the Greek word "Daimonizomai." Daimonizomai means "Daimon", the "demon." "Izomai" is that he is passively acting in the person. So if I ask the question with just a grammatical sense of what these things mean, could a person be a passive instrument of a demon? I'm going to say, yeah! As a matter of fact, I can use some very germane issues in Church politics when Paul says to Timothy, hey, there are people in your church who are held captive by Satan to do his will. Well, there's kind of it's seemingly there not that they're not willing participants in the sin, but Satan is utilizing instruments in the church to cause problems. So yes, I believe in that. Now, in your mind, that doesn't rise to the exorcist level of head-spinning and projectile vomit. But I would say the dramatic outbreak in Christ's coming and you got to look at it from an angelic and demonic perspective, the culmination of all the work of God coming to save humanity, to save his people, is all coming to bear on this thing like Christ's incarnation, right? Matthew 4, Satan himself is going to be there to try and derail all this. Right? The outbreak of demonic work in an extravagant, dramatic way. I get it. I don't think we see that kind of dramatic head spinning, you know, thing as often. I'm not saying it's absent, but I am saying why... There was something about the dramatic showing of demonic work in the book of Acts and in the gospels, I'm not saying that it's absent, I'm not a cessationist when it comes to demonic activity. But I am saying the demonic activity that's most effective usually doesn't include something you'd make a movie about. And so all of that's very active. I do some lecturing on the work of demons in the world today. Also at pastormike.com, lookup demons, and two or three lectures on what the Bible has to say about how the continuing work of demons work in the world. And I think that a lot of it is not going to, you know, Ozzy Osborne won't be interested in it because it's just, you know, it's all the bad stuff that most people shrug their shoulders at. In a Christian, that was your other question. I think a Christian is constantly tempted. A Christian is constantly harassed. A Christian is constantly targeted by the enemy, First Peter 5. So there are plenty of examples of that. Can they be taken over as a vessel of a demon? I would say no. And again, I go to First John Chapter 4, "For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." I think there's something about my relationship with God, the regeneration, the indwelling of the Spirit, to use those analogies that probably make that a non-possibility. Yeah. Great. All right.

Pastor Mike Stand up and we'll pray together and I'll let you go. Thanks for our time and my prayer going in with my team this morning was that we would have something in this morning that would encourage you or bless you or motivate you and I pray that that happened. Let me



just pray for us as we dismiss. God, thanks for this team. Thanks for this group. Thanks for all you're doing in our lives individually that certainly are indicative of some of the questions that surface. And we're thankful for the challenge of living the Christian life in a non-Christian world. We're grateful for the challenge of just all the passages that you give us, that you tell us that the glory of God to conceal a matter, it's the glory of kings to search it out. Thank you that you've made us students. We want to be better students. So continue to drive us back to your word to understand it well so that it might govern and guide our lives.

In Jesus name. Amen