



Q&A 2024 – Part 1

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike Well, every year on this weekend before our high school and junior high camp, actually known as Revival, we have a Q&A session in all three of our services and we're going to do that again tonight. This is unscripted. No plants. It's just your questions about the Bible, the Christian life, theology, whatever it might be. I want to do my best to answer it. All you got to do is raise your hand. We'll have one of the pastors with the microphone come to you. They will hold the microphone, stand up where you're at, and succinctly give us your question. That's how we do it. So let's get started.

Question: Hello. I just wanted to ask you a question here and this is just something I've been kind of thinking about for kind of a few weeks and a few months for now. And this is just something I personally have been kind of confused about because I just want to know that in the Bible it talks about how God opposes, you know, pride and how he wants humble people. So I just want to ask about two people, like, especially a brother and sister in Christ, who are dealing with sort of pride issues, like claiming, like, you know, like being proud of certain things and, you know, like, especially like calling things like this is God's country or things like that. I'd like to know, like, is this a pride issue or is it something that like, you know, is this just coming after, you know, out of nowhere, like, you know, just kind of curious, though.

Pastor Mike: I don't know. I mean, yeah, I don't know. That particular phrase, I can't say it comes from a prideful heart. It may come from a deceived mind, but, you know, the Bible's very clear about humbling ourselves. It's very hard for us to humble our brother. So, pride is an internal motivation which is very hard for us to assess. A lot of sins that we are called to rebuke our brother for are external things that come out into their behavior, their words, their actions. Pride is a diagnosis of an interior sin. That's why it's very hard for us to call each other out on pride. I can call you out on lying. I can call you out on cheating, stealing. But, I can't really do much about diagnosing pride. Although a lot of times we can suspect it. But all I think we can do when it comes to pride is tell each other to search our own hearts and repent when we find it. All right.

Question: I've tried to find an answer to be a good Berean before I even come to you. So, it's in Genesis 10 described as nations descended from Noah. So after the flood there were eight people aboard the Ark of certain descent. So where did the Asian community come from? The Chinese? The Japanese? Because I don't understand if they were of Arab descent how did their society come about?

Pastor Mike: Yeah. Well, Ham, Shem and Japheth, the three sons of Noah and their wives, that was the restart of society. All people came from those three families. After the Tower of Babel which describes why people were isolated in geographic locations we had a kind of necessary, well, for the most part, intermarrying of people in close proximity. We did not have the kind of melting pot you had prior to the Tower of Babel. Ken Ham's book, One Race One Blood I think it's called might be helpful just to describe how similar our DNA is and how very minor tweaks in isolation within a few generations can create all the distinctions we see in



melanin in our skin, fatty tissue around the eyes, color of hair, all those things that become characteristic of a certain ethnicity we would say are simply because of the isolation geographically and a few generations. That's all it really takes. And I would recommend you to that book because there's a section in it, in *One Blood*, where it plays this out mathematically through recessive genes and traits that are I just think, you know, it's a very simple, answerable question. It's not as though we need a completely different kind of DNA soup to create an Asian or an Eskimo, or, you know, someone who's black or someone who's, you know, Mexican. These things can happen very easily and there's no difference. The thing about melanin in our skin. It just has to do with how much we have. This is not like a new thing that makes someone dark-skinned versus light-skinned. So, that book does a much better job of going into the details, the minutia of how this is easily possible and which makes distinctions in how people look. Yeah.

Question: Hi, pastor. Could you give us a biblical view of the age of accountability?

Pastor Mike: Yeah. Here's the problem. And I want to be careful with this. Pelagius and Augustine back in the day had a big debate about how bad is our sin problem at the point of birth. Are we born guilty before God in the sense that we're separated from God, or are we seen as innocent before God? Pelagius was and the Pelagian view is that we are born innocent or neutral before God, at least, and that we fall into sin at a particular point in our maturation and therefore we become sinners. Romans Chapter 5 and Augustine and all the rest of Scripture, I would agree, says no, we're born as sinners. David said, we're conceived in sin. We go astray from birth, as the psalm says, and we are inheriting a position of separation from God which is the guilt of Adam. We call it original sin. So this is a theological category that we need to put in place in our minds before we start talking about the age of accountability. Is there something to the age of accountability? Well, sure, there is something to the age of accountability. Let me address that in a second. But all people are born in a problem basket, right? They're all on the bus heading toward punishment. They're all separated from God. And that all is an inherited problem. It's imputed because we are part of the human race that comes from a fallen couple. Now, the question is usually asked if my four-year-old dies in a car accident is he going to go to heaven? That's where the question pastorally hits us. Not theologically, but pastorally. And we would say, well, he's not yet to the age of accountability therefore he's going to go to heaven. There is some truth to the point in which someone gets to a place of what we would say culpability for their behaviors of being right or wrong. And in that regard, yes, there has to be a place, as Scripture says, the book of Isaiah talks about the fact that there is a time when someone doesn't know right or wrong because they're children. Even in the punishment upon the Israelites who listen to the ten spies instead of the two spies, at that particular point, I'm not trying to build an age here, but if you were 20 and younger you could live on into Joshua's day and going to the Promised Land. But if you were 20 or older, I guess it was over 21, 20. You look it up. It's one of the other. I don't know if 20 is right on the bubble here. Maybe you're going to lie about your age at that point, but, if you are older than that, well, then you're culpable for following the ten spies. And all I'm saying is there's an accountability of judgment that comes at a particular place with knowledge. That's why the argument in Romans Chapter 1 about conscience, and that's Chapter 2, and creation, Chapter 1, is enough for everyone to be without excuse. But

you are with excuse if you don't have perception to know what nature is saying about the divine attributes of God or conscience isn't to the place where you can understand the distinction between I've just done something sinful before God. So in that regard I would say, though a child, let's say a three-year-old, four-year-old dies in a car accident, we would say is he a part of a sinful race? Yes. Is he separated from God as he was born in the world? Is he a sinner? Yes. But what would he be judged for according to Romans Chapter 2, or the rest of the New Testament, or Revelation Chapter 20 at the Great White Throne? He couldn't be judged for behavior that he did not know. As Paul makes the argument in Romans 7, if I don't know what coveting is, I'm not coveting in that sense. Once I know what it is, well, then coveting takes flight, so to speak, gives birth to sin. So I'm going to say here's the dilemma we face as theologians when we look at the problem of a four-year-old dying, what would he be judged for? He could be judged as a categorically separated human being, but there's no active punishment in that regard. There would be a passive punishment in the sense that you're part of a sinful race. But we would say, most pastors at least, the assembled argument is but there's no active punishment because there's no culpability of awareness of sin. And in that regard, we would say we're trusting in the fact that God's going to deal with his connection to Adam and impute a connection to Christ. So I'm of the persuasion theologically that, yes, children under a particular age are going to be exonerated of their connection with Adam, and there's no punishment for them. Therefore, they're going to be saved, as we would put it. But it does take a step that the Bible doesn't clearly talk about. And that is the imputation of Christ's righteousness and connection to God through Christ without any conscious awareness of it. Now that argument does not go for the man in the jungle who's never heard about Christ if he's past a certain age. What is that age? I don't know. I would just say it's different for each person. So the age of accountability, if you're Palladian, if you followed any of that argument, I would say I don't believe that a person is innocent before they get to some certain age. I do believe though that someone can't be held responsible for particular sins even though they're still a sinner before God, is God going to correct that? I believe so, just based on my understanding of the rest of Scripture and God. Now, it's usually asked for one of those two reasons, theologically or pastorally. Pastorally I have to deal with, you know, children dying. Does that answer your question? Because I do believe children who die prior to a certain age are imputed the righteousness of Christ. I think that makes sense in light of the fact... And even some theologians back in the day would say that these infants or these children go into a place of limbo. They're not saved or lost. And I'm going to say well I don't believe that. The Bible doesn't talk about a third category, you are either saved or lost. And I think God saves those who aren't yet to a certain point. What is that age? I don't know. Different for each person.

Question: In the book of Genesis, it says that dominion of the earth is given to human beings made in the image and likeness of the Most High living God. And in the New Testament Jesus Christ says that all authority in heaven and on earth have been given to him. So how does Satan have any authority here on earth if he's not human? And how was he able to try to tempt Jesus by offering him all the kingdoms of the earth if Satan's not human, so dominion of the earth is given to human beings? So how does Satan have any authority here on earth if he's not human?



Pastor Mike: Okay. Because the premise of your question assumes that dominion is a categorical issue of either you have it or you don't, versus the fact that there are tiers of dominion. And we have to say clearly that even in the Garden God had dominion over the Garden, and yet he delegates dominion. It's a derived dominion, right? In other words, it is not inherent in Adam to have dominion, but he has a derived dominion in that he is given dominion. Just like you and I have dominion over our garage. Do you have a garage? Do you have a garage? No. Do you have a garage? You've got a closet. Do you have a closet? No, you're not shaking your head. Do you have a closet, I hope? If not, we'll talk... Do you have a closet? You don't have a closet. Oh, man. Do you have pockets, though, right? Okay. You're exercising dominion over your pockets. You can put a rock in your pocket. You can put bubble gum in your pocket. You can unwrap bubble gum, chewed bubble gum, put it in your pocket. You have dominion over that. And yet God has dominion over your pockets. So this is not an either-or categorical, either you have dominion or you don't. But God is willing to, as the Bible clearly says in passages like First Samuel Chapter 2, he grants dominion, or even as Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel, God is granting dominion to people. It's not that he gives up dominion, it's just that he's delegating and giving people derived dominion. So in the Garden did Adam have dominion? Yes. Did God have dominion? You can't say no because Adam had dominion. It's not an either-or categorical thing. It's both-and. God has dominion and Adam has dominion. Adam becomes a sinner. He still has dominion. He can still plant in the Garden. Well, he gets kicked out of that Garden, but in the next garden he can plant what he wants. But God still has dominion. And on earth now we learn from Second Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 4, that Satan has dominion. Or First John Chapter 5, "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one," Satan has dominion. So he has dominion over the sphere of this world. But he's not without the governance of a dominion that outpowers him. Right? There's a power greater than him. Like at your business. You might have a middle manager, but then he has a boss. Well, those dominions aren't either-or. Who's in charge of this place? Well, you could say, well, my manager is in charge of this place, this part of the warehouse or whatever, but he's got a boss and that boss can trump the manager. But there's a lot of lenience that God gives where he is allowing dominion, first of all to human beings, and then in the New Testament, it's clearly said, all that we read in the Old Testament as well, that Job is being seen under the dominion of Satan. Satan is given dominion over Job, but not complete dominion. And that shows that there's a leash on Satan that only goes so far. Satan can do all this stuff to Job, whatever you want, and he chooses to do like four things, but you can't touch his body in Chapter 1. So that dominion is limited. Satan's dominion seems almost complete and yet it's not complete because God, according to Ephesians Chapter 1, has dominion ultimately over all things. "He works everything after the counsel of his will," even through the derived dominion of humans and the derived dominion of Satan. So I would say if you look at the world this way, I've got dominion over my little desk or my closet. I happened to be blessed to have a closet and a garage. I have dominion over that. And I would say this: and Satan has dominion over this world, although God has dominion and ultimately as you quoted Matthew 28, Christ has dominion over the world. Here's a key passage. When God says in Revelation 11 that Christ will take his "power and begin to reign." Christ has dominion in heaven and on earth, but he's not exercising dominion on earth, not fully, at least. He has a leash. He's allowing the leash to go out on human beings and on Satan. It'd be like saying God is not for rape and stealing and, you know, shooting at former presidents at rallies. God's

not in favor of that, but the dominion that he is allowing is all that stuff's happening. And because of that, we'd have to say, well, clearly there's some kind of dominion. I think of John Chapter 10 where Satan comes "to steal, kill and destroy," where there are cahoots between the satanic dominion, Satan, and the sinner's dominion. And so sinful things happen. And yet God has dominion and one day that dominion which has now been vested in Christ, he's going to take his great power and begin to reign. And then ALL of the kingdoms of the world will become "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." A kingdom is dominion. Matter of fact, that's the word, right? The dominion is a kingdom. So God has taken the kingdom of the universe. He's taken the earth and said, okay, human beings, you have dominion over the earth, right? Satan now leads Adam to sin and now Satan has dominion over the earth. And then he's able to say things like Jesus in the temptation in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, hey, I will give you this dominion if you just worship me. I think that's a legitimate thing and yet he's on a leash. He's got territory here. The leash isn't out enough for him to have dominion over the earth, but all of that can be taken back at any point. And God is going to take it back in Christ. Does that help a little bit? Because we can categorize who's got dominion here. Like saying who in your job, manager, you know, middle manager, supervisor, boss, chairman of the board, whatever. You can see dominion is steeped, it's staired. It's shared. It's not categorically either-or.

Question: I have a question because we have some very dear and near friends of ours who are Christians, but they're part of the Assemblies of God. And so, you know, obviously, I looked at the doctrine and stuff and it looks like, at least, you know, the requirements of salvation look, you know, somewhat kosher, but there's this idea about the Holy Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit. There's a physical manifestation through tongues. And that also divine healing is an integral part of the ministry. So it is kind of like a stumbling block for us in our relationship and not something we can really talk too much about. So I'm just wondering if there are any viewpoints or Scriptural references you can give to sort of have an intelligible conversation about it.

Pastor Mike: Yeah. Assemblies of God, their doctrinal statement reads that you cannot effectively worship, witness, or work until you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit which is characterized by the speaking in tongues. So that becomes a very important doctrinal issue within the Assemblies of God. It doesn't mean that they're not preaching the gospel. They are preaching the gospel, right? In some Assemblies of God churches are filled with Christians. It's just that now we say, oh, now you're a Christian, you're in, but you want a letterman's jacket then you got to do this. And I'm thinking it's really not even a letterman's jacket. It's like clothes, right? You can't effectively worship, witness or work. But, I'm thinking that's pretty basic, right? I'd like to effectively do all the things in the Christian life. So this becomes an errant second blessing theology. It comes, unfortunately, through the book of Acts. And I say that because in the book of Acts when I started teaching it years and years ago, I said you need to remember this is a transitional book. And the key to it is that we got a bunch of apostles and disciples teaching New Testament truths, but they're not holding a New Testament. So God is now indicating the veracity of the message of the prophets of the New Testament with miraculous signs and wonders, as Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4 clearly says, those signs were to give veracity to the message, the truthfulness of the

message. So we see the book of Acts having certain things happen, in particular three times in the book of Acts, there was an outbreak of people speaking in other languages that they didn't learn starting in Jerusalem in Acts 2. And then we have two more. One takes place in Acts Chapter 10 and later in Acts Chapter 17. All of those show the concentric circles of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth, in that here the gospel is going to these three places. And what you find is people are saved, particularly in Acts 17, where in Ephesus there are these people out in Asia who are getting saved but they don't have the apostolic signoff. So we waited till the apostles got there, Paul gets there, and now all of a sudden everyone knows this is legit because they speak in tongues. That is very unique to the book of Acts. Okay. Once you start taking that as a normative, which the Assemblies of God have done, then you have to ignore like everything in First Corinthians Chapter 12 which says not everyone's going to speak in tongues, right? Matter of fact, very few people would speak in tongues. There are a lot of people jabbering in the Corinthian worship which he puts to rest in Chapter 14. But I'm saying you cannot make this the normative experience of Christians. There are only three occurrences in the book of Acts and all of them show a miraculous ability to speak in a language you didn't learn. And they're all in trilingual contexts and even more in Acts Chapter 2. And they're able to say, the Jews could say, wow, those guys speaking our language. They may have known Koine Greek. They may have known some other native, you know, dialect. But now they're speaking in Hebrew, the Hebrew that we learned. That is the kind of thing where everyone says this is an act of God. Even in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 they were reciting the fact that we know this is a gift of God and the gift of God has been given to them and we see the evidence of it. You could see where if I took the book of Acts as normative I could end up where the Assemblies of God guys end up. Okay, well, you got to have the speaking in tongues to prove you got the Spirit. The problem is the Spirit comes as a second-tier reality, at least in the demonstration and a miracle in the book of Acts to prove the New Testament truth when we didn't have a New Testament to go to. Well, later in the New Testament we have a clear statement that if you do not have the Holy Spirit, Romans Chapter 8, you are not a son of God. So I can't be a Christian in normative Christianity, as the letters of the New Testament point out, unless I have the Spirit dwelling within me. Ephesians Chapter 1. The Spirit is the seal of God, "the seal of the Holy Spirit, who is a guarantee of the inheritance that is to come." So I can't even say I'm saved if I don't have the Holy Spirit and everyone gets the Holy Spirit, the normative experiences when they become a Christian. That wasn't normative in the book of Acts, it certainly wasn't even normative in the gospels. But it is normative after the New Testament comes, after we have at least the propagation of the gospel through the apostles. That's why the book is called the Acts of the Apostles, because it's super important that we have the apostolic certification on the message. We can certify whether I'm saying something truthful or not by studying the Bible, the New Testament. They didn't have those 27 books codified in black or white. So it's a secondary issue, although it's a pretty important secondary issue because they're basically saying you're a "have not," and my church, we're all the "haves." The problem with that is the way they're proving that they're the "haves" and have the Spirit in this second blessing of God they call it, is because they're jabbering in ecstatic utterance. That's not what the gift was in the book of Acts, right? I believe it was a real language that other people who were trilingual or bilingual could say, you're speaking our language, how in the world could you know that? That's a miracle. It's called a sign in First Corinthians Chapter 12 and First Corinthians



Chapter 14. And if it's a sign, that word, in Greek very clearly is a miraculous gift. In other words, it's something that breaks natural law. There have been organizations having people jabber all the time. The Mormons did it, right? There are a lot of people in Church history, there are a lot of people in animistic religions in the jungles who do the same thing. They get themselves whipped in a spiritual frenzy and they jabber just the way you'll have at an Assemblies of God service. It's not real language, right? It's basically, and you can look at linguists who have studied this, it's just the most basic noises that your mouth can make when you just cut loose and get chaotic with your sounds. That's not speaking in tongues, right? That's just not, not according to the Bible, because they heard the works of God "in their own language." This is not a language. And then they defer to First Corinthians 13. They say, oh, First Corinthians 13 says if you speak in the tongues of men and angels, oh, that's angel talk then they'll say. It's not angel talk. Every time an angel talks in the Bible, guess what? People can understand what they're saying. Right? Now you have to assume a whole different language. Do they have a different language? What kind of language is that? It's not jabber, right? It has to be some cogent language. And every time they talk the angels are speaking in the language that people can understand. More could be said on that but it's not like you say you guys are lost. I don't think they're non-Christians. I just think you got a big stumbling block in your sanctification in that you think I'm not even sanctified. And I'm saying there is no second blessing theology. You get all of the Spirit at the beginning of your Christian life. The question is how well are you walking in step with the Spirit? Galatians Chapter 5. I mean, Ephesians Chapter 5. So many great passages on that. All right. Good. Great.

Question: Two kings. Right? Hezekiah. It says here he trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, none among those who were before him or after him. A few chapters later, regarding Josiah. Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the laws of Moses. Nor did any like him arise after him. So my question is, who of these two kings was greater?

Pastor Mike: The first one was in... give me the verse that it was in, Second Kings...

Question: That's 18.

Pastor Mike: Okay. This is the Hezekiah passage. Okay. 18. What?

Question: It starts at 5.

Pastor Mike: Yeah, I will say, and I'm looking at context here because oftentimes the context because I know this is a repeated phrase throughout Kings and oftentimes when I read that passage I look at the context and think, okay, well, here's the thing in view. Whether it was taking down the Ashtoreth poles, you know, or opposing the prophets of the false gods. And in this case in verse 5, he trusted God. There's none like him. The him part in the context is going to relate to whatever they've just talked about. And so the trust in God... Give me the next one and the other king you said was Josiah. Right? What was the verse in that? Chapter 22, right? What verse?

Question: Chapter 23 verse 25.

Pastor Mike: Okay. Okay. Well, Josiah's context, verse 24, "Josiah put away the mediums and the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land." I'm going to use that to govern the statement of no one like him before or after. Like, what was it about this king that was none like him? I don't think this is a complete wholesale statement, including Hezekiah, because Hezekiah at the end of his life gets in trouble with God for his lack of faith. So the context has to show me something about what are you praising here as uniquely great among the kings. There were only 20 kings in Judah, right? Why is he a standout? And I'm thinking Josiah is a standout for his reforms, in particular, I think in the context he puts away the mediums, the necromancers and the household gods. You find a lot of the reforms in Judah being he took down the Ashtoreth poles, but he didn't take away the household gods or, you know, he took down the high places, but he didn't take care of all the false prophets in the land or whatever. So, I'm going to probably say Hezekiah's trust in God, at least this particular time and what he accomplished in Hezekiah's day. Because remember what he does. Hezekiah lays before God when the Assyrians are coming after him and really he staves off the destruction of the southern tribes in one generation after the northern tribes. And so in that regard he's hailed as a great man. And yet he didn't finish as well. But whatever he's being praised for in that particular passage in trusting God, well, what does he do? He gets the Assyrian commander comes and says you're going to be destroyed and you shouldn't trust in God. Well, he trusts in God, and then God delivers them. But in a spectacular, miraculous way. I think that's got to be the focus of this, because you're right, if I'm just thinking about the wholesale picture of this person, there's no one like him. It's like if the future of Compass Bible Church we end up having 20 pastors, and then we're going through the history years and years from now. But the 20 pastors, you might say, there's no one like him. There was no pastor like the seventh pastor or the sixth pastor or the tenth pastor. Well, you'd have to define what you're talking about. And I think the context, if you look at every time that phrase shows up, and I wish I knew it off the top of my head, I don't know how many times, but something like that shows up several times. And I think five times maybe, I'm guessing. I think it's taking a particular aspect in virtue of that king and praising it and saying, that's the unique thing about this guy. There's nobody like that guy. Well, not like him all the way around, because I'm thinking Josiah was a better king than Hezekiah. Does that help a little bit? What we'd have to do and if I were you, I mean, you've already done it. I'm challenged now to go and look at every time a statement like that is made of all the kings of the South, because it's never said of the kings of the North, but the kings of the South, and say, what is around those statements? And how can I then chart out why were they unique? Is there something about that statement obviously, it is a standout. He's an outstanding king in what sense though? Not in the totality of who he is.

Question: In a service a few weeks ago, I think you were talking about people being saved and Christ coming back for the judgment day. So I was wondering if Christians are saved, supposedly, why is there judgment? Why is Christ coming back? To judge whom?

Pastor Mike: To judge us you mean? Two judgments. There's a judgment for non-Christians. Just like if you go up to the county courthouse in Santa Ana there are criminals who are about to be assigned to judgment. There is going to be a sentencing and a judgment, a judgment and a sentencing. That's the kind of judgment he's going to come back and judge the world that way. Christians are going to be judged just like you'd be judged at the county fair. Right? You're going to get rewarded for what you've done. You may leave with hardly any ribbons or you may leave with ribbons and trophies and a check, but you're going to be judged, which simply means evaluated. The evaluation is followed by rewards for Christians and the evaluation is followed by punishment for non-Christians. So Christ is coming back to judge you. Well, I don't know about you, but me as a Christian, and that means I'm going to be judged on what I did, and God's then going to mete out rewards, as Paul put it. And then when all the secrets are revealed his commendation will come to him. So I know that the praise comes after the judgment of Christians, and punishment comes, Revelation 20, after the judgment of non-Christians. Did I get the whole of your question? No. Okay. Keep going.

Question: So supposedly, you know, Christ came down and was crucified for us and wiped out all our sins, right? So what do we need to do to go to heaven? Do we need to do anything more?

Pastor Mike: Yes. Yes we do. Yeah. This is something as the Bible would put it, let's talk in human terms here, where you hear the teaching of the gospel and you respond in the way that God calls us to respond. And that is to call yourself a sinner, to repent of sin, which means I don't want sin anymore, I'd like to serve God now, and you put your faith in Christ, who now is supposed to be your leader and the one who absolves your sin. So, Christ died, and he died so that he could save people, and he has to somehow provide them human righteousness. He did that by living on the earth not just showing up on a Thursday to die on a Friday. And then he died to absorb the penalty of human sin. He was punished like he was watching pornography every day. He was judged on the cross as though he were a gossip. He was judged on the cross as though he were an unfaithful husband. He was judged on the cross as though he were a rapist. He was judged on the cross as though he were a murderer. He took all the punishment from the Father as though all those sins he had committed and yet we had committed those. How do I get that to happen on my account? I have to repent, turn from my sin and say, I'm a sinner, I need to stop following sin, and I need to follow Christ. I'm going to trust him as my leader and the one who absolves my sin. So no, not everyone is saved. Half the world is judged in punishment, I shouldn't say half, most of the world will be punished because they reject that. And a lot of people in this room probably reject that. But the people who embrace that and say, no, I repent and trust Christ, their sins are absolved. So it's a good question because I think what you're saying is, if Christ did this then why is anyone going to be judged? Well, because you got to respond to it. And the response is what we're looking for, and that is repentance and faith, turning and trusting. And if you don't do that then you don't get the benefit, right? It's just like if you were in love with this girl and you wanted to marry her and then all of your stuff would be hers, right? Common property law in California. And you kneel down on one knee and you held a ring out. Well, if she said no or I'm not interested or shrugged her shoulders and walked away, she didn't get any of that. But you're ready to give her all that. Right? There has to be a proper response. Right? So that's



what we're looking for. And that's what we pray happens in everybody's heart in this room, that they would feel convicted of their own sin, they would say I don't want to do that anymore, I want to now follow Christ. And we'll find out what Christ values in this book. And I want to trust him that what he did in living for me in my place and dying for me in my place, that will all be now credited to me instantaneously. Romans Chapter 4 says, the moment I do that, I am instantaneously justified and my sins are forgiven because of Christ's death on a cross. Does that make more sense? Would you like more? Follow up? Let's go more.

Question: That makes sense. You're not saved automatically because Christ died for you. You have to follow up and you have to do the right thing.

Pastor Mike: No. Well, the right thing is repentance and faith. Okay? Yeah. It'd be good if you did all the right things afterwards and I trust that you will. But the thief on the cross had no time to do any right things other than to trust in Christ and say he was a sinner, which he did. He said, I'm being punished for my sins here. Right? Christ is who he said he was, he's the Messiah, the one who's going to forgive sins. He's dying as the Lamb of God. The thief on the cross trusted in Christ and that day he dies and Jesus says, yeah, "Today you'll be with me in Paradise." So he responded and yet he never got off the cross, he never got baptized, he never gave money to the church, he never helped some old lady cross the street, he was a criminal. But instantaneously, as I said, Romans 4, made him absolutely right with God. So as long as when you say the "right thing," the right thing is repentance and faith. You're saved immediately when that takes place. Now we would say, hey, as a Christian, you're going to follow Christ. Yeah, there's a lot of good things that'll come but you're not saved based on the good things that you do. You're based on trusting in Christ. Repentant faith. Does that make sense? One more.

Question: Yeah, but following Christ means that you're not sinning or you're not, you know...

Pastor Mike: Not as much, at least. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And you. Yeah. And you should sin a whole lot less than you did before. Because if I say I want to follow Christ then I'm going to look to find out what Christ says and try and do what he says. And that means my life is going to start to change. Right? So outbursts of anger, for instance. Right? The Fruit of the Spirit is self-control. So I'm saying, okay, that's what God wants me to do. God's Spirit is going to help me be more self-controlled, I'm not going to have outbursts of anger. I'm never going to have an outburst of anger? I will probably have some outbursts of anger but you'll have a whole lot less, I hope, because you're trying to follow Christ. And Peter says there's always going to be a battle in your heart between what God says you're supposed to do and what sometimes your flesh wants to do, what your humanity wants to do. So you're going to fight. Definitely, you're going to fight but you can start doing more things. I like to say it cutely. It's not that you're going to be sinless, but you're going to sin less. Does that help? Great.

Question: If there's an age of accountability or culpability for sins where grace is given to those who died before a conscious knowledge of their sin? What would you say to someone who may go so far as to say that it may seem more merciful to allow a child to die to



guarantee they go to eternal glory with God in heaven rather than raise them with the chance of going to unending torments and unquenchable fire in hell.

Pastor Mike: Because I would say to you, I have no allowance in Scripture to let a child die. I'm supposed to make sure I'm pro-life in every way. And God is going to be glorified in the fact that life lives itself out. It's not at all part of God's plan for humanity to have all the kids die as infants. We could go through the nursery, kill them all, and say, well, at least they're all going to heaven. That does not bring glory to God. Right? God says no, no, no. This is not just about each individual, right? This is about God and his glory. God creates people to glorify him. And according, and this is a mind-bender now, he'll even be glorified in the judgment of sinners. He will. So it's not like God is like, oh, darn, these people are lost. Does it grieve his heart? Yes, it grieves his heart. Genesis Chapter 6 verse 6, sin grieves God's heart and so does punishment. And the punishment that he brought then was the flood and all the after stuff that goes on that he didn't even talk about in Genesis 6. So I know that God is not pleased, he takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," as the Bible says. So I would say, yeah, you could say that and I've had people say that in my evangelistic encounters, "Well, you guys are against abortion. Well, at least they're all going to heaven." Okay. Well that's great. Let me kill YOU now. Because if I kill you now, I've given you less time, as Romans 2 says, "to store up for yourselves more wrath on the day of God's wrath." Are we in favor of that? Can I kill you now? And the answer is, "Well, I don't want you to kill me now." Why? Because there's something about life, right? Life itself is something God brings himself glory in. Right? Isaiah 6, "The whole earth is filled with his glory." So I want kids to grow up, right? Is there a risk in that? Sure. But it'd be like you saying, "Why don't we just all decide not to have any children because then we'd know there'd be no one else going to hell? Let's just do that." No. God is all about life, and all life will bring him glory. There's even glory in the judgment of sinners. Now, that may be mind-bending, but you can go to our bookstore and read some books on that topic. I think even pastor PJ Berner wrote his doctoral project on that, God's glory in his judgment. That's why. But I've heard that argument. I've had people say it to me. But no, I'm not supposed to kill children. I'm not supposed to let children die. Right? Plus, I don't even know what that age would be. Yeah. God brings glory to himself in life itself. And so I want people to live. Because think about that, right? And trust me, I've had the thought Romans Chapter 2 says, "You are storing up for yourselves wrath on the day." Why? Because of your impenitent hearts. So a non-Christian would be better off to live to 40 instead of 80. Do we want to kill people? Is this Logan's Run? Right? Do we kill people? No, we don't want to do that. Why? Because that's against God's law. His revealed will is that we let people live out their days until natural death. So I want them to do that. Do I want them to sin less? Yes. I'd like even non-Christians to sin less because you'll store up less wrath for yourself. That's why I want my neighbors to live upstanding lives. There'll be less for them to be punished. And you say things that, and I don't know if this is your question or you're just channeling other people, but unending torment. The torment is going to be based on their deeds according to Romans 20. So I don't know how much torment a non-Christian is going to get. It's going to be based on their deeds. So not everyone's going to get the same torment. It's not like Hitler. Mussolini and Dahmer are having the same experience as my lost grandmother. They're not, right? And God will be just perfect in his justice because that's what justice means. That it's right. And everyone, including those who are damned, I think, is going



to say this is right. It's exactly what I deserve. And I say that even based on Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man just wanted Lazarus to go back to warn his brothers so they wouldn't come to this place of torment. He wasn't saying, I want to get out of here. Of course he wants to get out of there. But he wasn't shaking his fist at God saying this isn't right. He knew he came where he belonged, but he wanted someone to go back to make sure his brothers would respond rightly. And what was Abraham's response? "They have Moses and the Prophets," they have the Bible, "let them hear them." Some of them read the Bible and figure this out. People are preaching it on every corner in Israel and same today. Assemblies of God, whatever, all kinds of groups preaching the Bible.

Question: So I have a lot of family who are Greek Orthodox as well as born-again Christians. I was raised as both, went to both churches. So my question is when I have family who tells me that theirs is the original faith, how do I say, well, this is just us following Jesus? This is what Jesus did. This is the way that we were raised, in essence. But I don't know how to... It's not whether one's right or one's wrong, because they're both Christian, but one is very engulfed in tradition and one isn't. So I don't really know how to distinguish the two. Is one better than the other? Is one right? One wrong?

Pastor Mike: Well, you've summarized it well. Here's the problem with the Orthodox churches. When they say we're the original, we're going back to the original, we're tracing back to the original, they find all this emphasis in church history because that's where they find a source of authority in how this all worked out. And all I'm saying is what they should have been doing in every century and every generation is going back to God's revealed Word because it's clear, "it's living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword." It is the thing with the next verse says there in Hebrews we're going to be judged. Everything is laid bare before God, and all of it is going to be judged based on what the Word of God says. The books are open and I'm going to be judged by the Word. So if the second century didn't quite get it right and the fifth century took a step backwards, and the seventh century kind of went left field into some, you know, philosophy. It's like I'm not trying to trace my authority back to what the Church did. What I care about is what the Bible says, right? Now some generations did better than others, but I cannot lay the history of the Church which is a pretty crooked history, and say, well, that's my authority. And that's what they do in the Orthodox Church, right? They really put a bunch of stock in that. And sometimes we learn some great... I just quoted Augustine. He lived over a thousand years ago. I think he got it right against Palladian. Right? But I'm not going to go back to the third century and say what did they teach about virginity and chastity and say, well, that's got to be what I believe because that's the Church and Church history. I think they got it wrong. Right? They said eventually the Roman Catholic Church, which also in a lot of Orthodox churches early, at least in history, that to be godly, you can't be married. Well, I can read the Bible and say, well, I don't think you've read all of it clearly enough. Even in eschatology we kind of hammered some things out by looking at a lot of what's going on and it took time to figure this out. I don't even want to state the Trinitarian truths the way they did in the third century, I'd rather state it in the way we said it in the fourth century. Well, which are we going to choose? They are all part of the Church, right? Church history. So I always want to say every generation should take the Word of God and say, I need to make sure that my doctrine, my theology, my church, everything runs by this. And



that may be different than the seventeenth century, the fifth century, tenth century, or second century. I want to get back to what God's Word says. So I'm going to say I'd rather be in an evangelical Protestant church than an Eastern Russian Orthodox, any kind of Orthodox church, because I don't want to put that much stock in Church history. Can I learn from church history? I learned from church history every week. Every day. But I'm eating the fruit and spitting out the pits. They're swallowing oftentimes the pits and saying, well, I'm godly because I ate everything on the table. So yeah, that's a great... You said it right. I mean, you've analyzed the distinction. Well you live it with your family. But I'm going to choose reading the Bible, standing on the shoulders of all the church historians and church theologians and making sure that I can see that I'm complying and harmonizing my life and my teaching, my doctrine to the truth. And sometimes we don't even know how to hammer it out until false teaching comes. When false teaching comes, then we start to say, well, let's just clarify based on Scripture. A lot of theology has been hammered out when there's been a lot of attack upon the Church. Right? We didn't know much about the attacks at certain generations. And then after those attacks the Church kind of adjusted the way they said things to say it more accurately. I rather deal with a Protestant church that cares about what the Bible says. And the Protestant church, ultimately, out of the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago, the cry was "sola scriptura," the Scripture alone. And they were looking at the Roman Catholic Church which has a lot of similarities to the Orthodox Church. And looking at what they say, the Magisterium, what they've officially said, and Church history and those three things, the Scripture, the Magisterium and Church history, they're all three pillars of our authority, and you can't have one without the other. And the Roman Catholic Church is all in on that. You can't have one without the other. And I'm saying, you're telling me I can't have the Bible and I can't read the Bible and decide what the truth is in the Bible, unless I've got the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the history of the Roman Catholic Church. I'm going to say that's ridiculous, because the history of the Church taught things like pastors can't be married, right? There's a thing called purgatory, that Mary has some role in the mediation of my sanctification. All of that's just foreign to the Scripture. So I don't really care what some people said in Church history, although I'm not like some today, moderns say there's no value in Church history. There's great value in Church history. But eat the fruit and spit out the pits. Yeah.

Question: I have someone I know who watches a TV show that makes heaven bad and hell good and he says he wants to observe by watching it. I want to know why they hate God and how can I encourage him not to watch that.

Pastor Mike: I don't know that they hate God for watching that, but I would say, like, I think you intuitively understand it's probably not a good thing to be entertained with something that is making good look bad and something bad look good. And even the word "hell" itself becoming an expletive in our language where people yell it out when they hit their thumb with a hammer, I think it's all part of Satan's ploy to make the word "hell," and the concept of hell so common and mundane that it really doesn't have any teeth to it anymore. And when we're entertained by it and it becomes something good in a show and I don't know what show you're talking about, but I would say, well, yeah, that's another thing that Satan does to make people not have much respect or fear or concern about hell. And that's not what the Bible

presents us with, "where there's weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth," "outer darkness," "where the worm doesn't die." I mean, there's so much that Jesus taught about hell that should make us shudder, right? Even though everyone's experience won't be the same there. Still, it's a place we shouldn't want to go, and we're entertaining ourselves. So I would try to explain something like that to your friend, and then I would say I would encourage you not to, and that's all you can do because you can't control someone else's behavior. All you can say is, unless it's your son, all you can say is, I don't think you should do that, it's not good for you and here's why. So I'm not going to sit down and watch it with you and I think it'd be good for your Christian life if you didn't. And if you're his friend. Right? I just think that is something that friends do. They sharpen each other. And if he doesn't want to be sharpened and he bites back, okay, what can you do?

Question: Quick question on First Corinthians 6:12 and 13. So it says, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything." Now he's talking about Christian liberty at this point, I think. Then he goes into verse 13. He goes, "Food is for the stomach and stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." So he's going into more of the talk about sexual immorality. And I get that. The problem I have is with his statement about "food is for the stomach and stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them." Is he referring back to his Christian liberty or something else? Because some commentators talk about the, you know, our spiritual body, you know, like First Corinthians talks about or First John 3:2 and 3...

Pastor Mike: I've got an answer for you. Turn with me to First Corinthians Chapter 7. First Corinthians Chapter 7. Just a good example here. "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: 'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.'" Okay. That's their statement. Paul's now going to respond to it, which is no, it is a good thing. Matter of fact, it's an obligation. If you're married, this is a sexual relationship. You need to have sex with your spouse. That's what the whole passage is about. But he quotes what they're saying. Now go back to... What chapter were we in? Chapter 6 verse 12. I want to find it. Okay, here's another one. Okay. "All things are lawful for me." You see it's in quotes. Again, the quotes aren't in the original language. The translators have to choose where the quotes are. And then he's giving a contrastive conjunction in Greek, "Alla," and he's saying alla, "but, not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me.'" That's apparently another thing they were saying, right? Then Paul says, "But I will not be master by anything." Here comes a third quote now. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food." The translators put the end quote there. There are no quotes in the original language. My argument when I've taught this and studied it, the quote does not end there. It has to end after the next phrase, "And God will destroy both one and the other." Okay. Now the rest of this passage makes sense. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality." Here's what they were saying in the church and we see this in Gnosticism when you made physical things bad and spiritual things good. They started saying, well, it doesn't really matter what you do then, because it's all going to be destroyed. Now, the statement itself cannot possibly be true because Jesus taught repeatedly you're going to sit at a table with Abraham. People are going to come for the east and the west they are going to sit at the table, they're going to eat. Then we get the book of Revelation telling us

all about what we're going to eat. Right? So we are going to have stomachs and we are going to eat. So I know that the quotation is not Paul's statement, it's their statement. And when you put the quotation marks after the second phrase at the end of the verse, all of the rest of the passage makes sense, because then they were saying this: my body is going to be destroyed, I'm going to be a disembodied spirit, all God cares about is the spirit. I can do whatever I want with my body. I can go have sex with prostitutes. I can do whatever I want sexually because it doesn't matter. Paul's whole argument is you can't do whatever you want with your body. Matter of fact, look at how it ends. Look at verse 19, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" It ends in crescendos with look at how important your body is. "Your body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit ... you're not your own, you're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body." The whole point is about the exaltation of the body being important to God, and I would say even so much more that he's not going to destroy the body. He's going to give us tangible, glorified bodies just like Jesus, where he sits and eats in John 21. He has fish, right? He sits and eats in the Upper Room to prove that he's not a ghost. Right? So eating is a part of the resurrected body. That earlier statement is not true. And Paul's making the point from verse 14 all the way through verse 20, the body is important. And he's saying that because the context was it doesn't matter what you do with the body, you're going to get rid of it all. Now, the context isn't food in the stomach. The context, ultimately, of the Corinthian church is your sexual behavior. They even had an incestuous relationship in the church, as you know, right? Earlier in the passage. Look at Chapter 5 verse 1, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that's not even tolerated among the pagans, for this man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this to be removed from among you." They were even justifying people in their church having incestuous relationships, and one of their arguments was the body doesn't matter. Food for stomach, stomach for food, right? Gonads for sex, sex for gonads. That's all that matters, right? God's going to do away with them both. He doesn't care about that. Paul's whole point in the context is God does care about it. And I'm going to say eschatological he cares so much about it he's going to give us a body back, we're going to get our resurrected body, and we're going to eat. All right. Does that help? It's that quotation. And I know that's hard when the translators have to figure out where they're going to put the quotation, because clearly it's about a statement they were making. It's just we don't know where to end that. And I'm saying think translators think, think, think, think, think. Think not only about this, but think about everything in the gospels, think about everything in the book of Revelation. Don't put the quotation after the word "food," put it after the word "other." And then we've solved the whole problem. Which I think is what's going on. Here's the thing, I had a question asked once about the word "Maranatha," what does it mean? Well, it's an Aramaic term. It's transliterated in our English text, but there are no spaces in the original Greek. And you have to decide where the spaces are. That's two words, Maranatha. We don't know if it ends with "tha" or "atha." If it's atha, it means the "Lord has come." If it's tha, it means "come Lord." So I don't know which it is because there are no spaces, right? And I don't know where the quotes end because there are no quotations. So that's part of the problem sometimes with the original language of the Greek New Testament. Now we're trying to do it like we do today conventionally putting spaces between words, putting quotations around quotes. Those were conventions of modernity. It's not a convention of ancient Koine Greek. So that creates a few problems every now and then and that's one of



them. But I'm most confident in that because I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on in that passage. And I'm confident that's what's going on in that passage. Yeah.

Question: I was wondering, how do you go about preparing for a sermon?

Pastor Mike: I study. Yeah. Or you can take our Teaching the Bible class at Compass Bible Institute and learn about that. There are three things I say, and I just, with Pastor Mark, decided to write a book that some publishers weren't interested in publishing. I've been turned down by three publishers for a book I need to write, which is a textbook for our preaching classes. The way I teach it, my method of doing it is there are a bunch of steps involved in it but there are three categories. You have to study like a scholar. You got to put yourself in the ancient world and study the text, the languages and all the rest, if you know the languages, right? Then you have to plan like a pastor, right? Because preaching is a pastoral act. Even if you're a woman speaking in a women's Bible study or whatever. You have to have your goals set by the content of your text. You have to have goals set. So you got to think, as a pastor, how can I help these people be better Christians, walk with Christ better? And then you have to prepare like a preacher. So scholar, pastor, preacher. And you got to prepare like a preacher. How am I going to say this? And so I always try to think in those three categories when I prepare a sermon. Do I understand the text that I'm preaching? Be a scholar. You got to like that part of the study. Then you got to pray and think and plan because you know people you care about, people you're preaching to, people you're not writing a commentary, you're looking people in the face, and you're trying to help them in the Christian life. So plan the sermon like a pastor would because he cares, and then prepare it like a preacher. You're a speaker. You got to speak in a way that somehow is going to be compelling and persuasive and helpful. So, when I write this book in which Mark's trying to make me write, which I need to for Compass Press, now that we've started a new publishing house, is to do this book. It will be in three sections. And there are steps in all of those, to study like a scholar, to plan like a pastor, and to prepare like a preacher. Sounds like a book that I would want to publish. But I've had three publishers say we're not interested in that book. So, we'll publish it here at Compass Press and see what happens with it. Yeah. And you know why publishers don't want to do that, right? They want me to publish all these books that everyone's going to read because they want to sell books. Compass Press is different. I don't if you ever heard about Compass Press, but you should go to our bookstore. We published our first book, which was a compilation of a bunch of pastors contributing to on small groups, how to lead small groups, how to make small groups better. So that's in the bookstore, Compass Press, if we're not out of them, we might be out of them. We're in a second printing now. But Compass Press, like a lot of other things we do around here, the primary objective is to be helpful. I use that word a lot around here because I think that's the goal. Right? And we want to be helpful to Christians and to the church. Publishers, and I've worked with a lot of publishers, Thomas Nelson, Moody, Harvest, Wipf and Stock. They want to sell books and I get it, right? They want to sell books. If they don't sell books they can't get their paychecks to do what they got to do in life. If we start a publishing house that's under the umbrella of the church then we care less about the bottom line, we care more about the content. And ultimately, if you focus on the content God will take care of the finances, which has been my philosophy from the very beginning and it seems to be working. So we want to publish stuff that's helpful. And I know one thing



that would be helpful is a book on how to prepare sermons. Publisher looks at that and they say, okay, we're selling, number one, you know, we're not selling to the whole community. We're selling primarily to Christians. So that cuts the population, you know, down to a small segment. And then you want to write a book to pastors. Okay. Well, that's a smaller segment. Right? And oh, and then you want to talk to pastors about one specific thing they do, prepare sermons. They're thinking that isn't going to sell. So now you're behind the curtain on my frustrations. Sometimes I say, yeah, but this book that pastors need and they go, I don't care, I don't want to publish it. And they're usually what they tell me is we published one of those last year, and I'm not hankered to write books, trust me. But, you know, since they come to me to write books, the things that I want to write on are things that I think will be helpful. And I do write things, and that's, I hope, you know, all the books I'm writing are trying to be helpful. But, they like books that have a broad audience. All right. Out of time.

Pastor Mike: Let's pray. Let's pray. Yeah. That's how we should end this. And, you know, the president got shot today or Trump in the face or the ear or whatever. You heard about that. And I know Pastor John probably was sure everyone knew that so we didn't pray about it during the pastoral prayer. But, we should pray for that right now. I don't know what that's going to do to our country. It's kind of a wacky country we live in anyway. And it looks like he's fine. You probably learned more as you were skimming your news feeds during church this morning, (audience laughing) but, I'm assuming he's going to survive this and he's okay. But it's going to ramp up the rhetoric. And, so anyway, let's pray for our former president, who perhaps might be the next president. No political jeers or cheers. Right? No, I said none. But let's pray for that situation and the weird turn of events in politics that we should probably at least mention. And then we'll dismiss us. I probably said more about the prayer than prayer will last, but, it won't last that long. But let's pray. God, we do pray, most everyone in this room, I assume, has never been shot. And so we pray for the experience of being shot in the side of the head. I mean shot in the ear. Pray that for Trump to get through that. And, we know that he needs to think about his own mortality. He needs to think about the judgment day and just think about his own heart and the fact that he needs to get right with you. So we pray that maybe even this would move some of his statements and rhetoric and some of the lip service he sometimes gives us evangelical Christians, it would drive him to his knees to know that he needs you, because one day he could be standing before you sooner than he thinks. And, God, we just pray for the political season. All that's going on, all that's happened in the last month. We just know it's a real crazy time. I pray we would do our duty, which is to pray for our country and certainly the opportunity we have to vote. Pray that we would vote and vote biblically, vote our conscience according to Scripture. And, we do the best we can with what we've got. And we pray for peace, as the Bible says, that we can do our work here, quietly. And in that context, it's all about not being harassed by the government. We don't want to be harassed by the government as we do our work of evangelism and discipleship, make us effective at that. Thanks for giving us a chance to talk about a variety of topics here tonight. Thanks for this crew. Thanks for their love of your Word. Thanks for their study of your Word. Give them a great night even digesting some of the things we've said here tonight.

Pastor Mike: In Jesus name. Amen.