



## Q&A 2023 – Part 3

Pastor Mike Fabarez

**Pastor Mike** Well, as you've been told, this is the weekend for our unscripted question and answer. And so we have a few people here with microphones, and we just want to get started on whatever your questions might be about the Bible, about the Christian life, about God, about doctrine, about practical theology, about applying something from Scripture, whatever it might be. So wave one of these guys down and we'll get the third session here open and ready to go.

**Question** So my question is about believing in the resurrection. I am from Japan and in Japan there is a debate about whether you need to believe in the resurrection to be saved. Group A does believe Jesus rose again, celebrates Easter and teaches about the resurrection. But they say it's enough to just believe that Jesus died for your sins. And Group B says no, you must believe in the resurrection to be saved according to First Corinthians Chapter 15 verses 3 and 4. So since then I've been watching closely how pastors here talk when they talk about how you are saved, you need to repent. But nobody had mentioned you need to believe in the resurrection. But it doesn't mean we don't believe in the resurrection, but you still believe in the resurrection. And those I know in the umbrella analogy, you mention the resurrection. So it's very important that we believe that. So my question is I'd like your comment on this debate. And the number two question is suppose there is somebody who believes in Jesus and believes he died for our sins, repent for their sins, but they don't believe in the resurrection. But it's difficult to imagine if you believe in Jesus, how come you don't believe in the resurrection? But if there is somebody and he dies, do you think he will go to heaven?

**Pastor Mike** Yeah. Well, I would echo Paul's argument in First Corinthians 15, which is what are you believing in Jesus for, right? If you're believing in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Right? The problem of sin is "the wages of sin is death," which is more than relational death, but physical death and Paul says if in this life only we've hoped in Christ we're to be pitied more than all men. So he discounts the whole of his teaching. Not only does he say the apostles are liars, we're all testifying but this didn't happen, but what is Christianity about? And I would say if you don't believe in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, I would wonder what do you think is going to happen to you? And if you think, well, this is all there is, then Paul is saying then you're shifting all of this to a present reality. Look at the Christian life. It's not better than the non-Christian life when it comes to hassles and persecution. So it makes no sense and Paul tries to make that point. And I would say the same to someone who is denying the resurrection, but I would probably see a lot of different problems with the theology, which is a lot of what we saw in the early 19th century with the ushering in of liberalism, where everyone kept shifting the focus to the here and now. I would wonder, like, what is the agenda of the Church who says, "we all here believe in Jesus, but we don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus." And the whole point of the resurrection is he's the first fruits of our own resurrection. So yeah, I think the resurrection is essential. I do mention it. The reason I mention it is more than just mention is because anything I deal with in my presentation of the gospel, I would love to hand the whole Bible over to someone and say

let's understand and know everything that's in this book. But I'm trying to put together the essentials, the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the atonement for our sins by Christ on the cross. So, yes, I believe it's essential. I don't think that it's without a possibility that someone may be so ignorant of the doctrine that they can't be saved without it and still saying I know I'm a sinner, I need forgiveness, my guilt is overwhelming me, I trust in Christ for forgiveness, and they haven't even really process the concept. And if someone said, "Do you think Jesus rose from the dead," they're like, "Oh, it's for foreign. I don't know. I don't believe that." It would be akin to what we see in the book of Acts when they believe parts of the gospel, and they didn't believe all of it. And it's a unique situation in a transitional period in Church history. But if someone says, "Yes, I've looked at the claim of the resurrection and I discount it," then I'd say, yeah, then you're on perilous ground. If you know that the Bible presents Jesus as raised from the dead and you choose to say no to it, I'm sure that there are motives that are contrary to a kind of faith that puts our trust in Christ to take care of the sin problem and the consequence of the sin problem. So it becomes, in my mind, theologically catastrophic at that point. But it's not as though, you know, some young person puts his trust in Christ. He hadn't even thought through that topic. Okay, maybe. Someone's faith may be better than their theology in that case, but someone who's been confronted with the biblical theology and rejects it, I'm thinking you're rejecting a real cornerstone of truth about Christ and who he is. And then I would ask Paul's question, what is this about? For what reason? If he didn't rise from the dead our faith is futile. It's in vain. Our preaching is for nothing. We're liars. And for what good is the Christian message if it's just about kind of cleaning up our behavior in this life? We're to be pitied more than all men. So yeah, I'm in the camp, obviously, and you know this I'm sure, you've been around long enough to know. I mean, I can't believe she's got to believe in the resurrection of Christ. If you reject it I think there are probably some real problems with what you understand faith in Christ to mean.

**Question** Good morning. This is a follow-up to last night's question on cremation versus burial. What are your thoughts on organ donation?

**Pastor Mike** Well, organ donation if it's attached to the fact that you're going to be cremated if you donate certain organs in the process, if that's necessarily tied to organ donation, I would say let us let other people donate their organs, I'm not going to donate my organs. People in my extended family giving a kidney to one another. That does not necessitate that you're going to be cremated. Not that it's a salvific issue, but yeah, I have no problem with you taking, you know, a part of your body for the good of someone else. In theory, there's no trouble with that. I have my own reservations for particular reasons with the organ market and all that's going on. It's much like when a hurricane hits, you know, part of the country and I think every non-Christian in the world is going to rush to help out of compassion. Just like today at the DMV, people will say I want to be an organ donor. Plenty of people will do that, it has nothing to do with theology. In my mind, I'm fine saying in my case, if you want me to be transparent, I'm not a donor and I'm not a donor not because I don't care about people. And yet I would really consider, if it weren't for so many kidney stones I've had, donating a kidney to someone I love. Right? Because yeah, it has nothing to do with my resurrection. I'm not going to get resurrected with one kidney. My DNA instructions call for two kidneys. And when God takes my instructions, takes out the errors and the problems and glorifies my body, I'm



going to have two kidneys. So yeah, I'm not opposed to it in theory. I would say I wouldn't do it if cremation is a necessary tie to it after my death. And I am a little concerned about the industry just in some of the exposés I've read locally. The Orange County Register did a series of articles two years ago on it. But that's neither here nor there. But yeah. Did that help?

**Question** As you know our world population is increasing so fast, but the Christian percentage is not increasing in the same proportion. What would you suggest we should do, the top three jobs to have our Christian population increasing much faster? Otherwise, as you know, we are in big trouble.

**Pastor Mike** You mean the conversion rate or the Christians having babies?

**Question** Both. We need both.

**Pastor Mike** Well, we do need that. And Christians should not buy the line of trying to reduce population by not having children, we should be having children. Be fruitful and multiply. If you can't, you can't. I understand that. But children should be the default position of Christian marriage. Secondly, I would say the top three things about the fact that we're not growing the Church in proportion to the population, I would say, number one, we need Matthew Chapter 9 concern for the lost, right? Jesus could look at people and say they're lost. They're like sheep without a shepherd. He cared for them, right? The Lord of the harvest, to thrust out workers. The word "send" in English is a weak translation of this great strong word "Ekballo" to thrust forth workers into the harvest field. So that's the second one to pray. We should have an increasing awareness of compassion in our own lives for lost people. We should be praying that more people would be engaged in evangelism. That's what Jesus said in Matthew 9. And because of that, when you pray for things like that, you end up looking in the mirror and going, I should be doing the same. So you end up praying for yourself in all that. And thirdly, we've just got to do it. You've got to get up off the couch and you got to talk about Christ. You need to be unashamed. So we need boldness to speak, right? We need prayer that'll end up smacking us in the face because we care about lost people. But it all is predicated on the fact that you got to have eyes for the harvest. That's what Jesus said in John 4, "Lift up your eyes, the fields are white for harvest." You got people who are lost that you drove past to get to church. You should care about lost people. Caring for lost people, praying and then just doing it. Great.

**Question** So we believe in the pre-Tribulation rapture here, right?

**Pastor Mike** Well, I do. Yes.

**Question** Okay. Well, you're the boss. So I read a lot of John Piper, and he believes the Rapture will happen at the second coming of Christ. And so I wonder how you would counter that.



**Pastor Mike** Yeah, well, I mean, good men disagree on this. Plenty of Christians don't have the same view on eschatology. Eschatology is necessarily wrapped in a part of Scripture, most of it at least, that we call apocalyptic genre. And it's the genre of New Testament communication and Old Testament communication that is steeped in symbolism and vision and things that make it difficult for us to be absolutely certain about things. Not that we shouldn't strive for certainty. And I want to be convinced of my position. And I'm avowed in my position. But I can't say to my close friends or the Church at large, I know I'm absolutely 100% right. But I do believe that the problem with a historic pre-millennium position of thinking about the Rapture at the end of the tribulational period is it seems as though the distinction between meeting the Lord in the air and having the Lord come and touch down on earth, the return of Christ, those are two separate events. And when you combine them together, you've got a big whoop-de-do of us being caught up to meet the Lord and coming down at the same time. And you can differentiate that. And there are arguments that try and describe all that. There is a rapture. When someone says, "Do you believe in the Rapture?" That's the wrong way to pose the question because you've got to believe in the Rapture. Everybody believes in the Rapture. The question is when is the Rapture taking place? The Church is going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. At what point? And a lot of good men, a lot of good people, a lot of good women theologians would say at the end of the Tribulation. They don't believe that the seven-year period called the time of Jacob's Trouble, the 70th week of Daniel, as Jesus said on Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, the greatest tribulation the world has ever seen has never been or never will see. That period of time was not the fall of Jerusalem in my book in 70 A.D. It was yet to come. We haven't seen it yet. And it's going to be bad. And it's all the things spelled out in Revelation Chapter 6 through Chapter 19. And I believe that plays a critical role in the promises regarding the Old Testament, fulfillment of the Old Testament promises that there's a 70th week, a seven-year period, a period of time that matches Daniel in my mind. It matches everything that has been said about the revival of Israel being saved. Zachariah, book of Revelation. The New Testament hints to it here and there, that the Church is going to be taken up, taken out of the way, just like there is no mention of the Church from Chapter 4 of Revelation to Chapter 19. Not that that's a, you know, a death knell to a post-Tribulation Rapture position, but I just think everything makes sense. And the accusations I get against it in that, you know, that didn't come around to the Plymouth Brethren and Darby and it's an old Johnny-come-lately view. If we were living in the fourth century and talked about terminology for the Trinity, you know, you could have the same argument about the Trinity. Right? It doesn't matter when it came. What matters is does it comport with biblical data. And I think it best comports with biblical data for me to look at God's plan for Israel. And I think there's a seven-year period left, the time of Jacob's Trouble, as it's described. And I think it's coming that the Church is not a part of because it's been decreed in Daniel Chapter 9 for your people, Daniel, the Jews, and "your holy city Jerusalem," which is the focal point of everything in Revelation 6 through 19. So I think it makes sense. I think it's what's holding back the Man of Lawlessness as Paul said. You haven't missed it because the Spirit of God within the Church there's a "him" and an "it" in that passage. The "him" is the Spirit, the "it" is the Church. And the Church is through the functioning of the Spirit withholding this period of time of the Man of Lawlessness, the Antichrist being revealed. So the Church is going to be taken out of the way. And Paul says, you know what's restraining him, because he taught them personally about eschatology, and we're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, I believe. And

then there's going to be a period of seven years. Everything in Revelation 6 through 19 is going to take place, and then we're going to come back with Christ, which is what Chapter 19 talks about. So, yeah, I mean, these are good people who have a different view on it, but I'm still convinced of my position, and a lot of it comes down to how you interpret texts of Scripture. And I, you know, I just don't like the argument. You could start with pre-millennialism like it wasn't around before, you know, recent times. Of course it was. That's why some positions are called historic pre-millennialism because we have pre-millennialism long before Darby and I do think as there are some books written about pre-Darby discussions about the tribulational period. I don't have the titles off the top of my head but the idea of, many I do but not that one, the idea of the pre-Tribulational Rapture, trust me, being a part of the camp, I get the attacks all the time. I might recommend a book Hinson wrote before he died called *Can We Still Believe in the Rapture?* And of course, when you say that that represents the pre-Tribulational position, because when they say, "Do you believe in the Rapture?" What they're asking is do you believe in a pre-Tribulational Rapture? And yeah, I still do. So I would just say to Piper he's definitely in good company in the camp of being a post-Tribulation or whatever, however he views it. The correspondence of Christ returning and the taking of the Church happen at the same time. I totally understand that a lot of people in that camp, that's fine. You can be in our church and believe that, that's fine, but that's not what our pastors hold to.

**Question** I had an eschatology question as well. So do you believe that the building of the Temple or rebuilding of the Temple is necessary for the end times? Sort of the middle period. In my mind, as I think about the sequence of events, if it's the Rapture that launches three and a half years of peace, then there's a desecration on the Temple Mount, followed by three and a half years of tribulation. In my mind, I think given the Rock of Omar right now is where the Temple needs to be built. There's going to be a war to recapture that area to then build the temple. So anyway, I just have general thoughts.

**Pastor Mike** And the mistake, I would say you're making in the positing of the question is that the Rapture does not begin the seven-year period, although we conflate the beginning of the tribulational period with the Rapture. What starts the tribulational period according to Scripture, is the making of a covenant of this world leader of peace with Israel. So technically, the seven years doesn't begin until that. There are no time indicators between the Rapture given to us and this covenant that's made. And some people say, well, this happens at the same time. Well, we don't know that. We don't know what the time interval is. So I think part of that mystery and again, I'm just assuming on God here, but part of that mystery is to allow us to continue the eminency of the return of Christ. I should believe that Christ could come back at any minute. And I shouldn't say well if the Temple's not built I still got time. Which, you're right, the Temple plays a key role in the tribulational period. So it's got to be there. And you're not moving the third most holy shrine in Islam just overnight. So, I mean, it could be overnight. It could be moved overnight. That's all I'll say on that. But the point is you're not going to construct the Temple overnight. So, yeah, how long will it take before the covenant of peace? Well there may be that the building process is part of that covenant that this world leader makes with Israel. But I would say I have some latitude in my theology to say I don't know exactly. They're not contemporaneous like in the moment that it happens, although I



don't see anything prophetically in between the two. So, yeah, there has to be a Temple built and it will be, I believe, on the Temple Mount, which is in the old days when they used to let non-Muslims into the shrine of the Dome of the Rock shrine. I've been in there, I've seen it. And I do believe that's exactly where the Holy of Holies was. And I do think that's the spot. There are some arguments that you could build a Temple adjacent to it because it really is not there. And a lot of discussion about that, and I don't think that's the case. So does that help that gap?

**Question** Good morning. I just lost my father this week, and to my greatest sorrow he died a nonbeliever. So to the best of my knowledge that was his state when he died. I, of course, shared the gospel with him and he always vehemently rejected it. Not only that he reject it, but he considered the followers of Christ to be deluded beings and somewhat crazy. And in his eyes that's what I was for even bringing this to him. So my question is the following. In the afterlife, will we remember conversations that we had here on earth? The best reference that I know of is the story of Lazarus and the rich man in which the rich man clearly remembered the existence of Lazarus and the need for his brothers still on earth to hear the truth and to maybe through some intervention to gain eternal salvation. But there is nothing, at least as far as I know, alluding to the fact that Lazarus had any kind of recollection of that. So when we go after this life, regardless of where we end up, whether in heaven or hell, will we recall, those of us in heaven and people in hell, the conversations that we had with those while we were still here on earth?

**Pastor Mike** First of all, obviously all of our condolences. And there was a certain kind of pain, obviously, in that kind of loss. So we're sorry to hear that and we feel with you through that. But I would say to answer your theological question, I'm going to answer it with a conditional statement. We will not remember them if they're an ongoing source of pain. And I do have a text for you in that regard because I think the Scripture is clear. Not only is God going to wipe away every tear, Revelation Chapter 20, but he is also, as it says, he's going to "create a new heaven, a new earth," and he talks about, you know, making all things new and the former things, to quote Isaiah, "will not come to mind." Now, the former things can't mean everything, right? But the contrast in the passage is the old order of things laden with sin and the new order of things, you're not going to constantly be looking back with sorrow on that. And I know that sorrow will be removed. Right? That's what the Bible teaches, not that we won't enter with some sorrow. I think that, you know, there will be tears for several reasons, including First Corinthians 13, our own evaluation. But no, that will not be a recurring memory if in fact it would lead to sorrow. But I would say you do need to change your reference point in the sense of what causes me sorrow now may not cause you sorrow then, because in First John Chapter 3, we're going to have the mind of Christ. We're going to see him and we're going to have the mind of Christ. Now, the thing about the mind of Christ is Christ has a kind of perspective that you and I don't have. The reason you're lamenting your father is because he's your father, right? There are a lot of people who died in Orange County this week. None of them were your father. So you didn't have any feelings. You're indifferent about those. You're ignorant about those. Even if you read of some in the papers, like, I don't know them. It didn't cause you any lost sleep like the death of your father. And my point is that when God looks at humanity and says to this big chunk of humanity on the wide road, "the big gate that

leads to destruction and many of those who enter by it," there's not a sense of I'm crying every day about that. It's like the angels in the book of Revelation that pour out the bowls of judgment and they say, God, "he's holy, he's just" and these people deserve it. There's going to be a sense of justice that I think will change. Our perspective as always from a sinful perspective. We don't see the justice or mercy of God the way we ought to. So I think we would be able to say differently about the lost than we say now about those we particularly love or are close to, or shared genetic material with. So I think either our minds will be so changed that if we do recall it, it won't cause the sorrow it causes you now. Or secondarily, I would be more prone to take that passage in Isaiah and say "the former things are not going to come to mind." If the former things are the things that would be like that bums me out, that's sorrowful. And it's God's prerogative to do what he wants to do with our minds. And I would say the passage, you're right, Lazarus is looking back saying, "My five brothers, I don't want them coming here." He's got a lot of looking back and concern, not so much about I shouldn't be here, but I don't want them to come here. None of those words are being put into Lazarus' mouth. He's not looking back, he's in comfort, he's fine. So we can't take the equality between, look, the rich man was looking back, Lazarus must be looking back, too. I can't make that correspondence. Not that he didn't have memories of life. So does that help? Yeah. Right. Okay. Good.

**Question** How would you answer a person who does not believe in the existence of hell? That it's, you know, too extreme, just too much? And they just don't buy into that idea that there is an eternal judgment of hell.

**Pastor Mike** Yeah, I would say that God has said to us. "My ways are higher than your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts. As high as the heavens are above the earth." In other words, you don't find a place for it in your mind regarding people like I don't think there's... this seems too harsh. "Why would I do that because we're all pretty nice people? I wave at people in the parking lot and they're nice. And God should be nice to all of us. And no one should be in suffering." The problem is, God has revealed this is the reality. Jesus talked more about hell than he talked about heaven. And he said, this is what's going to happen. "There's going to be a place where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth," and most people are going to end up there. That's what he said. And there's going to be a place of justice where they will be paid back for what they have done. "They'll be repaid according to their deeds." So it's not a place of equal punishment. It's a place of varied punishment based on their deeds. And so when God says that and that's what he says, if you say, well, that's not the way I would do it, well, great, God's already solved that for us. His ways are not your ways, and your ways aren't his ways. So give up on him fitting into your ways. But this is what he said. And now, if I want to think like a theologian and say why would he do that? It makes some sense. It would be like me saying, "I don't think we have any jails in this country. I don't think we should have any jails, because that's the nice thing to think, because I think everybody's pretty good. Well, I just hang out with my people and that's what I think. I read about people online and I'm like, oh, that's naughty, but whatever, I don't want to..." Well, we're almost there as a culture, I should say. But the point though is I would hope that if you were in charge of punishment and incarceration, meting out sentences, you'd say there are people who need to be sentenced and incarcerated because that's the just thing to do.



Justice demands the response that God says, here's how just God is. There is a place of retribution and there will be retribution for those who have sinned and not had their sin atoned for. And so that's what he taught, we're stuck with that. But almost look at every cult group. Just about every one of them ditch that, every liberal church ditch that. That's one of the first doctrines to go was the doctrine of hell. And I would say we cannot give that up because God was so clear on this topic. If you want the biggest advocate for hell in the Bible, I think you go to the teachings of Jesus who continually repeated the reality of it. And I'm going to trust him because he rose from the dead and he says, my words will stand. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." I mean, he basically echoes Isaiah 40 about the Old Testament and saying my words are that way. So I'm going to believe what he says. And he says there is a place of conscious torment, he even told stories about it, like the rich man and Lazarus. And the rich man says, "I'm in agony in this place." There's going to be a place where there's agony for individuals, and all of us deserve to be there, but we need to cling to the lifeboat. There's a way off this ship. There's a way for our sins to be forgiven. That's what I would say to someone who's denied the doctrine of hell.

**Question** I was wondering your thoughts on yoga. Originally, like the origin is the Hindu practice, physical and spiritual practice. I feel like in America it's been marketed more like a physical exercise.

**Pastor Mike** Is it practiced as a physical exercise? In other words, are there any spiritual overtones to its practice?

**Question** Yes.

**Pastor Mike** Okay. Well, to the extent that there is, that would be what I would exempt myself from. Okay? Because the poses and the action and the exercise and whatever in and of itself is not inherently evil. And if you're only making an argument by guilt by association, then I would say, well, that argument doesn't fly, because in First Corinthians, the whole thing about guilt by association with meat sacrificed to idols that doesn't fly. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." So yeah, any position you want to put your body in to stretch or exercise, no one gets a market and a corner on that. But if you want to tie the spiritual elements of it into the practice, well then, okay, we're not going to do that. Any more than someone saying, "I really like at the mosque the way they pray with their head down because it stretches the back muscles we're going to have a call to prayer." And I would say, no, you're not going to do that. Figure out a different way to stretch your back than to pray prostrate in a mosque. So here's the difference. That's clearly a spiritual practice. Yoga today is marketed as a physical practice. How much spiritual focus is there? Right? If the meditation component is a part of it and clearing your mind. All the definitions that are eastern and not biblical, not that biblical is Western, biblical is Eastern. But Yoga has a whole different definition for spirituality, meditation, the mind. So, yeah, and I spoke a little longer about that last night in the Q&A, which might be worth listening to, but that's a summary right there. Yeah.

**Question** Hi, Pastor Mike. As I was studying a topic to write for my current term paper, although I didn't pick this topic on the doctrine of the resurrection, I stumbled across as I was





researching some different opinions about when we get our glorified body. Now I came away with that, like, I'm not so sure why it made me mad to think about the way it was being phrased, but it concerned me. So my question is, I know once a believer, a genuine believer, passes right now pre-Tribulation Rapture that they're in the presence of the Lord. I also believe right now, and maybe I'm wrong, that when the pre-Tribulation Rapture occurs, that's when we get our glorified bodies. So could you help me understand if I'm wrong there and why as a Christian it matters at what point we get the resurrection body. I mean, absent from the body, present from the Lord, shouldn't that be enough?

**Pastor Mike** Yeah, I would agree with your summation. We are, as Paul put it, in Second Corinthians 5 naked. Our earthly tent is destroyed. We're waiting for our eternal dwelling made, not by human hands, by God, not by procreation. So that intermediate state, that's what theologians call the intermediate state, the disembodied state between death, separation of the spirit from the body, and resurrection. Yes. The time marker is at the dispatch of Christ to get his Church. The dead in Christ will rise first, First Thessalonians 4. So that period of time, Paul calls it being naked. Right? And I don't think you get a resurrected body until Christ is dispatched to get his Church. Now, when you disagree about when that is and that goes back to the question about like a historic pre-mil position post-Tribulation or there is no Tribulation that the correspondence of the Rapture and the coming of Christ for his feet touch the Mount of Olives, Zachariah 14. If that's the case, then you could say, well, there is disagreement among Christians to when we get it, but it's really not, it's at the same event. Right? The Scripture is pretty clear on that. When Christ comes back to get his Church, the dead in Christ will rise first, which refers back to Daniel Chapter 12, when many who lie in the dust of the earth will be raised. The point of the resurrection body, First Corinthians 15, is it's all going to happen in a twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Right? When Christ comes to get his Church, then you will have the resurrection of the redeemed. So the only difference is there is another resurrection of the Great White Throne Judgment, the end of Chapter 20 of Revelation, where then the dead who are not in Christ are reconnected with their bodies. And if you think about that, when Paul talks in the book of Acts or when Daniel tells us in Daniel 12 that there's going to be the resurrection of the just and the unjust, or the righteous and the unrighteous, well, those are separated by time in my eschatology, separated by at least 1,007 years. Right? No. Yes. Revelation Chapter 20. So the Great White Throne Judgment is the resurrection of the lost. And when I say resurrection don't think we don't have conscious awareness. Think back to the story we've already told from Luke of the rich man and Lazarus. There's conscious awareness after death the Bible would teach. And now when do we get our bodies back? Because we're made to be encased and enmeshed in our bodies. Well, for Christians, it's before the non-Christians. For those who are righteous and accepted it's before the lost. And that's the separation of time. So is there debate about when that happens? There shouldn't be debate about when it happens because everyone should say it corresponds with the return of Christ to get his Church. If you think the return Christ to get his Church is when he comes and sets his feet on the Mount of Olives, well then there is a difference there. But there's no distinction. Did you follow that? I may have said that too much or too fast. I affirmed what you said at the return of Christ to get his Church, which is the Rapture. The reason I'm saying it that way is because Christ returns to get his Church, even though he doesn't touch the ground. That's the picture in Scripture. But his return to touch the

ground is at the end of the tribulational period. And he also returns between the two in judgment. The wrath of the Lamb has come. So he comes to get his Church, he comes to punish the world, and then he comes to fix the world. That's my eschatological scheme.

**Question** Hi, Pastor Mike. My question is about communion. Jesus was pretty specific. He said, "This is my body," right? "This is my blood." And we say it represents. Well, Jesus said, you know, "I am the shepherd. You are my sheep." We know we're not sheep. We know, you know, he's not really the shepherd, but I think spiritually he's our shepherd, right? Spiritually we are sheep. Why can't spiritually body and blood be present? I mean, during Passover, they ate the sacrificial lamb. They ate the meat. Jesus was celebrating the Passover. He ate the meat. And then he turned to his disciples and said, take, eat. "This is my body. This is my blood." So and then later on, Paul does mention that we participate in the blood. We participate in the body. So if we're not participating in the blood and the body in communion then where are we participating in it?

**Pastor Mike** Yeah. Okay. Well, a couple of clarifications. Number one, it wasn't the meat of the lamb sacrifice at the Passover that he said take, eat. "This is my body." It was the bread. Okay. And here's my first answer to the first part of your question. Why don't I say this is in some way spiritually his blood is because after he said "this is the blood of the covenant," New Covenant, the new covenant in my blood, he then turns around and says, "I will not again drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it anew with you in the kingdom." So he turns around and says, "It is the fruit of the vine." So I'm going to go with what he says about what it is and that is it's the fruit of the vine the whole time. But it is an illustration, much like sheep. But I'm not going to crawl around on all fours and I'm going to say, spiritually, I'm sheep. I'm not spiritually a lamb. I'm physically a human being. It's an analogy. And so I'm going to say your correspondence breaks down in the sense logically for me, no, I'm not spiritually a lamb and he's not spiritually a shepherd. He's not a shepherd and I'm not a lamb. This is an analogy, and it teaches me something just like the cup and the bread teach me something and my participation is in the body of Christ. And that's a Romans Chapter 6:1-4 representation. I participate in Christ because Christ was punished for my sin on the cross. Therefore, I've been baptized into his death. And the point of being baptized into his death is that God sees my life as in that point of retribution. I have been retributed for my sins already. And that's a participation, as the theologians might say, it's a forensic identification. And it's true and it's real in the sense that I am not going to be punished for my sins. But I have been punished for my sins because I was punished for my sins on the cross. So I do participate in that. And the picture of me participating in, as it says in that passage, First Corinthians 11, "I am proclaiming his death until he comes." So I just think there's no necessary... and you haven't quoted John 6 but most people get there and I can address that in a minute. But everything we've said about what you've talked about in the gospels regarding the Last Supper, in the instructions in First Corinthians 11, there's nothing in that that necessitates that I got to say, this is spiritually his blood or this is literally his blood. You'd have to go back to John Chapter 6 and you'd say, "OK in John Chapter 6 he says, 'Unless you eat my flesh, drink my blood.'" Okay. Well, I just think any look at that particular passage is the whole problem they have. By verse 66 in that passage, they're like their minds are blown, like, "We don't even like this. We're done." And many of his disciples withdrew from him, to quote verse

66. That's the kind of thing where Jesus said, "Are you going to leave me too?" All that. The problem is this: if that's true, as the Catholics would say, then that's going to traverse all the way through the Passover meal and the institution of the Lord's Supper, which he completely reverses in Matthew by saying, "I will not drink the fruit of the vine again until I drink it anew with you in the kingdom." It doesn't turn into his body, it does not turn into his blood. He is the door. He is the gate. John 10. I have to go through him. But I'm not going THROUGH him. The Spirit of God is in me, but he's not like in my torso. And if you're really big, you don't have more of the Spirit than a short person, right? These are analogies that explain the realities. And the reality is I need to be in Christ. I need Christ to be in me. Eating a piece of bread, drinking the fruit of the vine, there is that analogy there, the picture there. But I'm with Zwingli on this who fought hard to say this is a memorial meal and I don't think that is in any way in conflict with biblical data. And I'm just a convinced zwinglian when it comes to that. And I would say the reason Lutheranism and Luther didn't quite state this right in my view is because they were coming out of the horrid conflation of doctrines in the Roman Catholic Church. So in the Roman Catholic Church the doctrine of transubstantiation turned into consubstantiation within the Lutheran tradition. And now if your post, you know, reformation zwinglian and then you're going to say, no, this is a memorial meal. And I know that people don't like that, Presbyterians in particular and Lutherans don't like that. But I mean, I'm ready to be convinced otherwise, but I'm unconvinced. I get the confusion. But we don't like to be confused in the same way about the other analogies. And you've already brought up that objection. So I am participating in Christ by doing what he said, which is really about my transfer of trust regarding my sins into the completed work of Christ. I'm not becoming a new Christian every time I participate in the Lord's Supper, but I'm certainly affirming and recognizing that's where my hope is, that's where my alliance is. I'm seen in Christ. So it's an important meal, there's no doubt. It's just I don't believe in any kind of transformation into the blood or body, either literally or metaphysically or spiritually. Yeah, that's a pretty Baptist view of things.

**Question** Hey, Pastor Mike. So I grew up in more of a continuationist family. So I grew up hearing, like, things like the five-fold ministry with, like, the pastor, evangelists, apostles, prophets. So I was wondering, like, how do you guys take that? Like, I've seen like you have pastors that go out and set churches up, which is awesome. Just you don't use like those titles, for example. But then like the gifts of tongues, like you guys like you don't believe in like the language thing anymore. But what I've heard was like the gifts of like the utterance that only the Holy Spirit talks about in First Corinthians. And it's a language of angels and men. So I'm just wondering about like how your take is on that.

**Pastor Mike** Yeah, the five-fold ministry of the Spirit is based on that passage in Ephesians, I would just say the apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. The grammatical syntax of the passage ties the last two together just the way it's constructed. So I think most people would agree there are four offices talked about: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers. Of course we talk a lot about the terminology of pastor-teachers around here, but technically, if you want to look at the way that the word was used of Paul calling Timothy an evangelist in the early foregoings of the establishment of the church in Ephesus to the way that he wanted it set up with proper leadership. I would say when I send out a pastor



to plan a church you could say he's an evangelist, he's a church planter. And I often say that when I teach on the passage, the evangelist category is really the church planter. But he continues on in our model, they don't come to plan a church then move to other places. And that often happened not only in the early Church and with Paul's ministry, but it happens today. We're not really sending out church planters in that regard. Even though they serve as a planter their goal is to stay there and remain on as the pastor-teachers. So we go ahead and we're a little bit anachronistic, I suppose, by saying he's a pastor-teachers who's evangelistically planning a church but will continue on as pastor so we don't confuse people with that even though I get that distinction. The reason I don't think the apostles and prophets are ongoing offices is because of two chapters earlier in Ephesians Chapter 2 verse 20, Paul says the Church was "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets," and "we are being built up into him into a holy dwelling in which the Spirit of God lives." So I am a part of this building structure, which in my case includes being a pastor-teachers as God built it, 2,000 years later I came on the scene as a small brick in this whole thing, and you are too as a Christian, if you're a Christian. But the foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets. And therefore I believe even in that book, I'm just trying to speak contextually about that letter, it's a foundational office. And I believe that if you're going to look at the word apostle in the way it's used even in Acts Chapter 1, they very clearly had a concern about what it is. In other words, if you're an apostle you had to be a witness to Christ. Right? So there were certain criteria that was understood and there was a certain set of miraculous exercises that you had. Right? Second Corinthians 12:12, you did the signs of an apostle, right? The signs and wonders were done with perseverance among you. So signs and wonders, miracles, breaking natural law through the agency of an apostle were part of what were the credentials of apostleship. Prophets were speaking and I often make this case, prophets were speaking and teaching New Testament truths without a written New Testament. That's why I think it makes sense that the apostles and prophets were foundational, in part because, as First Corinthians 1 says, God is not in the business of converting people through miraculous gifts shows, right? "It's the perverse and evil generation that seeks a sign." So it's not an evangelistic tool. It was a tool to start the Church as Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 and 2 says that this is an affirmation of God's voice through the apostles and prophets by doing miraculous signs. And so in part, I'm going to say, okay, if those are foundational gifts, then I would expect the things that affirm those gifts to go away. And then I read Church history and I learned that right after the apostles, they said the time of miracles is over. The apostles, the time of the apostles is over. And like miracles. If I want to say miracles continue. It would be easy if miracles stopped, then all we'd have to do is look around and say they've stopped. Which the kinds of miracles most would say, even if you're a Pentecostal, would say, well, yeah, they're not happening the way they were happening there. And if they said, well, they're happening in my church, well then I want to come and see them, which I've gone and I've looked and I've seen some of the biggest names even in Pentecostalism, and I want to see your miracles. And maybe that night they'd say it didn't happen because you were there and a skeptic. I didn't let anybody know I was there. But the miraculous things that Jesus did and the apostles did I don't see happening. And that goes back historically to the second century. The revival of this expectation came about 130 years ago as we had a series of things happening in Topeka, Kansas, and in Azusa Street in Los Angeles, where we had a revival of an expectation of the miraculous gifts. And with that kind of working backwards, well then we should expect



apostles and prophets. Not that there wasn't an expectation of apostles and prophets in some enclaves of Christianity. But for most of Church history we assumed the time of the apostles and prophets is over. It's a new thing now in our day to have people say, "Well, I want to do that. You know, I want to see that. I want a church that has that going on." To quote John Wimber, "When do I get to do the New Testament stuff?" Right? And that has been an expectation, an appetite and a lot of people are satisfied by what they see going on in these modern Pentecostal churches. Frankly, I'm not. And I think that there's enough in Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4, I think there's enough even in Ephesians 2:20, there's enough I think in just seeing, First Corinthians 12:12, that the signs of these two offices are not evidently present and they were foundational offices. So I believe there are evangelists, church planners, missionaries, and there are pastor-teachers. Those are the offices of Church advancement, of gospel advancement. And I don't believe there are ongoing apostles and prophets. You can argue with me about what you saw in the mission field or about what somebody says is happening in their church. But, you know, at some point, the miracles of people bringing all the sick to Paul, you know, in Ephesus and having them healed, we'd be clearing out CHOC Hospital and Mission Hospital to have that happening at the church where that's going. And if you blame that on, well, you don't have the faith to see that happen or whatever, there are a lot of excuses for it. But I'm going to say there's not only, I think biblical hints to the expectation, but there's historical clear cessation that leads me to be a convinced cessationist. Most people are not convinced of cessation. I'm cautious but open, you know, and I sound bad saying I'm not open. Right? I hope I am cautious but I think the role of the miraculous gifts have a place in Scripture. They happened historically with the founding of the Old Testament Torah, with Moses and Joshua, with the classical period of the prophets with Elijah and Elisha, the prophets of the Old Testament and the coming of Christ and the apostles. And those rushes of miraculous gifts. It doesn't mean that God is not interacting in the world. He's interacting in the world and every molecule of the world and he's providentially at work all the time in answering prayer. But in terms of the creative acts of creating something out of nothing. Right? Those are the kinds of things, whether it's my muscle fiber in my arm or the rods and cones in my eyeballs or whatever it might be. No, I don't expect God to do that, nor do I want to create that expectation in the minds of Christians today as a pastor. There's much more I could say about that but I know where you're coming from. And I don't know if you're still there, but I know the background. But yeah, I would say there are evangelists, church planners, missionaries and pastor-teachers, but not apostles and prophets present in the Church today.

**Question** I just wanted to kind of piggyback. I have a couple that should be pretty easy off of what she said. You said that Lazarus, that's a good point, he didn't reflect back but the rich man in hell did. Do you think that people in hell will reflect back to, you know, when people tried to talk to them about Christ and that they'll remember that. And then, you know, it says that vengeance is mine. God says that vengeance is mine and that he doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked. And but yet he's just. So there has to be, I don't think, pleasure, but there has to be some sort of satisfaction or like the scales are even or something that God has, because I mean, like the stuff that's going on today, it gets me really angry. And I can't imagine God who's up there in heaven looking down at everything that's going on. Nobody



can say that he's not patient. I mean, for everything that's going on these days, if it gets me mad and I'm not anything like God, I would think that he's fuming.

**Pastor Mike** Let me address those two. Let me start with the second question first. Psalm Chapter 7 verse 11. "God is a righteous judge, a God who feels indignation every day." Okay, so I'm 100% behind you that God has a sense of "Tetelestai," which is the word that Jesus used from the cross when he died, "It is finished," when the satisfaction of our sins was dealt with, when there's a consignment of the lost to a place of punishment or judgment. Yes, there's a sense of satisfaction, tetelestai, an ending. It's like when the gavel comes down in the Santa Ana courtroom for some bad criminal situation. The judge is not happy about it, but there's a sense of closure and satisfaction to justice. Justice has been served. You hear that word all the time. Justice will be served and there's a sense of at least forensic or objective, virtuous satisfaction to that. But God takes no pleasure in that. And that's a good distinction to make. As far as looking back at our lives, I can't say what God is going to allow or not allow people to remember. But I would assume there are memories of missed opportunities or whatever. I mean, that makes sense to me, even though in the passage that has been quoted a couple of times here today, the rich man is really concerned not about himself, he's concerned about his brothers. And that, to me is a little different. Right? His concern is, "I don't want my brothers to come to this place of agony, so send someone so they don't come here." And the assumption is they need to get right with God. And the answer of Abraham was "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." In other words, they got enough information. So, yes, I probably, if I were to guess, I'm outside of Scripture right now, what I would say, yes, they probably will look back at their lives with regret. But I don't know the details of that because God hadn't let us know in the Bible. And the second answer, I hope, is satisfactory, pardon the pun, to you on the fact that I do think there's a sense of satisfaction, but it's not taking joy in that. God is grieved by sin. Genesis 6:6. He hates it and it grieves his heart. And so judgment is no fun either. But God is a just God. And he will do it without taking it back. Right? And that would be right.

**Question** First of all, I just want to thank you for this opportunity and what a great forum to have us tap into your knowledge and experience in Scripture. So my question is according to Scripture in Ephesians it says that we are saved by grace through faith. And my question is that in conflict with the concept of selection and predetermination?

**Pastor Mike** No, because it's in the same book that said in Chapter 1 that we are predestined to this. So there in the same letter, they're one chapter removed from each other. Paul lays those down as two truths. So, yes, the problem of us trying to reconcile God's sovereignty with us responding to God by faith, we're just going to have to deal with that, as J.I. Packer calls it, that antinomy. It's not a paradox, but I see how we have a struggle with this. But these are not in conflict with each other. The way that Packer illustrates it is like two rails on a train track. When you look down at it, down the highway, it looks like they connect but if you were to follow that all the way down they would never connect. These two doctrines do not collide, even though in our minds from our perspective they seem to collide. But yeah, the call to repentance is a sincere call of the evangelist. You need to repent and put your trust in Christ. And yet we know it doesn't depend on man ultimately to do this. John Chapter 1, "We're not



born of the flesh. We're born of God by the will of God." So I know that's a hard thing, but it involves the totality of our volition in the sense that we are experiencing that decision to follow Christ. And yet that's not decisionism, because ultimately no sinner who's dead in his trespasses and sins, to quote Ephesians Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4, were not going to respond rightly to God unless God is gracious in granting us, as it goes on to say in the next verse, verse 8, the faith to respond. I believe it's a gift of God, and it's grammatically, as you lay it out, what is the gift of God? I think it's the faith as well as the salvation, grammatically and logically and theologically. As Peter says in the beginning of Acts that we studied, that God would grant the Gentiles repentance, even that, he gives them repentance. And that's a gift of God's. It's a gracious gift of God. Whether you use the word repentance to talk about penitent faith, as Jesus did in Luke 24, or as Peter did there in the beginning of Acts Chapter 4, or use the word faith, as he did with the Philippian jailer, or in Ephesians Chapter 2, it's a trusting in Christ, a penitent trust, a turning from sin to trust in him, and that I believe, both from Acts Chapter 4 and Ephesians Chapter 2 verse 8 are gifts of God, and yet you better do it. Right? I mean, that's the point. And I understand the problem, and I would definitely recommend, if I haven't in this service yet on this particular question, reading Packer's little book of Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, if you haven't read it. A super good book and helpful in trying to piece this together in our thinking. Does that help?

**Question** Hi. I would like to get your thoughts on what is your opinion on Calvinism versus Armenianism, but specifically on the points of, and it sounds like you've covered it right there, predestination versus free will and the other tenet being losing your salvation.

**Pastor Mike** Yeah. Well, again, I'm not into the labels. If you have been around, some people I've been their pastor in this room for 30 years and yeah, I'm not about the labels. But if you want to ask me if God watched the video stream and went forward to see what I would decide so he could go back in eternity past and decide what he would do with me, I'm going to say I don't think God's will, free will, is contingent on my will. I think my will is contingent or founded or predicated on his will. Just like my life was to be born the first time. I think my life to be born the second time is ultimately part of his plan, which does not make me an automaton. It doesn't mean I'm a determinist in the sense that we don't have any say in this. God has called me to respond to the gospel. But as I just said, and you're right to identify it, I can't respond without God's gift of grace in my life. I have to be awakened even to my need and to see my sin. And that is an act of regeneration, of being born by the Spirit and that's a gracious gift of God. If it weren't for the mercy of God, I think it started in this service, God chose mercy to whom he shows mercy and the kindness of God in allowing you and I, I trust you as well as me, have seen my sin and thrown myself on the mercy of God. I'm going to credit God with that. And I think even in the Armenian-Calvinist debate as has been popularly said or historically quoted, at least, there's not as much distance or conflict between those as you might think. If we understand the fact that this is Christ's work, Christ's doing, Christ's calling. You know, when we start talking about effectual calling and all that, you can start sharpening your swords to fight with one another, but I'm thinking let's stop all of that. That's a lot of rhetoric when people start saying, well, you know, if you have this view on, you know, God's sovereignty on it, well, then you've got a whole different religion. There's too much debate on this that is completely unnecessary. You and I would agree that this is salvation by grace



alone, through faith alone. This is a thing that God has done by Christ alone. This is a thing that we can all agree on. How we work out the antinomy of God's sovereignty and our will is, you know, it's something we're going to have camps throughout Church history. Losing your salvation. Right? People who are saved are saved. Let's just think about that that way and somebody illustrated it this way and it's helpful. If there are people laying on a beach after a storm and all these lifeguards went out to save a bunch of people and they're there on the shore, you'd say, well, who's saved? Well, all the people who were there and the people who drowned, they drowned, but these people were saved. Well, in the act of them being saved as they clung on to the lifeguard's buoy, are they saved? Well, yeah, they're saved. And then some people say, well, in your illustration, if they don't hang on they're not saved. Yeah, well the promise of Scripture is that those who are saved, they're not hanging on to the means of salvation, even though it feels that way. Christ is hanging onto us. Right? It is John Chapter 10, right? "I know my sheep. My sheep know me. They hear my voice. I give them salvation and no one can snatch them out of my hand." He has got us. And so I would say, yeah, real conversion is someone who has taken hold of by God and God is going to bring them to the shore. And we're in the process right now of being saved. But like the Eastern Orthodox, you ask them about being saved, they're going to say, well, I don't know if I'm saved because I'm not on the shore yet. And you know, God's going to call me to work and get there because I don't know when Christ's coming back. I don't know if I'm going to be saved because I don't know if I'll be in sin when he comes back. That is not the doctrine of salvation from a biblical perspective, right? The doctrine of salvation from a biblical perspective, to quote Ephesians Chapter 1, is that God has given us his Spirit as a guarantee and a seal, a guarantee and a seal of our inheritance. We are going to be saved if we have the presence of God's Spirit because God has gotten ahold of us. Some people say, "No, I can walk away from it." Plenty of people walk away from Christianity. But I would say they profess Christianity, but they don't possess the kind of Christianity where God has gotten a hold of us. And that may be hard to distinguish. It's so hard to distinguish I can't sort the church out and Christ told me not to. The wheat and the tares will grow up together in the church and at the harvest they're going to be sorted out. I can't say who is saved and who's not here. I can kick people out or we can as pastors if people are in blatant, unrepentant sin. But a lot of people are churchgoing and conforming but they're not genuinely saved. Well, what happens if ten years into this they say, I'm done? Well, they can be done and people might say, "Oh, they lost their salvation." I think the Bible would make the case that they never had this to start with even though they conformed, which I think is the real concern of the book of Hebrews. A lot of people conformed to the early Christian Jewish enclave of people who said we trust in Christ. We're no longer with the sacrificial system and the Levitical system and we believe in Christ. But he was concerned about people who came with that exodus and were tempted to go back. And there are so many warnings in that book about that. But if you think that means, well, then they have it, but then they lose it, I'm going to say no. "They went out from us," to quote First John 2, "because they were not of us. If they would have been of us, they would have remained with us." And I do think that's a statement about individual adherence to the gospel, which is not just about us hanging on to Christ, it's about Christ hanging on to us. So, yeah, but that's the kind of thing I do not want us to break fellowship in this church over, which people do all the time. Some people, pastors get up and they say, this is the dividing line. It's not a dividing line, because I guarantee you this. You and I could go and read for the next





three months across the street at the Compass Bible Institute, and we could go down deep into the recesses of this doctrinal dispute and we would just be confused on a deeper level. (audience laughing) And so if we disagree now about how to articulate God's sovereignty and our freedom, our will, our volition, I expect that people are going to debate about that. We're not kicking people out of the church for that. And I don't want to be castigated by others because we have some weird doctrine which I think stands in a long line of what people have to confess, that God is not just looking forward to see what we can do. We're not at the center of this. God is at the center of it. And there's a lot to that. And I know some of you are militant on one side and some are militant on the other, but I'd just like us to put down our swords. We've got a lot of work to do outside of the church, and we got a lot of building up within the church. We all sometimes know enough to be dangerous on these theological topics.

**Question** Yeah. Thank you. So, a little bit on just this particular doctrine and that set of doctrines. What's the difference between limited atonement and unlimited atonement and your view on it?

**Pastor Mike** Yeah, the unlimited atonement view is that every time, particularly in John's corpus, John's writings in First, Second or Third John and in the gospel of John, when he speaks of the world, the unlimited atonement view says, well, what he means by that is Christ died not just for our sins, but the sins of the whole world. He's speaking about every individual without any exception. And the limited atonement view would say, no. Whenever there are statements about that and the few times that John mentions that he's talking about, as a Jewish person writing to Gentiles, which of course is what he is, that he's really saying that Christ didn't just die for Abraham's seed, he died for all without distinction. And so the distinction wouldn't mean that he didn't save those with a particular focus on what he was doing on the cross. It just means that it wasn't exclusive to one ethnic group. And so every time he used the word "all" or "world," you necessarily by context or assumption limit that to a particular category. When we say he died for the sins of the whole world, the whole world were a lot of things in the world that aren't people, right? He didn't die for your puppy. I'm sorry to break that to you, we never got that question this weekend. But and I think all of us would agree because world, what do we mean world? Right? When you say all world, the whole world, you think, okay, well, that must mean all the individual people of all time. And I'm going to say, in being convinced of a particular atonement, that Christ died for the sins of those whom he was going to save. And if that's the case, it makes sense. There's no double jeopardy of people going to hell because Christ had paid for their sins. And I know the arguments, right? They're going to say, well, it was available and made available. It wasn't effective until it was trusted in. But yeah, I just think theologically, doctrinally, logically, it makes sense that Christ died for the sins of those he saves, his own. But even when you read John's gospel there's so much talk about "his own," the "ones that you've given me." John 17. John Chapter 10. There's a sense of who those are. And I think Christ went to the cross for them, even as it starts there in Chapter 13 verse 1. "He loved his own who were in the world to the end." That picture of the particular focus, I think it comports with the rest of Scripture. You just have to deal now with what did he mean by the whole world in First John and the gospel of John. And I think he's probably just making the distinction that makes sense of a Jewish apostle talking to the Gentile world, because that's what the gospel of John is. It's the



most universal gospel and it's the last and latest one in the nineties at the end of the first century. Did that help? Yeah.

**Pastor Mike** Let's pray. God, thanks for this team here, this group, this church. And I just pray they would be blessed and encouraged as we prayed early this morning as we gathered. We just want people to take something from our time of discussing you and your word and be edified, encouraged, motivated. We don't want division in our church. We'd like unity. And that's why we do this in part to help us clarify things and find some common ground. And I pray that has happened. I pray everyone would have a sense of your work and your wisdom and your guidance here in this congregation. Increase this tribe, please, as we reach our community for Christ and as you bring us to effectual conversations and effective evangelistic efforts, even this week, as we're about to all pack up, many of us, I should say, to go out to Lake Havasu and start this week of camp for our teens. I just pray that it would be a life-changing experience for many of them as they encounter the gospel in a way that maybe they never consider that you work in their lives in a big way. So, God, we commit not just this camp, but everything we'll do between now and the next time we gather to you and pray you'd be honored by our words and our efforts to represent you in this world.

**Pastor Mike** In Jesus name. Amen.