



Ask Pastor Mike Live 2026 – Part 1

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike: Well, if you are new to this, we only do this once every 52 weeks and that is allowing you to set the agenda for the weekend. And we have three microphones. We don't write in the questions; we don't text in the questions. We figure you can just give us your question. So if you have a question we have three pastors here running around with microphones. So just wave one of them down. We'll get a microphone in your hand and we'll get started with whatever is on your mind related to the Bible, the Christian life, theology, some dilemma you're facing. I'd love to answer the question. So go ahead and pop up, stand up and we'll get a microphone near your mouth if you can and we'll talk.

Question: I see a lot of people who have given up their afternoon and evening to love God. The people on stage, every person here, I see a lot of young people. What prayer would you say for the young people who are actually making a difference?

Pastor Mike: What prayer would I say? Is that the question? I missed it. Were you asking what prayer would I say? I missed it. Maybe Pastor Lucas heard it.

Pastor Luke: It was a statement and a question at the same time.

Pastor Mike: And the question was?

Pastor Luke: Yeah. What prayer would you say for young people?

Pastor Mike: Okay. Great. Yeah. My prayer probably is like your prayer. I'm assuming there's nothing more important than to invest in Christ and his cause. Everything else is all going to burn, so we might as well according to Second Peter Chapter 3, invest in something eternal. And young people need to latch on sooner rather than later to something that's going to matter for eternity and that's Christ and his kingdom. So get that now before your hair turns gray. That'd be good.

Question: Charlie Kirk and his people have been pushing this idea that Protestants should observe the Sabbath. What is your feeling on that? Is there any harm in that? Or what's your feeling on that?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, there's harm in it if you're trusting in that act as some kind of act of righteousness. Because it's much like Paul when he wrote the Galatian churches, he said if you let yourself be circumcised, Christ is of no value to you, "you've fallen away from grace." So if you do anything, certainly related to the Old Testament ceremonial law, hoping that's going to buy you some favor with God, then you are missing the gospel entirely. The Sabbath was a sign according to Exodus Chapter 34 between Israel and God. That covenant-keeping sign much like circumcision means nothing now. First Corinthians Chapter 7 says circumcision means nothing but only "keeping the commandments of God." Well, circumcision was a commandment of God. Sabbath-keeping was a commandment of God. Yeah, but it



was a commandment of God, a ceremonial commandment of God, between Israel and God. So there is no Sabbath anymore. Now, I know some people won't agree with me because they've read the Puritans and they think the Sabbath now is Sunday. There's nothing in the Bible that tells us that the Sabbath is Sunday. You should have a day of rest. The word Sabbath means rest, so you should have a day of rest. And we need our batteries recharged every seven days or so. That's the way it's set up before the Mosaic Law. Hundreds and hundreds of years before the Mosaic Law God gave us the pattern of work and rest. But yes, there are problems if you are saying, well, we should keep the Sabbath and I'm pointing to a Bible verse, and that's the problem. Now, the only concession to this in Scripture was in Romans Chapter 14, When people conditioned in their conscience about eating vegetables and, you know, eating kosher, not eating, you know, pork or what have you, and worshiping on the Sabbath, they had their conscience weakened and therefore they became Christians. And the people who were Romans, Latins and Greeks, they thought, what's wrong with you guys? Here, have a BLT and forget the Sabbath. Let's go plow the field on Saturday. And Paul said, stop it, stop it. Their conscience is weak, right? You don't destroy the work of God for the sake of your liberties. So Paul said, stop doing that. "One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind," right? Because every servant's going to answer to God. Well, that's a weak conscience, right? Because every day is the same because there is no Sabbath. That's what Hebrews Chapter 4 is all about. The Sabbath day was a sign between Israel and God. And the book of Hebrews written to the Hebrews was all about, just like the priesthood, just like the Sabbath day, just like kosher eating, just like everything related to Israel and God in the ceremonial law, has all been fulfilled. Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 1. It was "a shadow of the good things to come." The substance is in Christ. So I'm not interested in anybody looking at a Bible verse and saying let's go worship on Saturday. I'm not interested in that, nor should you be. And I think it's dangerous because you might think I'm doing something righteous now. You're not. You're just changing the day you're worshiping on. And if you think, well, I go to church here. Well, only half of the year are you beating the sundown. So Sabbath ends at sundown if you're a Jew. We're not Jews, most of us here. Even if you are a Jew, now, we're part of this thing where the Jews and Gentiles have become one new organization. "One new man" as the Apostle Paul says. So we don't observe the Sabbath, we don't eat kosher. You can if you want, and you can come to Saturday service, or you can go to a church that has a Saturday service that meets at three in the afternoon so you're sure to beat it before sundown. But you cannot do that thinking you're obeying any rule from God. It's no longer a rule from God. That's my concern.

Question: Pastor Mike, if you were raising your kids now, I'm curious when and how you give them access to smartphones and then, like, what level of confidence you'd have in manufacturer parental controls. Google, Apple. Or if you consider, you know, dumb phones that don't have access to the Internet or social media.

Pastor Mike: Yeah, dumb phones are certainly a smart thing to do (audience laughing) if you're a parent and you definitely... Here's the problem. And I'm preaching on this all next week at Revival. And I've spent dozens of hours already preparing for this. We have a heart problem and a behavioral problem. And the behavioral problem is a slave to the heart



problem. You're raising cubs who are becoming lions, and they all want to eat gazelles or whatever they eat, antelopes. Okay. You're not going to change the appetite until the heart is changed. So you're focusing on behavior when you're changing what kind of phone they have. And I get it. We should. Right? I mean, we should care about that. We're not going to allow the kids to play on the freeway. We're not going to give them the keys to a car when they're 13. All of this makes sense, right? So we should curtail their freedoms. That's what childhood is about. And First Corinthians Chapter 13 tells us that the foolishness of childhood needs constraints and guardrails that adults should not have to have, although fools do need them. So we need to definitely curtail freedoms. And when can I start to say, well, those guardrails need to come down with the kinds of supervision that parents can have, having conversations and discipleship going on. Because your number one goal should be discipling the heart. That is important. Now Compass Press is about to put out a book about guarding and protecting our children. And I think that's going to be helpful to kind of think through it. It's a very short book, but it's going to be about thinking through everything in terms of how do we as Christian parents guard, and not overguard, but guard the way we're supposed to, protect, shelter our children. So that's one thing we're doing to contribute to this conversation. And parents should be talking to other parents. But here's the deal, your kids love gazelles so much, they're going to find a way to outwit you, you know, no matter how smart you are, they will find a way. And they do find ways. And I have all kinds of conversations through 40 years of doing this where people come and talk about how their kids have done so much they had no clue they were doing and that happens all the time. And it's heartbreaking because you have to see the heart change. And that's a really, really difficult thing because as John Chapter 1 says, we're not born by the will of man, we're born by the will of God. We'll talk about regeneration. So this is all about discipleship. This is all about what Pastor John got up here and talked about in the announcements. We're here to reach, teach and train. Those are the heart issues, right? Parents, though, also have to deal with the behavioral issues. Of course the child is known by his behavior the Proverbs say so it's both/and but you need to know that even if you have all the behavioral guardrails in place, you haven't solved the problem. You haven't solved the problem. The problem has to be solved by you begging God for regeneration in the hearts of your kids, and you working hard to make sure every single day you're dealing with under the surface issues. It would be helpful to start even when it comes to phones, because a lot of this is pornography, right? It comes down to pornography. John Foubert, I think, is his name, wrote a book. He's a PhD dean of a college in Tennessee, Union College. He wrote a book called "Protecting Your Children from Internet Pornography." It's not a Christian book in the sense that it's giving Christian solutions, but it's a book that every parent should read because it talks about the problem of having 12-year-olds, you know, engaging in looking at pornography, the damage it does. It does damage to everyone, particularly the kind of pornography we have going on today, which is much different than the kind of pornography when I was a kid that you might be able to get a peek at under the cardboard thing at the liquor store, very different. So we have a whole new world of degradation that people, because of the principle of diminishing returns, that we're doing great damage to our kids if we don't do all we can to protect them from it. But all we can do is something that is impossible as they grow, because one day they'll be your age and you're not going to be checking in on them at that point. So your goal now while you have them constantly in your home is to drive to the heart, always to the heart, drive to the heart.



Because even if you were successful in shutting them down with all the software lockdowns and everything else, if you don't change the appetites and that comes with a regenerate heart, we have problems. But I'm all for guarding, and dumb phones should be the first step for everyone. And then after that, if you're going to give smartphones then there needs to be, you know, all kinds of open-door issues. Computers should be done in an open room; there should be all the kinds of things that just should be common sense. Kids should not be bringing phones in their room. Right? There are all these things that should be common sense. My kids were raised in a time when it wasn't quite as bad as it is now. But still, those rules were all, you know, in vogue in my home. Right? You couldn't take your phone in your room, you couldn't do all the things that I think some parents didn't even think about, but they should have been thinking about because this stuff is damaging to young minds. It's damaging to all minds but particularly to young minds. So that at least gets you started. You should read this book protecting our children coming out soon at Compass Press, and you probably don't need the book by John Foubert, but it is helpful. He talks about all the different ways. He starts with the problem and then deals with some practicalities. But always saying discipleship, discipleship. He doesn't deal with Bible stuff. I wish he did. It's Northfield Press that published the book, but we all should be concerned because of the whole phone thing, I mean, there are other problems, but the ultimate atomic bomb is the pornography problem. That's the best I can do in five minutes.

Question: Hey, Pastor Mike, I have two questions. One, based on your response just there about the kids, about your kids. And the second one is the one I was thinking of. But the first one is would you allow your children to go to public schools today because the growing up, the whole sexual thing is very, very different? And I know you've always said you wanted to inoculate your kids and you were very involved with them and you knew what they were doing and going through. So you walked with them through that. But my other question is this. From a Reformed or Covenantal perspective and a Law/Gospel Distinction that they see in the New Testament. When I'm thinking about our sanctification, a lot of times the Covenantal guys will talk about Jesus preaching law like, for instance, to the rich young ruler. And what we do with the law, we say there when Jesus said, "go and sell all that you have," we say, well, what he really meant was to be willing to do that. But he was preaching law to that young man according to a Covenantal perspective and many other places in which we are told to do something it's a law issue and we turn and we look to Christ because there's no way that we can fulfill anything. Does that make sense? You know what I'm talking about.

Pastor Mike: I know exactly what you're talking about. Yeah. As far as the schools today, I'm not tracking them as much as I was tracking them with my kids where I had to make the decision every year. I had the advantage, by God's grace, to have my wife be able to stay at home and full-time, be a stay-at-home mom, which was amazing. And we were going to make the sacrifices to make that happen. And so the discipleship of my wife in my children's lives was super helpful in the discipleship process, so I don't think that I could have sent them to public school even back then were I not having the hands-on discipleship of my wife, not to mention my own. I mean, I wrote a Bible survey for kids. That was just something that I wrote for my own kids and engaged my own kids in stuff like that it just grew out of that because we were actively trying to disciple our own children. So it would really depend on how bad it is.



And the world is bad. They can't drive up I-5 freeway, you know, I sent at least one of my kids, Pastor John, to Master's University. What am I going to say? Don't drive through downtown LA, right? Don't drive through Rancho Santa Fe or, you know, don't drive through the I-5 freeway. You go around, go the I-210 freeway instead of the I-5 freeway. I mean, just like the world is filled with garbage. And I'm not saying, hey, expose them to garbage in the second grade, but I do know that my goal is to disciple them through this and pray for regeneration and hopefully see this regeneration secured, in the case of our kids, you know, somewhere in their teenage years, and then be able to see them implement the sanctification that leads me to your second question. And so I don't know, but it is getting really hard to send our kids to public school, depending on what kind of public schools we're sending them to, which are getting worse, not better in most cases. All due respect to every teacher in the room, because there are some great teachers still out there teaching. The Law/Gospel thing. Yeah, I don't buy any of that in terms of how you interpreted Matthew Chapter 19. Here's the problem. He is revealing the lack of what needs to happen and that is what I talked about in the earlier question. And that is the regeneration that needs to take place. Right? The whole problem is the rich young ruler is trying to justify himself by the law in the second tablet of the law, and then Jesus turns to the first tablet of the law and he says "go, sell what you possess." Why? Because the first tablet of the law says, "you should have no other gods before me." And he clearly had a god before him, he was introduced as the rich young ruler and he's unwilling to part with that. Well, I don't think this is some kind of, you know, fiction. Hey, I just want you to be willing to do it. Jesus said to Peter, James, John, leave your nets and follow me. It wasn't a like I want you to be willing to. "They left their nets and followed him." I do think that's exactly what he wanted them to do. What does he need to do? I mean, for the rich young ruler he needs to dethrone the riches, right? There has to be what he says in Luke Chapter 14 verse 33. There has to be a willingness to say I'm willing to relinquish, renounce all that I have to be his disciple. That's the requirement. And the Law/Gospel Distinction does not negate that, right? That's what faith is. Faith is Second Corinthians Chapter 5 verse 15, no longer living for myself, but for him who died for me and rose again. That's impossible without the active work of God's grace because Ephesians Chapter 2 says, I'm "dead in the transgressions and sin." So I can be as reformed as possible, understanding the deadness of my sin. But how do I become alive to God to walk in the good works he's prepared for me to live for him, to put him first? How does that work? It doesn't work without God's quickening grace, right? His effectual grace. Right? So I'm all about the theology of it, but I'm not ready to say, you know, this was some... Here's what happens with some of that. Some people, some groups, depending on who we're talking about, because I know who you're talking about, but there are other groups who have said, let's take all that Jesus said and say that's not the kind of evangelism we should ever do. We should just put this over here. You know, Ray Comfort, our friend up the street, he'll say well, we preach the law to expose sin. And that's clearly what I think was happening. You were exposing the sin of breaking the first commandment, and what he needed was an act of regenerating grace to even be able to say, okay, I'll do what Peter, James and John have done, though I'll leave my nets and follow you. I'll leave my riches and follow you. Because on the books is, from our perspective at least, Luke Chapter 14 verse 33. And it starts in verse 25 in that passage where it says, "great crowds accompanied him, and he turned to them and said," and what does he say? You have to hate your life. You have to hate your mother, your father, your sister, your brothers, even your own life. So he's saying



you got a problem. You cannot come to me, to quote Luke Chapter 9 verses 57 through 62, you cannot come to me and say, I'll follow you but... I'll follow you but... That's not like law, and now I get saved by law, because grace does enable me to keep those kinds of laws. And the simple law is Christ is King, Christ is Lord. And anybody should understand that. And in the Reform tradition, even people are willing to write books about that. Of course, he's the Lord. So, you know, I don't want to tap dance around Matthew Chapter 19 and say that he's not preaching the gospel by calling him to leave his riches behind. That is certainly going to expose his sin. And the only enablement to do that is God's grace. And unfortunately, the rich young ruler went away sad because he had much riches. And Jesus turns to his disciples and says how "hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." What does that mean? He's not saved. He just proved he's not saved. Why? Because he loves his wealth and you "cannot be my disciple," Luke 14:33, unless you "renounce all that he has." And every real testimony in this room right now has done that. Every real testimony in this room has come to a place of saying my faith in Christ is saying I'm now trusting in you. It's no longer about me, it's about you. Second Corinthians 5:15, I no longer live for me, I live for you. That's the basis of faith. I'm trusting him. I know there's more nuance to that in the whole Law/Gospel Distinction, but...

Question: So I have a lot of friends who are new believers or nonbelievers who are seeking, and they are asking me about sexual immorality in the bounds of a dating relationship. They understand, like obviously traditional sex falls within there but they aren't sure where the line should be drawn. And I was wondering if you could help me explain that to them.

Pastor Mike: Well, without getting too explicit in a Saturday night service. (Audience laughing) Yeah, the equipment on a man and a woman should remain non-sexually engaged in any way. And it would be dumb for us to start the engines, rev the engines and not put this all in gear and take this for a spin if we're not supposed to engage the transmission and take this for a spin. That's why Christian should say we're doing a lot of things to prevent what is technically called adultery or immorality or fornication in this case. Right? And I will go even further because the Old Testament is willing through a euphemism of adultery. It uses this phrase, that's not your nakedness. Remember, it says, this is your brother's nakedness, this is your uncle's nakedness. This is your father's nakedness. So, okay, even that, that's a euphemistic way of saying you can't have sex with her. You can't have sex with her. Okay, so even that tells me, okay, you have to keep your clothes on. Right? So there are people, I'm sure, asking you this thinking, well, we're not having sex, but we're getting naked on the couch. Okay. Sorry. That's enough of it to say you crossed beyond a boundary of what is acceptable in a biblical context of what we're talking about. So, yeah, it really comes down to wisdom. And I use that illustration a lot. You know, if you're 15 years old, you don't have your license then don't sit here and drive the car up and down the driveway. You're not allowed to drive yet. You can just look at the car. You can sit on the hood. This is a bad illustration, (audience laughing) but you cannot get in the car and start the car and, you know, mess around with the steering wheel. Just wait until you get your license. Ahhh. (audience laughing) Certain answers I regret. I hope that helps in some way. Let's get on to quickly to the next question. (audience laughing)



Question: So, I attend a different faith. But I had a question because I'm trying to learn what you guys believe and things like that. So I'm hearing different people quote Scriptures and they're talking about how we know that the Lord fulfilled certain commandments and the law, certain laws are done away with. And so how do we know something's been fulfilled? Or for you being the pastor how do you know if a teaching should be done away with because Jesus fulfilled it and/or should not be practiced because we talked about a couple of things that were mentioned that you're like, probably no, it's not because of righteousness, it's not because of this, but like it was spoken of in the Bible. So how do you know where to follow what was in the Bible and when not to?

Pastor Mike: Great question. The critics of Christianity are going to say you guys just pick and choose. You guys just pick and choose. We don't pick and choose. The Bible has to tell us, right? There are 40 authors of Scripture according to Scripture itself. God has moved these authors with one author authoring all these things which makes perfect sense because over 1400 years this has created one book that allows us to write systematic theologies, which in our bookstore we can realize the harmony and unity of this book. And we say, okay, this book right here is God's Word to us, right? This is what Second Timothy Chapter 3 verse 16 says. We say, okay, this is a book that is God's revelation to us. Now, anything in this book that's going to tell us, okay, these things no longer apply or these things apply in this context, but not in this context, then we follow that. If the Bible says we're supposed to do this and not that, then we do this and not that. It doesn't matter when people say, oh, you guys are against homosexuality, but, you know, in the same chapter it says you can't wear two different kinds of material in your cloak. Okay. And let's look at the label on your shirt. Okay. I'm all about it. I will absolutely do exactly what that passage says if that is exactly what the passage is telling us to do in New Covenant days. The reality is the Levitical law regarding two different kinds of seeds in your field, two different kinds of fabrics in your cloak, having a Levitical priesthood, having a priest bringing sacrifices to an altar, burning incense, having shewbread on the table in the tabernacle. All of these things are clearly described by Christ, by the apostles, and in the New Testament as all of these things were ceremonial laws fulfilled in Christ. If it didn't say that, then I would have to do them. But they all are. I just quoted one example in First Corinthians Chapter 7 that says circumcision means nothing, right? And it makes perfect sense when you read it in its context that this was a sign between a particular genetic offspring, the offspring of Abraham, and how Israel related to God. Now, God's not done with them yet and he's going to pick this story up according to Romans Chapter 11 at the end of time. But for now, everything God said was a ceremonial or covenantal picture that Israel had with God. Sabbath. Circumcision. I don't have to do any of that. What do I have to do? Well, he gives us two things to do that are very specific, the Lord's Supper and baptism. I have to do that. And then all the other things that aren't quite as ceremonial. We have to meet together, we have to read our Bibles. We have to preach. Right? We have to worship. So we do all of that. We do exactly what the Bible tells us to do and everything else that he says, nope, you don't have to do that anymore, then we don't have to do that anymore. We do exactly what God tells us to do or tells us we don't any longer have to do. That's it. If I don't have precedent to say it no longer applies, it no longer applies. See, people look at us and say, well, how come you don't have women pastors? Because there's nothing in the Bible that rescinds that command. So we don't have women pastors. We take a lot of heat for that



because the big church down the street says, oh, we changed our mind on that because, you know, we figured it out. Well, we haven't figured it out because there's no way around that in Scripture. Right? But we're against all the things the Bible's against that have not been rescinded. And we're for all the things the Bible is for that have not been relinquished. And we can do that by studying this book very carefully. And it's really not all that hard if you read it through a few times and you start to see, oh, this all makes sense. There's a third set of rules in the Old Testament that sometimes confuse, and that is because the Old Testament was written to a nation that lived among nations, and a lot of the rules were for the government to govern the people. Think about it. In 1445 B.C., they came out of Egypt. That was a group of people living as slaves within a nation, Egypt, well established, one of the most, you know, established nations in the ancient Near East. Now Israel needed rules. They needed to know how much if someone came into your house and stole your stuff, what was the restitution supposed to be? Well, they had to add a fifth. So 20%. What was the law going to say about adultery, right? What was the punishment supposed to be? So you have all those rules. What were those for? For the leaders of a nation how to function as a civil society. Okay? New Testament says you're no longer a nation among nations. All of these rules are for an international organization that is caring about getting people's souls saved, and you're now supposed to live in obedience to the nation that you live under. And Jesus made that clear, pay taxes to Herod. Go do all that. I'm building an international organization, my kingdom, from now on it's not of this world, right? I'm now getting a spiritual kingdom set up and I want you to go make disciples of all the nations. We're not building one nation here. So all of that makes perfect sense when you read now all of a sudden all those civil laws maybe a government will use those to kind of figure out what's smart about civil organization in their nation. But now, as a Christian, as a pastor, I'm not going to look to those civil laws in Exodus and go, okay, this is what I'm living by in my household, because they're civil laws for a nation living among nations. I'm a leader of an international organization caring about, as the Great Commission says, reaching, teaching and training. So if the Bible can clearly show me what's to be kept now in the New Testament age and what isn't, we're going to do it. If it originally said to do it, we're not going to do it if it now says we no longer need to do it. To discern this it takes some scholarship. That's why I'm supposed to be, according to First Corinthians, focused on this job. My job is to study and study and study and pray and pray and pray and come and teach. That's my job. And the Bible says if these people give in the offering, I should be able to do this without having to go out and be an electrician or a plumber or a doctor. I should be able to study so I can do this well and make sure I'm teaching these things according to this book, that's my job. And we have a whole team of guys who do this with me, and they're on platforms all over, sometimes on this platform teaching. And this is why you want to go to a church where you have some full-time pastors who are giving themselves to study and teaching and prayer, and that's what we do around here. There's more to it, maybe, that you'd want, but there's the answer.

Question: I have a few friends who've had various levels of exposure to like, Catholicism and, you know, Buddhism and I was wondering if you had a recommendation for good resources. I pointed them to, you know, the gospel, C.S. Lewis, sometimes, you know, The Case for Christ. And I was wondering if there's like a specific, I guess, like recommendation for, okay, you could start, you know, in Matthew's gospel and then or like even like a specific



breakdown of like, okay, where you should start reading the Bible because some have just like read the Bible straight through from like King James. And, you know, he's like, okay, that wasn't okay or cool. But then so there are like various degrees but I know it's not like a one-size-fits-all. And it's like ultimately the Holy Spirit that takes, you know, control of their hearts and, you know, you just point them in a direction. But I was wondering if there is like a good...

Pastor Mike: Well, number one, I wouldn't give someone a 500-year-old English Bible because I remember reading Shakespeare in my high school class and I'm like, wow, this seems like another language. So I wouldn't give someone a Greek New Testament to read, and I wouldn't give someone a 500-year-old English text. So get them a readable translation. We use the English Standard Version here. It's up to date. It's readable. It's understandable. There are several others, New American Standard, New International Version, there are plenty of other scholarly, good, up-to-date translations. Get him a good translation. And then, whether you're a Buddhist or a Catholic or they're exposed to those things, I'd start reading in the book of Romans. That's what Martin Luther, who started this whole Protestant Reformation 500 years ago was reading, reading Galatians and reading Romans and said wait a minute, this church is messed up. And I'm paraphrasing. But that's what he said by reading these two books, right? He said, this is messed up because justification by faith is clearly spelled out after the preliminary stuff about our sin. By Chapter 4, he's saying to us, here's what it takes to get right with the living God, not the sacramental system of the Roman Catholic Church. So I would read the book of Romans three times over, and if I've been exposed to Catholicism and even Buddhism, because we need the proprietorial work of Christ, not some kind of melding into nirvana. I've got to have a solution for my sin. And you'd be surprised how many religious systems out there have no answer for that. And yet that is the problem. The problem is, and everyone knows it, we have a problem. Things aren't the way they're supposed to be, and I'm a participant in the way things aren't supposed to be. So how do we fix that, right? And even in Islam, that seems so rigidly religious and God is so great and merciful Allah, they have no proprietary work to solve the sin problem. All they can say is God is merciful and I hope he forgives me. Right? I'm sorry. You need the payment paid. And at least the book of Romans, if someone's going to go through it a few times, is going to say here's the answer. The answer is Christ crucified. So I'd start there. And for books, if you go into our bookstore after the service is over and a lot of the comparative religion books in there are helpful. We have Walter Martin's book in there. It has a chapter on Hinduism. We have individual standalone books on Catholicism just comparing the difference between Catholicism and biblical Christianity. I think Ron Rhodes' book is in there on that. There's just a whole section on comparative religions. It may be a small section for the sake of shelf space but whatever we carry in there I would recommend picking up. But the book of Romans is a good place to start.

Question: I just wonder if you can explain Exodus Chapter 4 verse 24 through 26. Yeah.

Pastor Mike: Circumcision preceded this, it had already been commanded. Moses had not done this. Zipporah, his wife, was not happy about the disobedience here. "The lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death." God is engaging in disciplinary action with Moses. I think this is all part of what God sometimes is doing for the sake of the



audience. In other words, God has a plan for Moses, obviously, right? This is almost anthropomorphic language in terms of he's making... What he's trying to do here, and it's a lot like Hebrews Chapter 12, the disciplinary action of God is so that we can share in his holiness. In other words, you're doing wrong. God's going to come in to do something harsh so that you'll do what's right. Discipline is not pleasant. It always seems painful so that it can bring us into alignment with righteousness. So here God, whatever it means that he was going to put him to death, it was clear that this is not good. And "then Zipporah," verse 5, "took a flint cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it." Right? I can picture this like throwing this foreskin down. "'You're a bridegroom of blood to me!' So he let him alone," God did. And "it was then that she said, "'A bridegroom blood,' because of the circumcision." So she steps in, you can picture the marital conflict here. Some of us know what that's all about. And you weren't obeying God. God comes to discipline us. We're on our way here. And she picks up the flint knife, does the deed, and God's wrath is abated and on they go. And now we have circumcision put in place as it should have been and Moses' disobedience is rectified. It's a weird passage, I get it, but God is correcting what should have been done. Let's go to a couple other passages just in thinking through. Think of the Babylonian exile in the Old Testament, or go earlier, closer to this. In Joshua's day they're going into the Promised Land after Moses had wandered around the wilderness. Okay, this is early on. This is Exodus Chapter 4. This is the beginning of them coming out of Egypt. Well, they wandered around in the book of Numbers for forty years, and then Moses dies. This last thing in Deuteronomy Chapter 33, he gives this last sermon, and then Joshua gets the baton and he goes into the Promised Land. Well, guess what wasn't happening for 40 years? The sons were not getting circumcised. So they get circumcised as they go into the land. They're all going to get obedient again to the sign of the covenant. Why? Because they were under discipline. So here is the thing. God wants to bless the people here and wants the leader to be in compliance with the sign of the covenant. Right? This started 600 years earlier with Abraham. So this is a 600-year-old command and Moses wasn't doing it. He knew. Moses was super-smart. He was raised in the top educational tier in Egypt. He certainly knew the Jewish history and he had forsaken the obedience to the covenant sign, which may be, I don't know, like you and me, we'd be a little squeamish doing what we should do here in regard to circumcision in our family. All right.

Question: The question is if we die and we go to heaven do we go to heaven as a breath of life, as a spirit or as a soul? And also, how do we put that together with the Second Coming in the resurrection?

Pastor Mike: According to Second Corinthians Chapter 5, we go back naked. And that means, here's how theologians put it, we call this the intermediate state because it's a temporary state. We go there disembodied. Disembodied. So you and I, if we're Christians, we're trusting in Christ. We die. Right? This is clear all the way back to Genesis. Death is defined as the spirit leaving the body. Right? Rachel's spirit leaves her body and she dies. Right? Jesus on the cross says to the Father, "into your hands I commend my spirit." So the spirit leaves the body, just like if you've seen your loved ones die, the spirit leaves the body and they're dead. So your spirit leaves the body. That's how the Bible describes this, just like it started in Genesis Chapter 1. God breathes into this biological unit the breath of life and he



becomes a living soul. So when it leaves, you're dead. So when it leaves according to Jesus' parable in Luke Chapter 18, what happens? It goes to be in one of two places. Now we know the place that it goes according to the Scriptures is to be absent from the body, I'm quoting the same passage, Second Corinthians Chapter 5, is to be present with Christ. Christ now, according to Hebrews Chapter 1 is at the right hand of the Father. So we go where God is, First Timothy Chapter 6. He is in "unapproachable light" in this place that's described in Revelation Chapters 4 and 5, a place called heaven. Okay, that's not our home, that's God's home. But we're all going to go there for a little while, and we're going to go in a disembodied state. Okay. In a disembodied state, you're still going to have intellect, emotion, will, you're still going to be conscious, right? Just like the parable he tells, you're going to have some reality experience of knowing things, knowing realities, perceiving things. So all that's going to be our experience, but we're going to be naked. And as Paul says in that passage, we're going to long to be clothed, not with our temporary dwelling, our tent that we live in now, but with our eternal dwelling, a building that God makes. So the body now is called a tent in that passage, and that means it's going to pass away, it's temporary, but we want the eternal body, that's the glorified body. So we're going to get that. When do we get it? Well, the Bible says that Paul told the Thessalonians that when Christ comes back the dead in Christ will rise first. Wait a minute. The Bible's very clear. We immediately consciously go to be with Christ who's with God the second we die. What do you mean we rise first? Our body rises first. This is what Daniel Chapter 12 verse 2 says. Bodies rise, the bodies now get reconstituted and are glorified. First Corinthians Chapter 15 says this, "in the twinkling of an eye," right? The people who are alive and remain, they get changed. But the dead in Christ rise, so their bodies rise and you get your body back. When you get your body back, it's not like the old body. It's not all wrinkled and pained and arthritic. It now comes back like Christ. Paul writes to the Philippians and he says with the exercise of God's power, it's going to be a glorious body, like Christ's body, impervious to death and sickness and aging and all the other stuff. And we will have a body that no longer dies and no longer hurts and is all the things described in First Corinthians Chapter 15. It's beautiful, it's ageless, it's powerful. So all of that we get back and we will feel at home then, right? And that's why Paul says, "we make it our aim to please him," in that passage, Second Corinthians Chapter 5, "whether we are at home or away." So you and I will be away. Away from what? Away from our bodies. It'll feel different I'm sure, and we will long to be clothed again. Because you were not made like the angels. The angels are a class of beings that were made to be disembodied. They never were made to be in bodies. We are made to be enmeshed in bodies, and we're going to get back in bodies, and then God's going to bring us back to a new planet, right? A new heaven and a new earth, right? We're not going to live in the new heaven. We're going to live on the new earth. And that's going to be a place where righteousness dwells, according to Second Peter Chapter 3. So disembodied for a while, reconstituted and then we're going to come back for a while. If you want my eschatology, we're going to live for a thousand years ruling and reigning with Christ. God's going to deal with the nation of Israel again, and then after that, the eternal state. And we're going to live there in a perfect place. And we'll have a lot of stuff to do for a long time.

Question: Pastor Mike, I have a bit of a hefty one here for you so forgive me if I fumble my words a bit, but I want to give you the full context so you can answer. So last Friday my mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Naturally, I want to share the gospel with her in this



time that I have. She claims to be saved but I think her fruits would say otherwise. So it's kind of one of those issues, right? Where it's tricky now is I have a family member who my mom is very close to, very influenced by, who has some beats of sound doctrine here and there, but the real issue is she claims to and I think she's thoroughly convinced that she hears the voice of God and that she can see things and know things that others can't. I've confronted this family member about this lovingly and we had good discussions. I effectively said you are not a prophet; you're not an apostle. I pointed her to Hebrews Chapter 1. So there is, you know, discretion and a bit of a dichotomy there now, right? But my mom, again, is very influenced by this person. How would you navigate this in a way that you're not going to be super-confrontational in a way that, you know, kind of steers my mom in the wrong direction? What would you do?

Pastor Mike: What is she saying to your mom?

Question: I'm not entirely sure. I could go on and on.

Pastor Mike: I would, I would get as much time as you can with your mom by yourself. And I would for now ignore, if you don't know what she's saying, I would ignore her and just focus on your mom. And here's the great thing about knowing that you have a terminal illness, if in fact it's terminal, which it probably is I'm assuming, there's a consciousness of our own mortality that really often makes people more susceptible to Christianity and even people who claim or think they're Christians and if they're not, because as Titus Chapter 1 says, you can "profess to know God, but they deny him by your works," and you want to make sure that there's that wonderful experience of assurance, because my deeds match my profession, and you want to share the kind of gospel message that you know is true. And do that with, you know, sensitivity and Scripture and Bible reading. You can sit there with her and just focus on a one-on-one relationship and connection with her. I would get some simple things to kind of guide the discussion from the bookstore, just books that deal with the gospel. Not to read to her but to have in your mind that will always give you something new to talk about that somehow relates to the gospel message. And then I would talk about it with her. Right? She doesn't need YouTube. She doesn't need TV. What she needs is conversations with you about the gospel. Who knows what she's getting when you're not there. And it may be nutty, who knows, right? But you have to ignore it until it starts coming back out of her mouth to you, and then you're going to have to combat it. And then you have to say, well, mom, you know, a lot of people say a lot of things in the name of Christ. You know, a lot of people say a lot of things about me that I didn't say, you know, whatever. You'll have to deal with it then. But, you know, I'm sure your mom loves to hear from you, loves to sit and talk with you. And I would just take advantage of that as much as you can and extend those conversations. And even when this other person comes, you know, maybe say hey, time for me to head out, mom. I mean, I'm not going to get in an argument with her in front of your mom unless you have to. And I will stand up for truth if I have to, but just do it really nicely and make it short, but only do it if you have to. Yeah, that was hard.



Question: My question is regarding a child's heart. How would you recommend guiding a child's heart who has characteristics of anxiety and perfectionism, but also has the characteristics of very high intelligence and sensitivity?

Pastor Mike: All those go together often. Yeah. I'm thinking of the opposite end of the spectrum. Sometimes you think, you know, the kids who aren't highly intelligent sometimes they are just life's great, you know, they don't think of anything and they don't have any issues. So it often comes with the territory. Right? Highly intelligent kids sometimes overprocess. They're afraid. They're anxious. So I get it, I get it. How do you deal with them? You deal with them like they're older than they are because kind of that's what's happening. They are processing thoughts that are probably beyond their years, but they're doing it with a foolish heart because they're young, they're immature. So you're going to have to step up in how you deal with them. Picture them five years, six years older than they are, and have to really do the counsel with them that you would do with someone older than them. And, you know, they are intelligent so you're going to have to give them answers. And Christ has given us answers for all this. Starting in Matthew Chapter 6 he talks about the anxious heart, right? I don't know how many times I have to say to people who I deal with in our church the simple truths of Christ when he says things like this, you can't add a single hour to your life by worrying. I mean that's just such a simple little truth that Christ said just think about it for a second. What are you wasting all the gasoline in your brain on, right? The energy you're expending on this it won't do anything. All you can do is what you can do. And then he ends that passage at the end of Matthew Chapter 6 and says, every day has enough trouble of its own. I just love taking people who are anxious and putting them right back into let's think of the rest of today. So start getting a little bit more prepped in your counsel, right? Maybe you should get in one of Pastor Lucas' counseling classes if you haven't been already. Go to Compass Bible Institute class, learn how to do good biblical counseling, and start to prepare this. This is your child I'm assuming. Start to prepare this child with better counsel that's deeper and richer and start to deal with them as an older person. This is a precocious mind who thinks deeper than most. And they need a little deeper counsel, maybe, than what you've given. But it is hard. But, you know, there's great potential with people who have brains like that. And we'll pray with you, those who know you, and maybe God can get through this. And I know it's paralyzing sometimes, but there is hope, there really is. God takes anxious people and turns them into highly dependent people on God. Think of Second Corinthians Chapter 1 verse 8 when Paul says, "we despaired of life itself." Right? And then it says, "that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead." Paul was extremely effective because his confidence was in God in a way that the average person wasn't. Why? Well, he says he was despondent in Second Corinthians Chapter 1. Well, I don't like hanging out with despondent people, but his despondency led him to a kind of trust that other people didn't have. And then I don't like hanging out with people who are sick and aching. In Chapter 12 of Second Corinthians, he had a thorn in the flesh that wouldn't go away, and all of that was changing his character and making his character more aligned with God so that he could be more productive even more. So, the pains that you look at as liabilities can be turned into great assets for a mind that sharp and God can use this. So have hope. You need to be optimistic, even if he's anxious.



Question: We're having an election in November and I've been hearing for months that 50% of Christians in churches do not vote. How can the pastors of churches or the church let the congregation know the importance of voting without telling them who to vote for and not losing your tax status?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, well, yeah, I don't really care about my tax status if it's the right thing to do. And here's the right thing to do. The right thing to do is not for me to be some kind of shill for any politician. My job is to tell you if you have a voice in helping to pick better people to govern then you ought to do it. And if you're not doing it, what's wrong with you? So everyone here should be voting. Okay? Now I think that's just a basic responsibility because in the Bible there was no voting. So you were stuck with Herod or Nero or whoever was the emperor or whoever was your governor. So I just think if Paul could have addressed or Peter could have addressed voting, of course they would have said, duh, you vote. And so I'm going to say to all of you and all of us and the rest of our church, yes, of course, everyone here should be registered to vote and everyone should vote. And it doesn't take a lot of work to just do a little bit of research to see who the lesser of two evils are, because that's pretty much how a lot of this works. If you're looking for a pastor to go into politics, please don't take someone out of the pastorate to be a politician. We need our best pastors to remain pastors. But what we're doing is trying to find a politician who's better than the other politicians, and that's what we want. So do your research. Vote in November. Do what you have to do to vote for the best candidates. And yes, everyone should vote. And I'll say it, we'll probably have another voter registration table out there and maybe a pile of voter guides where you can look at the issues. But beyond that, you know, that's as far as we're going to go, because my job is to reach, teach and train. I'm dealing with the hearts of people getting reconciled with God. But of course we should vote. And I have a lot of sensitivities to the way people are concerned about all kinds of things. Trust me, there are missiles flying from all directions, people who are concerned about Christian nationalism, you know, and people who are concerned that we're not, you know, waving enough flags. And so, you know, I have to know what my job is and then let the chips fall. And so right now I know what my job is and certainly I'm going to say, I think biblically though it's not addressed, it makes perfect biblical sense if we have a voice which is, I know a small voice, but collectively it's somewhat of a bigger voice. All of us as Christians should be voting, of course, but I'm not going to be Jerry Falwell, you know what I'm saying? Or the, you know, the religious right. I'm not going to start a religious, you know, political campaign. I'm just not. I have bigger and better things to do. Well, I already live in California. Think about it. I have souls to worry about and non-Christians to see saved with the gospel. That's the priority. And the world is going to get burned up. I know how it ends. And so the kingdom is coming and what it's going to take is the king to show up. And he promised he'd come back. So we'll get excited about his return to fix our political problems. And yet I'll vote. I'm going to vote in every election. I've voted in every election since I was, whatever, 19, 18 years old.

Question: The topic that came up over here kind of like stirred something I've wondered about. And please correct me if I'm wrong, but my thoughts are on when we pass away cremation or being buried in our body. And correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought I heard you say one time in a sermon that you would be buried in your body. And I just wanted to know,



like from a biblical perspective is it okay to be cremated or is it better to... Because when I've read the Bible I'm not finding it. I'm not finding like which way, like guidance on if it's okay to do it either way.

Pastor Mike: Do you find any patterns in the Bible? Do you find a lot of cremations in the Bible?

Question: No.

Pastor Mike: Okay. What do you find in the Bible?

Question: Buried bodies.

Pastor Mike: Okay. There you go. And here's the case I make in my book that I wrote, *Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife*. And to know the priority I put it at the very end of the book. It's the last chapter, so it's not a hill I'm going to die on. But I wrote a chapter that I think has been very persuasive for some people who are willing to reconsider the topic. The Bible's pattern is burial. It doesn't matter if you're in a crypt. I don't care if you're in a mausoleum, I don't care, you know, if you're in the ground, whatever. But to bury the body, the way I like to put it is to lay the body aside respectfully and await the resurrection. The resurrection may be in three days, maybe in three years, 30 years, 300 years, 3,000 years. I don't know when it's going to be, but because my theology is reflected in burial I'm going to lay the body aside and await the resurrection. God's not done with my body yet, so I'm going to lay it aside. I'm not going to burn it and pulverize the bones in an industrial blender, because that's what cremation is. I've taken the pastors to Rose Hills. I've watched it done, and I don't think it's respectful. I don't think it's dignified and I don't think it's appropriate to our theology, and I don't want to do it to my wife or my mother or my dad or my loved ones, and I'm not going to do it, and I'm going to ask for you not to do it to me. It's in my trust. I hope you don't. And yet, would it be the end of the world? Nope. It wouldn't be in the world. And that's the argument people make with me. Well, God can do anything. Well he can. You're absolutely right. I have no problem. I could catch the next nuclear bomb and God would have no problem putting my body back together. Right? He knows the DNA and has it on file. He's great at resurrecting my body and putting it back the way it's supposed to be. But my theology is going to be reflected to the extent that I have the power to do it. I have a plot over there at the El Toro cemetery, and it's a stacker. So hopefully me and my wife will... Whoever dies first is going to go on the bottom. (audience laughing) And that's where our bodies are going to be. And I've already paid for it and it's just waiting. So that I think is reflecting my theology. So if you haven't read my chapter on it, it's in the bookstore *Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife*, Harvest House books. I wrote it some years ago, but I had the Dean of the Bible department at Moody Bible Institute read that. He had the opposing opinion, read it, and changed his view on it, and began to teach the other perspective because of that chapter. And I don't credit my amazing persuasive skills. I credit the fact that not many people are even talking about it. Right? What's happened in cremation, it rose first in Europe in part because of the secular thinking about death. And it's been rising in America, in part because of the economic advantage, right? It's so much cheaper. I don't care so much about that. You



can buy a casket at Costco and you can get it cheap. This is why I went to El Toro, because it's a county-subsidized cemetery, so I want to do it on the cheap. I'm not looking for a mahogany box to bury myself in. But, you know, I want to do something that's affordable as best as it can be. I know you could throw my body in a trash can but that's illegal, that would be cheaper, that'd be cheaper than all of it. So I'm not looking to make decisions based on how cheap it is. Right? Just like you didn't for your wedding. You wanted to do something that's dignified in keeping with what this is about. I've done plenty of funerals for people who have been cremated. I'm not going to make a big deal about that. This is not a sin issue because I can't point to chapter and verse on it. I think this is just a wisdom issue because of the first question I asked you. What's the pattern in Scripture? Burial. So I'm going to follow the pattern of Scripture until I see real, important reasons not to follow that. And I think the reasons, if you read this book, it's called *Purified by Fire*. It tracks the historical rise of cremation, first of all in Europe. And I think it's fascinating to read that, and then in America. It's a bit dated now, but even to look at the origins of it. Fascinating. So anyway, that's what I would say. That's what I would say and that's what I did say in writing and flopped right out of my mouth.

Question: We thank you for Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for what you do on the radio. It is fantastic. You change lives like you have changed lives here. And please keep it up. And someday when you retire from the pulpit, we pray that you'll continue to be on the radio.

Pastor Mike: Well, we'll see what happens. We're trying this now. We're actually going to build a little studio across the street. Because if you've ever listened to my program, I am the engineer and the host and I'm running a lot of different things at one time. And so we're going to build a respectable little place to do this. And we're hoping other stations will pick it up. I host on other programs that are bigger programs than ours, but we wanted to have one we had full control over, and we're now on I think only about six stations, but you can pray for that if you would, I hope it expands. I like doing it. I don't get paid for it. I don't make anything on it. But it's a fun thing to do. And I just really, really loved it when I was a new Christian. I listened to a guy named Don Cole who used to answer questions live on the radio. I just loved it. I fell in love with it and I just listened to it all the time. And then someone would ask a question. I would quickly try to see if I could answer and then what's Don going to say? And it was just so fun. And of course, if you grew up around here, I also listened to Walter Martin who was just so fun to listen to back in the day. But anyway, so I like doing it. And I understand a lot of people don't like doing it. So I figure if I'm a glutton for that kind of punishment, I might as well do it. So pray that we can get on some more stations and maybe get a few more callers in and that would be great.

Pastor Mike: All right, let me pray for us. I'll let you go. Why don't you stand with me? We'll let the blood start flowing. Circulating. Let's pray. God, thank you for our time. Thank you for your Word. Please help us to do well in ingesting more of it. As the Bible says that we should study to "present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." We want to be that. Maybe even times like this as we hop around from here to there in your Word, may it motivate us all to be better students



of your Word. I pray we could go more deeply into it every day. At the very least, let everyone in this room be engaged in that Daily Bible Reading schedule that's out there every single week, utilizing our bookstore to buy a good book or two that will help us to dig deeper in our own mind, our own personal study time, our reading at night before we go to sleep, or whatever it is that we can just get our minds stretched a little bit more to think deeply about your Word. Thanks so much for this crowd, for their just willingness to engage here with me for the last hour. I pray you dismiss us with a sense of just a greater appreciation for you and love for your Word.

Pastor Mike: In Jesus' name. Amen.