



Questions & Answers 2025 – Session 1

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike Well not to butter you up but let me begin with a compliment here with the Saturday night service. The Saturday night service needs to be complimented, not that you weren't my favorite service always, all along. But my favorite is because you put up with the raw sermon. But I've been boasting about you guys, because it's so great to see you enjoying these summer nights and lingering around here for, I mean, some of you for like over an hour. It's just awesome. And I think that's how church ought to be. So maybe we'll just save money on the auditorium remodel, and we'll do church here forever. Well, that could be the first question you might want to ask. But we're doing questions tonight. And we've got Pastor John on this side. We've got Pastor Elvis on this side and we have Pastor Roy in the lobby. And Pastor Roy, if he finds you with a question, he'll bring you up to where I can see you, just because I got to look you in the eye. All we're looking for here is something that would be helpful to you living the Christian life, understanding the Christian life, understanding God's word, whatever it might be. Most of you've been through one of these before but just wave down one of the pastors and we'll start, I think, with Pastor Elvis' side over here. Looks like he's already got something going and then maybe we can find someone in the lobby next and then we'll go to John's side next.

Question Hi, Pastor Mike. Question in today's Daily Bible Reading in Acts 21, which says in verse 4. It says, "Having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem." And you go further down to verse 11. It talks about Agabus, the prophet, coming to Paul, tying his arms and his legs. He goes, "And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit,' 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" So to the casual observer who is reading this, it may seem that the Holy Spirit is contradicting because he's saying that with the disciples, they are telling Paul not to go, and it says through the Spirit. So if you could elaborate on that expression, whereas Agabus actually says this is what the Holy Spirit said.

Pastor Mike Were you here when I was preaching through that section of Scripture? Yeah, I tried to deal with that carefully when we went through that, and I don't want to punt on it, but I did deal with both sides of that. And let me have you go back to that, because I think there's so much to deal with in terms of Agabus as a prophet dealing with also the concept of how people will use that in terms of modern day fallible prophets, but also looking at the personal aspect of us wanting because of the impact of negativity upon the Apostle Paul certain things that motivate our decisions, right? Just like when you hear someone has cancer we don't want them to, you know, die of cancer. And I would want to go consult my notes on all the aspects that I tackled. So that, you know, there's a good way to start. I love my Saturday night service but I will want to defer to that message because I tackled that hard. All right. Sorry about that.

Question Hey, Pastor Mike, so I'm a new believer, still learning about Jesus, and my eight-year-old had a really, really good question the other day. He started praying with me and



coming to the Lord, you know, hopefully. He understands about Jesus and life, right? But he told me like, okay, who made God? Like, he said, you know, I tell him like, you know God made the world. And he said okay, what was before God? Who, like, and I have no answer for that, so please help me.

Pastor Mike That's a fundamental question that I think everyone has been asking, all philosophers have asked it, we either have eternal stuff or there must be some eternal something or someone who sits outside of all the material stuff that we have. Philosophers asked that. It has been the fundamental question, I think. As it's been put outside of the Christian context there has to be a logical, unmoved mover and uncaused cause. There must be something that is eternal that sits beyond what we now have. So God is by definition, even in using that word in theology, when we talk about an ultimate being, he is by definition one who is not constrained by time and space. And therefore it makes sense if you don't have an ultimate person, if you don't have an ultimate person who has the ability to design and to think and to have the rationality to build what we have and that is the problem. Why do we have something rather than nothing and here we are as thinking creatures with the ability to reflect upon who we are, then there must be something sitting outside of space and time that has the ability to not be contingent upon the creation itself. And it is a philosophical question, but I know that the modern non-Christian will say well, you know, if we reason back and regress back to God well then I want to say who made God because, you know, we can't believe in infinite regression but we by the point of saying, you know, that there is infinite regression that there is someone who must be infinite. That is the whole point and I guess I'd go back to anything in our bookstore that's going to try and encapsulate in modern terms the Thomas Aquinas argument, the ontological argument of something that's going to help us understand that all that we have in trying to reason as creatures dependent on space and time and trying to think about, well, let's just try and project our own temporality to something beyond us, we just can't. So I do think it's by necessity that we have to have that. Because if you ask the modern naturalist, well, what existed before we got this ball rolling, which even in modern cosmology, that is a very recent new thing where we're saying maybe there was eternal matter. There was at one time a belief that we had eternal matter. Cosmology said we had uniformitarianism, that there was eternal matter that always existed and then, you know, this soup came together ultimately where we came to be. And then there was, well, no, that didn't happen because of the red shift and Hubble's observation. And there must have been an expanding universe. And that goes back to this infinitesimal point where we had this Big Bang and then it all started with that. Well, that's all being called into question by modern non-Christian cosmologists today, which is taking us back to maybe we have eternal matter. But either way, we're stuck with something, as even modern evolutionists and cosmologists will say, we have something that defies the laws of physics, that somehow doesn't depend on modern realities. And that just takes us back to either saying, you're going to believe by faith in something that is sitting outside of what we know, that's either a thing or a person. And I just think Aquinas was right, and so many others were right in saying this must be an intelligent personal God because of who we are by nature. And that makes the most sense. And ontological comes from the word "Ontos" in Greek, which means "being." And there is a sense in which our being, as we understand ourselves, we understand there must be a being who created us, and that being must not be contingent or dependent upon the things that we



are contingent and dependent upon. So it's more of a philosophical question that your eight-year-old asked, and that's why I don't like doing Q&As for eight-year-olds. (audience laughing) And once a year they ask me, and we do a young kids Q&A and it's harder than this one generally, although we're off to a really rough start here tonight. (audience laughing)

Question I'm asking a question for a friend who's hopefully watching.

Pastor Mike Sure you are! (audience laughing) All right, go ahead.

Question What would you say is the biblical view of retirement?

Pastor Mike Well, let's start at the very end. Clearly, your biological unit will retire. It's called death. And I would say the week before you die, let's say you live to be 96, you're not doing what you were doing when you were 56. So there's nothing, I think, that is... I know it's super spiritual to say, well, we're going to work right on up to the end. And I believe in work. We were created for work. We can quote, you know, Genesis Chapter 2, and say we're designed for work. I get that. Work is a pre-fall gift that God gives us. It's complicated by Genesis Chapter 3, but I think all of us are designed to work and we should work. But to say that there is a curtailing of my ability to work, absolutely. And so if you have to say, well, I'm going to scale back my work. Here's what I don't want. I don't want what we had in a generation past, which I hope is going away, that I just can't wait to get to a certain age and then I'm going to walk the beaches and do nothing. All you have to do is really sociologically learn about what goes on in people's lives when they do that. It's not good. We are made for purpose, we are made to exercise dominion, we're made for purpose and relationship, and I just say, that's not good for you. And I think for Christians on top of it, not just being people made in the image of God as a non-Christian, but as Christians, we have stuff to do. So we have to weigh our capacities with what is before us. You can't do everything you want to do. And in the prime of your life, we can't do everything we want to do. So you have to prioritize, you have to see what your capacities are. And depending on what you are, if you're a pilot, you know, I'm all for retirement. (audience laughing) And my surgeon, right? It's time to retire. But, you know, in the Old Testament there was a retirement for the priests, right? They retired young, and it was mandated by God. But even that, it's not because there was something wrong with a 52-year-old when they had to retire at 50. They weren't flying, you know, 747s. It was the same reason that you couldn't have someone who had a physical ailment. God wasn't against the handicapped, right? It was the fact that you had to have this image, this picture of something that would reflect the perfection of God as best as we could. You couldn't have a malformed hand. If you're born with an extra digit you couldn't serve. And so you could only serve for a very short period of time in the prime of your life. But it wasn't because you've got to slow down now and buy an RV. That wasn't the point. And a lot of people point to the retirement of the Levitical priest and say, well, there's your retirement. So all I'm saying is it's good for us as the Bible says for us to save and we should save and the saving should be because your capacities are probably going to diminish as you get older and as you save I just want you to say that's just because I may not be as productive to earn my own bread at least not as big of a loaf as I did when I was younger, yeah, you can cut back. But I would want you just to live every day as much as you can to the end, as being productive as you can. And productive



may not mean that you're welding anymore, but I would hope that you are doing something, at least as it relates to reaching, teaching and training, if nothing else. So I want everyone to be exercising dominion. And that, I think, is a part of our job. And that doesn't just mean with stuff. That means with relationships. That means with all that we're made to do, to have influence in this world. So, I don't want anyone to do what I have seen, at least when I was growing up, people wanting to get to the end of a certain age and say, now I can stop doing stuff. You know, it's like the old songs, living for the weekend and, you know, all that. I won't sing it for you, but that's how they thought, and you've heard me preach on this before. If not, I've always said, we don't work so that we can rest, which in a microcosm, we go Monday through Friday so we can have the weekend off. That's not a biblical thought, right? We're supposed to rest so that we can work, right? And so that cycle of seven days, it's supposed to be six and one, but we've made it five and two, which I don't, well, that's another question. We'll leave that. But I think the macrocosm is, I do think that we're not trying to work so that we can get to a place where we're finally to the, you know, the two decades of doing nothing in our lives. And I love that our church during the week, I see a lot of people here who don't have a Monday through Friday job, and there are a lot of grays walking around our campus doing stuff, and they're mentoring, and they're discipling, and they're here and that's how it should be. They're not at home watching whatever daytime people are broadcasting anymore. I don't even know who's on. Jerry Springer? He's gone, isn't he? I don't know. But they're not wasting their life. Don't waste your life. That's what I'm trying to say.

Question Hi, Pastor. Thank you for trying to clear this up. In First Corinthians 13:10, it says, "when the perfect comes." What is the perfect? Is it Jesus? Is it the canon of Scripture? What is the perfect?

Pastor Mike I know many people, very popular people, will say it's the canon of Scripture. I don't think it's a canon of Scripture in the context. I think it is about us seeing him face to face. The point is that faith, hope, and love. When we're with Christ we don't need faith because we live by faith, not by sight. Even with the Bible in my hand, I live by the faith because of the promises in it. I'm looking to the things unseen as we've been preaching in Second Corinthians Chapter 5. And hope is, as it says in Romans Chapter 8, I'm looking forward to the fulfillment of all those things, but the thing that is lasting, and that's the point of the passage, is that if you're going to serve in the church, you better be driven by love, and he's trying to say you guys aren't doing that in Corinth. So the perfect that's arriving, as he says, "We see in a mirror dimly," there in First Corinthians Chapter 13, but then we're going to see him "face to face." I think that's the "perfect" in the passage. Does that help? Not satisfying maybe? But yeah, because other people want to say it's the canon. I don't think it's a canon, but I do believe there are a lot of things that happened when the 27 books of the New Testament were done being written. But I don't derive it from that passage.

Question Hi, Pastor Mike. My question is did Jesus die for all the sins of mankind or just exclusively for the elect?

Pastor Mike I think theologically, I'm led to understand that if he died for everyone's sins, every last person's sins, then it would be a bit of a theological problem for me to say people



now are suffering for their sins. Then you have to deal textually with the passages of Scripture that talk about the world. It's easier for me to understand those passages, particularly most of them are written by John, either in the Gospel of John, as the record of Christ's words, or John's commentary in John, or First and Second John and Third John, but First John in particular, talking about he died for the propitiation for our sins, not just our sins, but the sins of the whole world. John being a Jewish man for an audience that is the most universal and Gentile audience, and I think when he talks about the whole world, he's talking about the fact that not everyone, every last person without exception, but all people without distinction. And I think if you look for that you'll see it everywhere, all throughout the Bible, not just in John's statements, but John likes the phrase, "the world." So I believe it makes more theological sense to say yes, the sins that are being paid for on the cross are the sins that he knows he's paying for his people's sins. And I think that makes perfect theological sense. Now I've got to deal with the texts that seem to say something different. But they don't, I think, in context. I think they deal with, he didn't just die for the Jews, because that was the contention. He died for the fulfillment of the promise to Israel, then that's a concern. What about the Gentiles? We start in the book of Acts. We've got Cornelius getting saved in the middle of the book of Acts. Then we've got a bunch of Gentiles getting saved. By the end, we got them way out there in Greece and Rome. Well, that's not a problem because that was the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant that through him, through his offspring, all the families of the earth would be blessed. And I think that's what we mean by the world. All the families on the earth will be blessed.

Question Hi, Pastor Mike. So throughout the Gospels and in Acts, we do see a lot of either the disciples or Jesus casting out demons, and it seems to be pretty prolific. Is that something that is still going on today? I mean, where people are possessed by demons and whatnot, or is that more of a, I don't know, mental illness, if you will.

Pastor Mike First John Chapter 5 says, "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one." We've been studying Second Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 4 that says Satan "has blinded the minds of the unbelievers." Ephesians Chapter 2 verse 2 talks about how we were once all, "following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that's now at work in the sons of disobedience." So Satan is alive and well in the world and he's very active in this world. God gives us tools, weapons of warfare, for the right hand and the left, to do something about that, very dramatic in the ministry of Christ to show that he is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, right? We're a part of that kingdom, as imperfect as we are, and God gives us the kind of deference to the Lord that we're supposed to have. Even Jude, in talking about a dispute over the body of Moses with Satan, he does not start doing what people were trying to do, perhaps because of Jesus doing it, trying to say that they've got some kind of inherent power to tell demons what to do. And he then shows that Michael the Archangel, who's much more powerful than any of the people whom Jude is talking about, Michael says, "the Lord rebuke you." Well, that's what I'm praying all the time. I want the Lord, that's a prayer, to do what Paul said Timothy should be praying for, and that is that in his church, people who are held captive by Satan to do his will would be freed from that. So that's called prayer. That's called preaching the Word, correcting those who are in opposition to you, doing it with gentleness, but firmness, right? Coming at them and saying we've got to stop this. That's the work that



certainly all of us as pastors do all the time. And so it's happening everywhere. Satan is at work and I could look at all the passages and I've done that. Matter of fact, you should go to our study at "focalpointministries.org" or "pastormike.com" goes to the same place, and look up our series in Focal Point U on angelology, it's on the back of the worksheet, and Satan's strategy, you can see all the things the Bible says in the New Testament outside of the gospels about Satan's strategy in your family and then you'll start say oh okay so disobedience to parents, rivalries within the home, breaking up marriages, all of that is Satan's work. That's what he wants to do, he comes to steal, kill and destroy but specific passages about how he messes up everything. So now you're a dad going, wow, that's how Satan's trying to work in my family. That's the work of the enemy. Okay, now, how do I deal with it? And then we deal with what the Bible has to say. You don't go around doing what Jesus did or his apostles did. And remember what the word "apostle" means, right? An "Apostolus" is the one who has the authority of Christ. Why is that important? In John Chapter 14 through 16, they were going to represent Christ in the world when he left. And they were going to speak on his behalf with all of his authority. So, they had some authority to do some things, according to Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4, to show the kinds of things that he did so that they would be able to be listened to as they wrote, and they would leave behind 27 books and have that as the thing that we're reading and teaching our children for 2,000 years now. So, no, I'm not going to do what Jesus did, who was proving in some spectacular ways that he's the King of kings, and that his apostles are his emissaries to write the New Testament. What I'm doing is in the same vein, but I'm doing it with complete deference to God, and you've told me how to do it. Go read again Ephesians Chapter 6, "put on the full armor of God." Why? Look at the passage, because I'm fighting, right? I'm trying to put out the fiery darts of the enemy. That's a passage about me fighting Satan. How do I do it? With incantations and spells? By saying, be gone, Satan? No. By doing everything in the passage including Bible study and prayer. If you got up this morning and prayed and read your Bible, you were engaging in the battle. So just know this, one of Satan's names is the "adversary." He is trying to oppose everything that God wants. So everything you read in your Bible that God wants you to do this week, wants your family to do this week, priorities you're supposed to have, Satan is all against that. And so you know to fight that you're engaging in the battle. It's just that you're not the king and you can't go around telling Satan to go to hell. Right? Because you don't have that authority. But we're praying. We're asking God. We want progress. But even Michael, the most high-ranking angel was not an apostle, right? And he has to say, "the Lord rebuke you," I pray God would be done with you. Every time you do evangelism with a non-Christian, we were praying just this week for a non-Christian. What are we praying? God, please open their eyes. Well, who's got their eyes closed? Second Corinthians 4:4. I'm praying against the enemy right here. OK, so does that help?

Question Thank you, Pastor Mike, for doing this. My question is about AI, and as a mom and a teacher, I'm just wondering what principles maybe you apply when it comes to using AI and not using AI, or maybe what principles you encourage your staff to use or not use, because I think those principles would probably apply whether I was discipling a 14-year-old with their paper, or a 17-year-old in applying for college, or a 25-year old at work.



Pastor Mike Well, to ignore it would be ridiculous. It would be ridiculous. So we better be able to wield it as Christians and know how to use it. And what we don't want to do is to be liars. So I'm not going to become someone who claims as my work something that I didn't do. But what we need to do is still be very creative. I've entered into contracts where they're very concerned that the work that I'm doing for this company is my brain work. Okay, well, what's your statement on AI? Well, everything I've done and the things that we've researched, even in starting a publishing house, we need to make sure we know what the industry standard is. No problem with brainstorming. I brainstorm with people. Now I brainstorm with my computer as well. And there's nothing wrong with that. I hope, and this is hard to say for a young person, because I'm in a whole different situation. I mean, I've done four decades of doing my own brain work, right? So I can have a conversation with predictive language in my computer and it's great, but I can still look and go, ah, it's not how I would do it. Then I can say, well, I can feed all this information to put the parameters in and say I only want information that is going to come from guys like FF Bruce and Don Carson and you give me that. Okay great, now it's even better. But still I have to come back and say here are my thoughts. I can learn from AI but I can also if I'm trying to produce something, which gets back as an educator to care about kids producing something, you have to interact with your tools to be able to pursue something that is yours. So there are two ends to it, brainstorming and polishing. And I think that's where I want to make sure I'm square in the middle of all this. If I'm going to sit down and say, OK, this week I need to write a manual on how to have the best facilities for a church, I don't have any problems sitting down with AI and spending two or three hours trying to get all the information I can, because I don't want to reinvent the wheel. And that's great. This is great. I don't want to be sitting here using smoke signals when there's a telephone. This is what I need to use. And at the end of the day, I need to use the tools maybe for implementation or even communication. But I sit in the middle and I have to figure out how to... Now, I'm talking real world. You're talking education. Here's what I've said, and you can talk to Dr. Kelly, Dr. Goodrich about this as we deal with it at Compass Bible Institute. My concepts are always, I think what I am valuing more and more and more is I want to see students talk to me. Close your books, close your stuff, talk to me. Now, I know not everyone has the same ability to communicate with their mouth, but not everyone has the same ability to communicate with a paper either, with words on paper. But I don't really know what you know until I can shut everything out and have you talk to me. And it's much like a job interview. I'm not hiring anybody based on a resume, I got to have an interview. And I almost feel like I don't even know if she should pass a Theology I class without an interview because anyone can turn almost anything in. Now we try to stay ahead of this and I'm sure you do too in trying to make sure that week we use all the AI tools to figure out if every paper we get is written by AI. But even that can be hard, because I can produce things and then say, here, I produced this from scratch, from my brain. Is this AI? There are some times I answer something, and I was just talking to Joseph, because Joseph wrote a song for Revival. We're all going up to Revival. I worked hard on the first sermon for Revival, and I try to do them a day at a time when I get there. But he wrote a song. I worked on a long outline for the first day and he wrote this song. He sent me all the lyrics. He sent me the first run through. And at the end, he said, I just want to let you know that no AI is involved, right? And I said to him, it's funny, because I do the same thing. If I produce something and send something, even on a text sometimes, if it's a good answer, and I think, ah, this is good, not to be prideful, but I think



this is a thoughtful answer, I'll often put "no AI-involved." Because I want to make sure they know these are my thoughts, I didn't even polish this on AI. So I guess Christians are going to have to go through this new frontier and think this through. Now, we're not talking about whether it's going to explode the world. That's the next question probably. But this question is, how do teachers, how do leaders, how do parents, how do we deal with this? And I guess every industry is probably represented here. And every industry's being affected by this. And we need to learn how to use it. If you don't know how to use it, if you're not using it, then I just think that's ridiculous. And Christians should be the ones who I think are diving in. Everybody on staff, we talk about it a lot. We've had seminars, we've had our IT guy train us in how to rightly use it, wrongly use it. And yeah, all of our Bible software now integrates it. It doesn't do it as well as other platforms, but I don't know if that helps. Does that help at all? And to me, I've got to stand in the middle. And I think I'm uniquely positioned. I say that only by age. If you're my age, I think you're in a unique position to be able to say, I would never trust it to think for me, right? But I do think a younger person is going to have a harder problem with that. Because I want it to brainstorm with me. And I want you to help me say this better, right? I've written lots of books, probably 19 books without AI. But now I'm in the middle of writing a book right now and I'm throwing my stuff in AI once I write, you know, twenty pages and go what do you think of this? Well, I've had AI, she's not artificial, but her name is Ruth Staggs, who is a real person, and she's called my editor, right? Well, then she passes it to another AI, which is not AI, is not artificial at a publishing house. See, there are all kinds of editors out there who are real brains, but what do they have? They have intelligence, real intelligence. So when I throw it in artificial intelligence, what's funny is, if I do that with 20 pages of text or 30 pages or if it's a chapter, and I get it back and I'm like, ah, that is said better. Then I'll toss it to her. And then what's funny about writing is that she's so in tune with the writing part of this. I don't know if she's here tonight, but she immediately knows. She came to my office the other day. She said, I am so sick of AI and putting everything in triads as a copy editor. This is what she studied. And it's like, it's just, you know, I'm sick of that. I mean, she was maybe having a bad day. But she's right. She's able to say, we need to put the human element back into communication and writing. Now, that's like going full circle to say there's going to be a desire to have things said right. What's funny on Slack, our inner office conversation software, is that something happened, I think it was after the first week. I did throw something into AI and I put it on Slack. Of course, I got naced right away because it was said like, that's not Pastor Mike. Right? They know how I am raw on Slack, and they're like, oh, you polished that. Yeah, I did, you're right. But, I'm not above that.

Question Why is Samson mentioned among the Hall of Faith in the book of Hebrews despite all the evil he did in his life, and that we don't have it recorded that he repented of it?

Pastor Mike Yeah, well, here's the thing about everyone in Hebrews Chapter 11. I remember preaching through that chapter, and I said something in summary after I preached the chapter and I had a guy rip me out in public. I don't know, it was on online social media or something, because I summarized it like so many others have, the heroes of faith or whatever. And they just blasted me for saying anything positive about them. I thought, well wait a minute. You know, I think I'm standing on pretty good ground here in good company of people who have said these are people who are worthy, people of whom, I don't know, just to quote Scripture,



the world is not worthy, I don't know, God said that. So I'm going to say that if God is saying that he is careful to point out for us all the downsides of all these people and yet hold them up as examples of faith which is the whole point of the passage, they trusted God. And Samson, he did. Right? He trusted him not perfectly. Neither did Noah. No one did. We just read Job. Job is probably one of the best examples of someone, if we only had a few chapters on him, we'd think, this guy's perfect. He's not perfect. And if you read it carefully, you don't have to be that careful. He is an angry, depressed man, and he wants God, he wants to go a few rounds with God. Noah's getting drunk, you know, and we go page after page. And so when I took the criticism from that guy, I thought to myself, you're right, but the point is we're not Assyrians or Babylonians or Egyptians. All they do is hail their heroes. They make demagogues out of them. They deify their Caesars. And God gives us our heroes and says, yeah, David's up on the palace watching the gal across the street, getting her pregnant and killing her husband. Why? Because God wants to show us you don't trust in them, you trust in me. And then I think that is the key that every one of those guys, including Samson, you probably wouldn't know anything about that. All you'd know about Samson if this were a Syrian history or a Babylonian history or an Egyptian history, is that you should have seen this guy. He could kill a million Philistines with no trouble. But we get the whole warts and wrinkles and all. So everybody in there, eventually, if you study them all, they're all filled with warts and wrinkles. But Samson is a man who trusted God enough to fulfill the role. I mean, think about Manoah, his father, everything about Samson, just if you studied the Old Testament, you didn't even have Hebrews Chapter 11, you'd say why did God spend so much time in the book of Judges on him? There's nobody in Judges who has more ink spilled. So that's a big deal. Gideon, Samson, those are the two big ones. So I just think it's amazing. I don't think we have to record his repentance. We have to see that he did great things at times in his life because he trusted. He trusted God.

Question Hi, Pastor Mike, I want to say first of all that I definitely used ChatGPT to help me make this more succinct.

Pastor Mike Oh, okay. Did you start with, give me a stumper of a question?

Question Something like that. So I have a question about something in Matthew Chapter 27. It says that when Jesus died, the tombs were opened and many saints came back to life. And "then after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many." So my question is what happened to those people after that, did they just die again after living a long life or where were the souls or souls of others who died before Jesus came and died on the cross, like Abraham and David? Were they with God, or were they in some kind of waiting place, like Sheol? And I've heard some people say Sheol's like a waiting place that's divided into different sections for God's people, et cetera.

Pastor Mike Yeah, we need to stop thinking so compartmentalized about these words. To say Sheol is to speak about grandpa's gone over yonder. It's just a word describing they've died. They've gone to death. Sheol can describe a non-Christian's departure. It can describe a Christian's departure, so Sheol. So make it more fuzzy in your mind, not that they're not really dead. They're really dead. But it's not trying to say they went to a good place or a bad



place. It's that it's the place of the dead. Now I've read a lot of old stuff about dissertations about the netherworld and the connection to the land of the lost, but people who aren't right with God go there and people who are right with God go to the land of the dead, they go over yonder. That's the extent of that. Now, let's just talk about that Matthew Chapter 27 passage first, then we'll get to the other. Did they just die again and live a long life? Well, I'll say yes, they died again. I'm confident in that. Did they live a long life? They could have died the next week. One of them, two of them. They could have lived 10 years, 20 years, 30 years. It's like Lazarus. And the reason I say that is because First Corinthians Chapter 15 says that Jesus is, "the first fruits of those who" would be raised." Wait a minute, I can go back to the Old Testament and see people raised from the dead, but those are technically resuscitations because they weren't raised to immortality. Jesus is raised to immortality and everyone who trusts in Christ, everyone ultimately, is going to be raised to immortality, as Daniel Chapter 12 says. And Paul said it, "both the just and the unjust," are going to be resurrected. But we're going to be in a good place. So that convinced me, yes, they all died. It may be one of the reasons we have no other mention of this and there are Christians that have, I think, stepped away from the authority of Scripture by saying that's a weird passage and since we don't hear anything about it well I don't believe it. I think we should believe it because it's right there in the text of Scripture and I don't care if Luke didn't say it, I don't care if Mark didn't say it, it's there in Matthew Chapter 27. So I certainly believe it and we better believe it because we're going to get them to heaven to find out it happened and God's going to say, I told you so. How many times do I have to tell you? My dad said that a lot. So he only has to say it once. So where did they go? Which goes into the other question, right? I think Jesus tells that story in Luke about the Lazarus and the rich man. All I think we're trying to learn from that is there's no passing from one place to the other. And it doesn't matter your station in life here. If you trust in Christ you'll be in a good place. And if you don't trust in Christ, I don't care how rich you are, you're going to be in a heap of trouble. The reason people say, well, they had to be in a holding place is because of Jude and Second Peter, and Colossians, when it speaks about the fact that there's some kind of proclamation made of victory to the spirits now in prison. And what people are going to say is, well that must be all the people in the county jail at Sheol that he comes now and he's able to take those Old Testament saints and bring them into God's presence in heaven. And then the other ones he is just saying na-na-na-na-na-na ... You're staying there. OK. And then the tie-in in Jude and Second Peter is to the time of the flood. And then some people tie it to Genesis Chapter 6 and it has something to do with this weird thing that happened there in Genesis Chapter 6, we'll get into that another time I'm sure. But here's what I'm going to say. I don't want to make too much of that. Does he make a proclamation? Yes. Is there a particular group of people he's concerned about? Maybe. Certainly, a statement of who he makes a proclamation to doesn't mean it's exclusive. As I like to point to Colossians, because it doesn't tie it to the time of Noah, he took our sins, he nailed them to the cross, he freed us from the penalty, and he publicly triumphed over the enemies. So there was a declaration of victory, whatever that means, and all those who hated him, all those who thought sin has prevailed, and the demons that thought sin had prevailed, God's saying no. And there was something about the victory of the cross that is a proclamation. The word "Kērússō" is the Greek word that's used, and that's what stumbles people, because people think, well that must mean, because it's the same word for preaching. That's what the word "kērússō" is, the word "to preach." They think, oh, preaching, that means



they have a chance to get saved. And maybe that's what happened. Kērússō can also mean a proclamation. You're just proclaiming an indicative truth. And that's, I think, clearly from Jude, Second Peter and Colossians, is exactly what I think is happening. Did they transport to another place? I'm not so big on that, because I think we like to characterize this and really compartmentalize, in almost cartoonish ways. I don't think Abraham's like I can't wait to get into God's presence. I'm having a hard time with that. Is there some kind of ...? And here's why, because we think there must be some temporal time-based thing because until Christ died there's no possible way that Abraham can be in a good place. I'm thinking have you ever sat on a beach in Hawaii on a vacation? How can you be in a good place when you're a sinner? I'm saying of course Abraham can be in a good place. Can you read your Bible on a beach in Kaua'i and not have a good... Of course you can have a good day and Abraham can have a great day and God can be right there. So I don't know what Abraham's experiences are but it isn't bad and neither was the man who was begging at the gates of the rich man. So what changed? I guess in space and time everyone cheered when Christ died on the cross and paid the penalty. And was there a proclamation of victory? I think it's more of a proclamation to the losers, in particular the demons, which I think is clear in Second Peter and Jude. So that is as far as I want to go. Now, if you learn the creeds, if you went to a high church, they talk about Jesus died and descended into hell, right? The Pentecostals or the Charismatics or the TV preachers sometimes say, well, there he went to suffer for us in hell. You know that's not true, right? He suffered on the cross and he said, "Tetelestai," meaning "it is finished." But he didn't go to hell to pay any penalty. His suffering was to incur the penalty of our sin on a cross. And we have to decide whether it's everybody or the redeemed. I think it's the redeem. So, that's what took place.

Question Hello, Pastor Mike. My name is Jim, and I have heard discussions in the gospel where it said that Jesus was raised. The meaning is that Jesus was raised by the Father. And then I have heard another gospel, and I can't quote the Scripture, where I've heard that Jesus raised, as if he raised himself. So what do you think about that?

Pastor Mike Yeah, I think you can state it either way, because he did say it both ways. And he said, yeah, "I have authority to lay down my life, and I have the authority to take it up again." He says it in John Chapter 2, right? If you kill me, or you tear down this temple, God will raise it up. So there's credit to the triune God. Everything Jesus did was in the power of the Spirit. And at times, passages will focus on the fact that he did this, or he came in the power of the Spirit. And then there are other times we talk about Christ, in his power, did this particular thing. And sometimes as he is sitting there doing something, or even in the proclamation of the Father saying, "This is my beloved Son," right? There's this deference of, like, God's doing this work, or, even in his name of the Old Testament, like, "Immanuel, which means, God with us." So I just think there's no problem seeing that you can state it either way, because, yeah, what the Father does the Son does and he makes that statement. Everything the Father does I do. And it's not that we're blurring the personhood of the Father and the Son but they are of one essence and that's something very unique. It's hard to talk in terms of our pronouns because we don't know anything about what it is to be the triunity that God is. But you're right in that observation.



Question Hey, Pastor Mike, I'm a little bit perplexed regarding the Catholic teaching about Mary and the idolatry that goes along with that. I'm just curious as a Protestant how we should view Mary if in any elevated form rather than just what we're given in Scripture.

Pastor Mike Well, I think as a Protestant, because we've shifted the authority from a church that has assumed authority to say, we tell you what's true, and Protestants say, no, the Bible is going to be our source of authority. If we stick with our source of authority, that immediately kind of puts everything in perspective because we go, if she's all that important, where's all this information about her, right? She starts with what we call in Latin the "Magnificat," where she talks about having a savior. What does she need a savior for? I think really in the Roman Catholic theology the immaculate conception is not a statement about Jesus being born sinless, this is a statement about her being born sinless, she doesn't need a savior. As a matter of fact if you talk to Mother Teresa, you can't now, she would say Mary is actually the co-redemptrix, she came and brought you and is enabling you to be redeemed. They've absolutely elevated her to a place ensconced her through the magisterial teaching of the Roman Catholic Church to an absolutely, and I'll say this, absurd place. And you can't get there in the pages of Scripture. But just like I've said when I've sat there with five, six robed priests, they'll tell you when I talk to them about Purgatory, it doesn't matter what's in the Bible when it comes to what we're telling you, because we got the robes on and you don't. And so you're not going to win the argument. And I will say, and I think I learned this in my missiology classes, I think there was a great thirst for female deities from the pages of the New Testament, from the book of Acts. And the Greco-Roman world had a desire for it. I think you can go back to Genesis Chapter 3 and see a desire for it. But in South America, what we see in missions, the conflation of local religions into the Roman Catholic missionary work, I think it fed right into a desire for a feminized deity. And their answer is certainly met, whether they'll admit that's part of the intention or not, because the arc of this has come early in the Church. And it was ensconced in their creeds. So all I can say is you've got to choose your source of authority. They'll say it's the Bible plus these two things, right? The church's tradition and the teaching, the official teaching of the church. We're going to say no, it's the Scripture alone. And they think that's absurd. That's what they'll fight you tooth and nail on that. And I've had plenty of people argue with me about that. I'm saying, no, I'm left with that. Nothing makes sense if I have two authorities or three authorities. I got to have one authority, ultimate authority, and that's it. So if I start with that, I'm going, man, the Apostle Paul's going to Corinth, he's going to Berea, he's going to Antioch. Where's all the stuff about Mary if it's so important? There's nothing, nothing. And I know it's an argument from silence, but I'm thinking I'll argue from Mary's own words. She's a sinner. I'll argue it from the gospels. They knew she had other children. And that was an early, you know, heretical doctrine that she's, you know, perpetually a virgin. No, she wasn't. They say, well they were cousins. Well there's a word for that in the Greek New Testament if you want to use that word. But they're not they're her half-brothers of Christ. He had at least four brothers and one sister, at least.

Question Hey Pastor Mike, so my wife and I are first-time parents for kids who are finally going to Revival. We've been here for a long time. We've served under a lot of the pastors. We've asked the question. I wanted to ask what your original vision was for having Revival since we've come across 20 years here at Compass Bible Church. You know, we're talking



about a lot of cool things that are happening. Just in this sermon alone, or this Q&A alone, about people who serve, like Grace, my mother-in-law has gone to Revival. Just what was your vision for Revival? Why should we be sending our kids to Revival?"

Pastor Mike Well, it wasn't my vision. I hired this crazy guy named Bobby Blakey. And at that point, we were sending our kids to Hume Lake. And I grew up going to Hume Lake and Pine Summit, all these places. And Hume Lake, in particular, was like the one big summer camp. It was expensive, which, you know, everything's expensive. But there was always kind of a holding your nose. You never know what you're going to get. The speakers used to be, I think, pretty solid. And sometimes it was hit and miss, potpourri. Well, Bobby comes and he says, let me just put it on. We'll just do it ourselves. Like, OK, where? We'll go somewhere and do it. Like, oh, OK. Are you going to feed them, you know? Like, where are they going to sleep? You know, so, I don't know, I hope all the guys who work here with me would say, Pastor Mike's not going to just rain on your ideas. I mean, let's try it. If you can bring all the kids back, at least the first time, we'll give it a try. And he went out and he did it. And it took a guy like Bobby to really change this paradigm, because Pastor Bobby has the ability to rally leaders and those leaders they did stuff and we brought a truck with tanks full of water and, you know, people started cooking for all these students and so we put this thing on, they put this one on and they've had me come out and speak. So well I just kind of was sold, like, wow, this is great and then Pastor Bobby and Pastor Lucas just focused on doing the ministry part of it and they said would you come out and speak and so I just started speaking every year. I only missed one year and that was I think the second year and then I've been doing it ever since. So I'd just watch, you know, I go and preach, that's my job. And I'm just sold that because we put it on ourselves we get to, you know, tailor this. We can control the small groups. We can control the preaching and that's what camp ultimately is about. You know the games and all that, we have a great games crew and everything, we have a great team. But we want to make sure they're going to have good teaching and we're going to have good small group time and everything else is safe and all the rest and fun. That's really the philosophy, but it was, you know, it was Pastor Bobby's idea but I was all in favor of the idea which is let's make sure it's quality control from the top down. And he pulled it off and then we just followed in the footsteps of that trailblazer. Pastor Bobby went to plan a church and they said I'm going to buy some trolleys and then an ice cream truck and we said, like, okay. And then we're going to put a float in the Fourth of July parade and be on Channel 7 news. And we said, okay. Yeah, and it worked. Now we're like, we just stay out of the way.

Question OK, so it's another Catholic question. Both of my parents were Catholic. So before my father had passed, I mean, I knew he believed in God and Jesus, but he had an aneurysm and he was in a coma. So I don't know what happens between that state and God. And then the other parent, she had a priest come and give whatever his responsibility was.

Pastor Mike Last rites, yeah.

Question Right, so I'm just kind of confused about my parents. So I just wanted your take on that.



Pastor Mike You know, I don't know what it was that sparked my time with God thinking about salvation. I mean, obviously, I've preached about salvation and written about it and all the rest. But I was just struck. And I know I've said this probably in Q&As. I was just struck again with, like, what is justice? What is it? And I just, it was just this week, I was like, it's just doing the right thing. It's the right thing. And what's the wrong thing is to forgive anybody. That's the wacky thing. And to think, for me to be upset that anyone gets the right thing, it's almost like me being a brat and thinking, well, wait a minute. It is great that I get the wacky thing, the amazing grace thing. But, as I've often said, and surely you've heard me say this, no one's shaking their fist at God where they end up. And I hope I've taught you well enough you've been around here that hell, like heaven I taught last week, or the new earth, is all graduated based on what people have done. It's according to what they've done, what they've known, motives, all the rest, effect. So everyone gets precisely what they deserve. And I know that the secular mind can't understand that. So, no one's going to be upset. They may not like it. And I think maybe those thoughts come when I think of myself, and I think what do I deserve? Right? When Newton writes the song, Amazing Grace, "How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me," when he feels that and says that, that's when there's a sense of it's just not right. Like the man who Jesus speaks of in the story of the tax collector, "have mercy on me, a sinner," he won't even look up to God. That's a far cry from the arrogant youth group eighth-grade girl who thinks she deserves God's love, this is absurd. So, all I can say is I mean I can throw out a platitude, "well people's faith is sometimes better than their theology," and maybe, who knows, I don't know, and sometimes when people face their own mortality maybe... Who knows. I don't know, but it is not going to take away from your joy even though you think well I love them, they're my flesh and blood. Well, your ultimate dad is the God who sent his Son to save you. You are not going to in any way have your eternity marred by the person on this planet whom you love the most not having the exceptional grace of God bestowed upon them. You think that now but I would just dare you to plumb the depth of what grace is and think that's just not right. If all of us today, if I could just have waved a magic wand and said, you're all going to hell now because I'm going to take away your salvation, which, of course, is impossible. But if I could and said now go home and think about it, you're going to get precisely what you deserve. At some point you have to say, that is what I deserve. See, there's nothing about what Jesus put in the mouth of the rich man saying, I don't deserve to be here. Every American when you even dangle the thought in their mind you're going to go to hell, they say I don't deserve that, they immediately protest. In Jesus' parable the man doesn't protest a bit. He says I don't want my brothers... is there anything? This guy doesn't have to be here. Can my brothers not go here? Not a word about his own state. So righteousness is what's right. Justice is what's right. And all of us, whatever we get, if we go to a place of judgment, is what's right. If we go to be with Christ, that's not right. That will be the most humbling thing ever, to have God's grace. It should be humbling now. But, you know, there's somebody living in Laguna Niguel, someone living in Torrance, someone living in Coda who you don't know who is dying tonight. And you're like, oh, that's sad, I guess. But you don't think about it, and I don't think about it. But, you know, your dad. So, that's hard. Think about God. God made all four of those people. And God loves all four of those people, and all four of these people either embraced the truth of the gospel or they didn't. And all I'm saying is that's a hard truth. I get it. But there are people, who walk away from Christianity because they think, well, my dad's not going to be there, or my friend, my



brother's not going to be there. I just don't think you understand it then. So I would just say, try to have some of those moments of plumbing the depth of what it means to be a recipient of God's grace. It's amazing. I wrote that book on "Lifelines for Tough Times" and the chapter I got the most grief... I don't know why I'm talking about all the complaints I've received, but I wrote that chapter about the rats in my hedge, which is a little more revealing than I wanted it to be, especially before you come over to my house for dinner. But the rats, right? And I say, if I exterminate all those rats, well, they're rats. But if I take one out, this is when my daughter was living at home, and I just give them the shots and shampoo their fur, whatever they call it. Put a pink ribbon around the rat's neck, put bells on it, give it a comfortable place to sleep. And she sits there and pets it while we have dinner. That's my prerogative, too. Rats in my garden. I didn't even make the rat. But, can someone say but you zapped the other ones? Yeah, well, I did. What's amazing is that I saved the rat. Not that I killed the other rats. The problem is that your neighbor doesn't think he's a rat. We don't think we're rats. And that's the chapter that got me in trouble with people who read my book. Thankfully, most people buy the books but they never read them. (audience laughing) They just get through the first chapter and that's about all they get. So anyway, I know that didn't help. But I could start with the platitudes. And it may be true, because I do know that. Pastor Kellen is on a streak right now. He's had like two guys come to faith like two or three days before they die. And I've had that experience before. I had one who was like 102. I got called in and I shared the story and then Pastor Kellen had it happened again. Just to have someone on their deathbed come to faith in Christ, and it'd be obvious, like this is a real transfer of trust. Amazing. And so who knows? People come to faith in Christ without a pastor over them. Who knows? I don't know. That's all I can say.

Question So a couple of questions ago you mentioned Matthew Chapter 27 or Matthew Chapter 27 was mentioned. A couple of verses before it says, "Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split." A significant amount of years ago you preached on the veil tearing at a Good Friday service. Would you be able to touch a little bit on the significance of the veil tearing and like the position of the temple and then behind it Golgotha and all of that.

Pastor Mike Well, there is some question about which veil tore. But I think if Josephus' explanation of the veil that was the most visible, the outer veil, it would be remarkable for that veil to split. And it probably would be visible from those who passed by, not on the Golgotha side, but on the Kidron side. But it obviously was a sign, I don't know if this is what you're looking for, but a sign that the whole point of the temple to put a post, a guard, a gate up between you and the symbolic presence of God was torn, it was opened. And as the book of Hebrews puts it, it was a curtain that was opened through the flesh of the Son of God. And that was the point. God had to send his Son to be the target of his justice so that I wouldn't have to be excluded from the Garden of Eden, so to speak. That sermon is available to listen to, and I go into a lot of detail. And Rose White had built our replica in the auditorium of the veil. It is interesting to read about the explanations. It would be Herod's veil, ultimately. He was the one who remodeled it. But there is something about the period between 33 AD and 70 AD, whatever it was, how the writers talked about the temple never being the same.



Something was wrong, and they knew it. Even though they rejected Christ, they knew that the worship was never the same after that. Anyway, all right.

Pastor Mike Well, on that note, let me pray for you. And then you can stick around for another hour. Let's pray. God, thanks so much for this crew. Thanks for our common bond in Christ. Give us a sense of your presence as we fellowship now. Thank you so much for our auditorium that's underway. Thank you for the provision for that. Thank you for our cafe, our bookstore. Just thanks for all that you're doing in our church. I pray we continue to be as just enthusiastic about you and about your truth and about getting this message out to more and more people than we've ever been. We do pray, even as Aldi was talking about this very important week that's about to start for our students, please, as we focus on this topic of repentance, I pray you'd bring many teenagers to faith in Christ, a kind of repentant faith that redirects their lives to fruitfulness and service in a deeper way and a more, just in terms of longevity, a longer way than would otherwise be the case. Just save a lot of these young people at Compass and just let them make a huge difference. So God, thanks for that. Keep us all physically safe. Just pray for a good and productive time there. And just thanks for the beautiful weather. Thanks for letting us live here. Thanks for the common grace that we get to enjoy. Just thanks for our church family.

In Jesus' name. Amen.