



Ask Pastor Mike Live 2026 – Part 2

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike: Well, we're glad you're here this weekend which is always a special weekend. If you're visiting this is not what we normally do, just so you know. But it is a chance for you to ask whatever questions are on your mind about the Bible, about the Christian life, about something you might be facing that you want some biblical insight on. And we have pastors here, Jose's over here. So if you have a question just wave them down. We'll get started. Whatever's on your mind, they'll have you stand up. They'll hold the mic. They know how to get it close to your chin and we'll get started. Just wave them down. Here we go on the aisle.

Question: So my brother is an agnostic atheist, and one of his hang-ups on Christianity is how can God create people predestined? He knows who's going to heaven and who's going to hell. How can he lovingly create people who he knows are going to hell? And how does that also coincide with free will? If you are predestined for salvation, how can you freely choose Christ? I was wondering if you could help me answer that for him.

Pastor Mike: Sure, yeah. This is a typical misunderstanding that we somehow all deserve to go to heaven and have some, you know, great afterlife experience. Because of course, God is loving and we're pretty chilled, cool people. And shouldn't we just get this all figured out? And then we throw the word predestined in there and it seems like God has the power to make this all right. And so let's just all have him do that for us. And since he's not going to do that, I'm going to cross my arms and I'm not going to be a part of this Christianity thing. Knock it off, okay? Because here's the reality. God is a just God. People are making decisions every day. Forget about the difficulty of trying to process the sovereignty of God. Think about the decisions you make every day. Think about the decisions people make in their lives that affect your life that you don't like. You blame them every day for their decisions, even down to the lane changes on the I-5 freeway. You blame them for their decisions every single day. You make decisions. God would only be just to respond to your decisions in a way that would bring some kind of wholeness to the universe, to him as God, by creating the rules and being in charge of everything. And so when he says you are consigned to punishment, it's not equal punishment. Everyone doesn't end up in the same category of punishment. They get appropriate punishment equal to their behavior, their knowledge, the things they've done, their motives and everyone gets what is exactly right. The only people who don't get what's exactly right are the people who he plucks from what's exactly right and endows them with this amazing gift. Now, if you're going to sit around and say why doesn't he give that gift to everyone, right? I guess you could sit around and say why do some people, why are there some trust fund babies and why did I not become one? You're right. You could sit around and say that. But God, as he tells a parable about people who get paid different amounts for working different amounts of hours, the punchline is this, right? Do you begrudge this landowner for being generous with what's his? Okay, so the bottom line is this, God creates everything, including the synapse in the brain of your brother. Okay. So his brain is working on the hard drive that God created for him to sit around in a world that God created for him to enjoy and he's enjoying parts of it. He may not like parts of it. He's eating food that he enjoys that God made, breathing air to oxygenate his blood that God made. He's enjoying all these



things and now he's sitting around and he's saying I don't like the fact that I don't get to have this eternal experience that I think the Christians talk about. Number one, he's saying he doesn't believe any of it. But I'm saying this: you need to recognize that the judgment that is coming to you if you do not repent and get in the only lifeboat that could ever provide you opportunity to avoid the judgment that you deserve you can't say I'm not going to get into that lifeboat. Because, number one, because you brought up a couple issues here, there's some fanciful, difficult, you know, mind-numbing problem called God's sovereignty under the rubric of predestination. Because since I can't figure that out I don't want to make a decision to save my soul by trusting in Christ. And I just think if God is loving, he'd save us all. Right? Justice is that all of us should go to hell, because all of us make bad decisions and God should punish us all. The definition of justice is that God does the right thing. So, you know, you can gamble with your soul if you want and say I don't like it, cross your arms and say I'm going to enjoy everything that God gives me here on earth, and then I'm going to face him one day and say I chose not to be saved because I didn't like the fact that you didn't save everyone. But in the end, God is going to hold people responsible for their decisions and no one's going to be able to say, well, I heard that in the Bible there's this thing about you being sovereign and so I felt like my decisions didn't matter. It's not how God taught us to think. He taught us to think as though our decisions do matter. Just like we hold everyone accountable around us making decisions, we hold them accountable for it. So we have courts. That's why at work you write people up; there's an HR department. All of that is how we function because we're made in the image of God. So all I'm saying is it's a wonderful way to avoid responsibility. But John Chapter 3, here's what Jesus said, people avoid coming into the "light because their deeds are evil." And the problem is I don't want to be exposed for being evil because then I'd have to change my behavior. I'd much rather be in charge of my life, right? As Henley said in his Invictus poem, I would rather be in charge of my own life. I don't want to submit to God because then he'd be in charge of my life. Psalm 2 is a great psalm for your brother because he wants to live in Psalm 2. I'm in charge of my life. I'm going to cast off the constraints of God. Let me live in rebellion to God. And you are at the bottom of that psalm saying, no, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way." And that means he needs to stop with that kind of thinking because one day he is going to meet his maker and it'd be good for him to repent, and your brother is going to come up with an excuse not to. It's a poor excuse. You need to rethink the fact that you're a sinner, and you need to pray for your brother to feel the conviction of his sin, and then to cry out for God's mercy, because that's the only solution. To blame it on predestination and then to say that's why I'm not choosing to be saved is foolish. And again, you can say, well, I'm going to use theology as a reason not to make a choice. You make choices every single day, right? Even the most ardent, you know, Calvinist, is making decisions every single day. God calls us to make decisions every single day. "Choose this day whom you will serve," right? Every single day we're given choices. And Moses said, "I've set before you life and death ... choose life." This is what the Bible tells us to do. So you know, the Bible that he's claiming is the reason he's not choosing to be saved is filled with exhortations to choose to be saved. So you can't throw the baby out with the bathwater just because you can't understand the infinite God and his decrees of sovereignty and the fact that you have an opportunity to get in the lifeboat because this titanic world that we're cruising on is sinking. Because it is sinking and I hope your brother can recognize that. It's a real



cruddy world that's going down and it would be good for him to be plucked from this world and be saved. That's the best I can do in five minutes. But...

Speaker 3 So what dictates the frequency of communion at Compass? And should I honor Jesus' command in my own home?

Pastor Mike: Command to do what in your own home?

Question: Take communion.

Pastor Mike: No. Communion is an ordinance of the Church. And just like the ordinance, as it says in First Corinthians, when we gather as a church. It's repeated like four times as he talks about the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is modeled after the Jewish Passover. The Passover was an annual event. And if you read Acts Chapter 2 or Acts Chapter 4, and you say, well, breaking of bread, they were breaking bread. I think the context there is taking their meals together. They were taking their meals together all the time because they lived communally. The observance of the Lord's Supper is an observance that your pastors are going to decide how often we do it. If you do it less than every year, I think you'd be in violation, at least of the spirit of the observance because it's based on the Passover. So we could do it every week. We could do it twice a week. We could do it twice a year. We could do it once a quarter. We could do it however often we need to do it to where we would want to wisely say we don't want it to become rote. So just like I don't want you baptizing your husband in the Jacuzzi in your backyard because it's an ordinance of the Church, I don't want you participating in the Lord's Supper in your home because it's an ordinance of the Church. And the Scripture says, "when you come together," when you come together, we're talking about the assembled church. So don't exercise the Lord's Supper in your home. You're not nodding at that, but... I didn't convince you. Get the microphone. Get the microphone back. We don't want her yelling at anybody. Jose's going to run to you.

Question: When I was thinking of it, I was thinking of there being so many people in, like, the Thrive sub-congregation groups. And so it's like the, you know, community within the community. That's more my thought of communion. Like, we shouldn't do that in our small Thrive groups or other groups. But also, I was curious what drives us to take communion at the times that we do.

Pastor Mike: The church calendar and the pastor's decision as to when it's the best time to take the Lord's Supper. And we don't want it to be something as a thoughtless participation. Yes. We don't want it taken in sub-congregations like Thrive. That's a decision we make because we take that passage as a passage when the church comes together, when the whole church comes together. So just like baptisms aren't going to be done in sub-congregations. We only have two ordinances of the church. Those two ordinances are going to be done when the church comes together as a whole, and the best we have because of the size of our building is when we come together on the weekends. I know we have three services, but we're going to do it in those three services. If we had five services, which I had at one time in a smaller building, we did it five times in a weekend. So that's, you know, as



granular as we'll do it. And that's because it's a whole church event. And then it comes down to Hebrews Chapter 13, "obey your leaders." They'll give an account for your soul. So you're going to have to defer to your church leaders. And if it becomes a deal breaker because you say well, this to me is a conviction that it should happen every week or it should be allowed in homes, or it should be done in sub-congregations or small groups. Well, I'm sure there are pastors of churches that mandate that or allow that. But it's not this church. In this church our leaders don't believe that. And that's not our policy here. Our policy is based on trying to read the text and say when the church comes together, it's going to be at an assembly of the whole church where the whole church is welcome. It's not just the young marrieds group. It's not just the seniors group. It's not just, you know, the youth group. It's when the whole church is invited to come then we will take the Lord's Supper. Then we'll do a baptism, the two ordinances of the church. And we'll do it at a time when we think it's not so frequently that we're not even thinking about the meaning of it, and it's not so infrequently that we're not doing it on a regular basis. If we did it less than once a year, it wouldn't be based on the pattern of the Passover. And we always do it at the Passover, right? We always do it on Good Friday, because that's the lunar calendar and that's when we celebrate Christ's death. We'll always do it on Good Friday.

Question: I was wondering about your interpretation of Matthew 11 verse 12. This is "from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force." And there are various interpretations in different study Bibles.

Pastor Mike: Yeah. The Greek word "Biazō" is the word that translates to the word "violent." This word is used positively elsewhere. And I do think this is a statement that we're going to understand as something that is the aggressive nature of the advancement of the Church, even as it's set against the discussion of John the Baptist in the context. John the Baptist was, you know, the unconventional prophet, right? He's out there doing what no one would have expected him to do, and he's doing it with an edge to him that no one would want him to have. He's very unconventional. He cares about the truth. He doesn't care about the opinion of people. It's what they said about Jesus, too. We know you don't care about the opinion of man; you care about God. And this is the kind of tenacity of John the Baptist that becomes something that Jesus is commenting on. It's something that he even taught about the advancement of the Church. And a good parallel passage to this is when he speaks of Matthew 16, the growth of the Church. Right? "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The gates of hell are a defensive. A gate is a defensive bulwark. If the church is going to advance, it's going to do violence to gates. It's going to continue to advance in a way where people are going to have a militaristic mindset of we're taking ground for Christ. We're taking ground in evangelism, we're having conversations with atheists and agnostics and we're saying, as Paul said, weapons for the right hand and the left to tear down arguments and anything that's raised up against the knowledge of God. It's not milquetoast people who are on the front lines doing evangelism and apologetics. And I think biazō is the Greek word that is, I think, encapsulating what Jesus is trying to say about there's a tenacity, an aggressiveness about the whole movement of Christianity that he's initiating. And it's how it's going. It's an indicative statement. This is what's happening. And then he says that this is what will happen. It's a future indicative when he talks about it in terms of the gates of hell not



prevailing against it. All the parables like the mustard seed growing into a big tree, these are unstoppable growth. This is an unstoppable thing. And it's like it's done by people who are unstoppable in their tenacity. And that's biazō. That's the violent, take it by force. Violence in our minds seems so negative. Right? But tenacity is a word I think that is helpful in our polite company. It doesn't quite seem so negative. Right? But there are the John the Baptists that you would never want as your pastor, right? You barely put up with me. Right? And so you wouldn't want John the Baptist because he would offend everyone. I just offend half of you. (audience laughing) Right? So that's the kind of thing that I think that God is looking for in the fact that he's just... It's an indicative statement. He's not saying it as an imperative statement. It's like this is what's happening. Right? And I think that's the interpretation of it. I recently spoke on this at an event in Dana Point. I'm sure it's recorded. And if you want, get a hold of me in my office and we can get you the, I don't know how long I spoke, probably 35, 40 minutes on that passage because I was speaking to missionaries because I think that's what I want missionaries to have is the biazō spirit. We have to go and take ground for Christ. And I think that's what Jesus was getting at in that statement. Yeah.

Question: My question is do babies who die and go to heaven stay babies for eternity?

Pastor Mike: I don't think so. The Bible doesn't address it but I don't think so. And I don't think so based on First Corinthians Chapter 15, which speaks about this idealized... And there are two passages also, Philipians as well. But let me start with First Corinthians Chapter 15. When it speaks about the resurrected body, it speaks about it with four particular descriptives. And all of them, I think, can infer the maturity of the body, the completeness of the body, the words that are used like "Doxa," the word of "beauty" and "Dunamis," the word of "energy" or "power." They're all words of like full maturity. And I think the bodies themselves are going to be fully mature. Then you look at passages like First John Chapter 3 verse 2 and you talk about, and First Corinthians Chapter 13, the mind of Christ, "we'll be like him, because we'll see him as he is." Okay, so we have a mind that's now matured. You see a body now that's complete. And then you see when Paul speaks to the Philipians in Chapter 3 verse 21 about the endowment or expression of the power of Christ to "transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body," well, his glorious body is mature in his resurrected body. So I just think all the bodies that are going to be resurrected will be resurrected at their full peak maturity with all the things described in First Corinthians Chapter 15, and with a mind, a spirit that is completely mature and what it should be. So spiritually, because we're two parts, we're immaterial and material. Both of those will be at their peak capacity. And because of that, I infer from all of those passages, though I can't point you to a chapter and verse about, you know, babies. If you die at 16 or 6 months or 96, you're going to be this idealized age, whatever that age would look like if you were to speak in terms of age. But I think I'm on safe ground because if you have your 96-year-old mother die I don't think you're going to say, well, I guess she's going to be 96 in eternity, right? You would say, no, I hope not. Right? Not that there are not beautiful 96-year-olds, but you'd hope that this would be exactly as it's described in First Corinthians Chapter 15. And of course it will be. So you're going to have the perfection of the body, and the perfection of the body is not the in-process maturation of a baby. So yes, I think we're going to have adults, and I think that's why we're going to have to wear nametags for a while because we won't recognize each other. Yeah, I'm being facetious on that but, I



mean, maybe we will. I don't know, maybe I'll be right about that. Hello, my name is Mike Fabarez. Do you remember me? Yeah.

Question: So I had a question about the Compass Bible Church doctrinal statement. So under the section The Church, it says the universal church is composed of all Christians, from Acts Chapter 2 to the rapture and is considered the complete body of Christ. So I wondered about like people getting saved during the tribulation. How does that fit in when it says the complete body of Christ is just until the rapture?

Pastor Mike: Yeah, because in Matthew Chapter 25, that's where I think everyone during the tribulational period is described, the judgment of the nations. They populate the Millennial Kingdom. Okay. The Church is expressing the category. Though I wouldn't be a classical dispensationalist. It's my dispensational theology that the Church proper wouldn't include the people saved in the tribulational period, because they are part of the nations that inhabit the Millennial Kingdom that will live in the Millennial Kingdom if they survive physically, they will live in the Millennial Kingdom as citizens of, you know, the nations, and they'll relate to the nation of Israel. And all of those will be part of the kingdom of God, but they will not be part of the Church. The Church is a unique organization where Jew and Gentile are one. Okay? In the Millennial Kingdom, the distinction between Jew and Gentile is now again intact, in my theology, and so it's not the Church. The Church is "one new man," as the Apostle Paul calls it in the book of Ephesians, where Jew and Gentile there is no distinction. Right? Now, some would say you're being regressive in your theology, and I've been accused of that here. I understand that you can be a covenantal theologian and say I'm regressive but I don't think I'm regressive. I think God's getting back to what he said he was going to do and has left that undone as many times we see that in Scripture. Just like he did something in Deuteronomy that was promised and it wasn't done until Joshua, even though that was only a 40-year gap. Clearly, there are times where God gets back to what he said he was going to do, even in the exile. So I think we've got a long exile here. It's called the Church Age, where God's building a spiritual kingdom, but it's a kingdom that now is called the Church. And the complete Church, the body of Christ, as we call it in the New Testament, is everything from Acts Chapter 2 until the Rapture. Everything before that you can be a proselyte. You can be, you know, part of the Jewish state. You can be whatever, but you're still saved. There's no doubt that you're saved. You're forgiven, you're saved, you're redeemed. You're all redeemed on the credit card of Christ's cross. Right? And we're redeemed on the debit card of Christ's cross. And everyone in the tribulation is redeemed based on the debit card of Christ's cross and everyone who's going to inhabit the kingdom, obviously, from that point on. It's just that the Church is a unique organization according to my theology, which is not unusual. It's a, you know, plenty of people have it. So that's why I define the Church as everything from Acts Chapter 2 to the Rapture. Yeah, and it doesn't change their salvation, it just changes how they function in the Millennial Kingdom. The eternal state, now read the end of First Corinthians Chapter 15. Everything then is assumed under, you know, the kingdom is delivered up to the Father. Then it's all done. Everything is done. We live in the eternal state. Then we have what Second Peter Chapter 3 says, everything is now a new world where righteousness dwells. But we have a millennial kingdom yet to come described six times in Revelation Chapter 20. That is unique and that's where at the time of Jacob's Trouble, after the Rapture of the Church, what I think



we have is something that finishes the 70th Week of Daniel and then the Millennial Kingdom. We then are just this ruling and reigning co-regent with Christ during that period of time. We're different and we're distinctive in that. And covenant theologians don't agree with me and that's fine, but that's fine. We have different theology. Does that help? Okay.

Question: In Luke Chapter 1, an angel visits both Zechariah and Mary to deliver news of an unlikely conception. The responses are nearly identical. How can this be? Both respond with unbelief. The angel chastises Zechariah and punishes him by taking away his voice. But Mary, he gently corrects, teaching her that nothing is impossible for God. Is this because as a priest, Zechariah was more culpable for his unbelief compared to a young woman without formal theological training?

Pastor Mike: Yeah. Not to mention one is an old man who had plenty of time to study the Scriptures and was a professional priest. The other one was a young Nazarite teenage girl. Okay, so it's much like when Jesus said it's going to "be more bearable ... for Sodom and Gomorrah than for," Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. How in the world can that be? Because God judges people not only eternally at the Great White Throne, but even temporally, according to Hebrews Chapter 12 in discipline based on what people know, based on their knowledge. And Zechariah had much more knowledge than this 14- or 15-year-old Mary. Right? She was just a simple, humble girl living in Nazareth. So, yeah, you answered the question in your question. That's my take on it. Absolutely. I preached a series of sermons on this. If you go back to my sermons, go to pastormike.com in Luke Chapter 1. I dealt with both of these. I think I put them in juxtaposition to one another in either one sermon or two back-to-back sermons, because that's the question everyone asks. And it's a great question. And I think the answer is found, I don't know if I use this cross-reference but I probably should have, in James Chapter 3 verse 1, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers," because you will, "be judged with greater strictness." That's exactly in play in the narrative in Luke Chapter 1, in my humble, educated opinion. Yeah.

Question: I have a question from the Daily Bible Reading this morning and perhaps there's an obvious answer I didn't consider, but in Psalms 9:17 it says, "The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God." What is the word "return" mean?

Pastor Mike: Yeah. It doesn't mean they've been there before, if that's what you mean. And I don't know the word, but the turn of phrase, the idiom, is they're going to be turned back to Sheol, which it may be "Shub," it may be "Azuv." There are a couple different Hebrew words. It's not that you've been there before, but you're going to be turned back. It's like, if I'm cutting, I don't do this very often, but my wife's in the front row, so I can't claim I do this very often, but if I'm peeling potatoes, she's going to go, yeah, right? I've done it, I've done it. I've done it before. Right? And I've peeled off the skin, is that what it's called, skin? (audience laughing) Okay. And it's gone there on the counter and I want to turn it back, or maybe in the sink which is probably what sane people do, but I'm going to turn it back into the garbage disposal? (audience laughing) I go out to eat a lot. Put it in the garbage disposal. It would be a way that a Hebrew idiom, it would be the way that you might say, I'm turning it back to the garbage disposal. Not that you've ever been there, but I'm redirecting it there. I would want to open up



some Hebrew grammar books and prove that. But I'm 99% sure I could do that clearly enough to justify that. The word "return" in our mind has more of a sense that you've been there before. That's not what's meant by this. Yeah. My illustration was weak there, but usually I have more time to think of illustrations.

Question: I just wanted to say that I actually live in Atlanta, but I've listened to your Focal Point Radio ministry for years, and I was in the area, so I wanted to stop by and worship with you all. So thank you so much for that.

Pastor Mike: Thanks for coming.

Question: So my question is about the mode of baptism. For a while my wife and I were living in an area where the gospel-preaching church in the area did infant baptism, and they did it by sprinkling rather than immersion. I always grew up with believer's baptism and immersion. And we have since moved away and now we're in an area where there are quite a few more churches, but through social connections we stayed in the same denomination and we've been now well connected to that church. And we were both baptized, it didn't matter to me, but I have a daughter now and I'm planning on still sticking with believer's baptism, but they practice sprinkling and I'm trying to decide how important is that for me and at the church I attend. And it seems weird if I'd want to have my daughter baptized at a church I don't attend. And I just wanted to know your thoughts on that.

Pastor Mike: Yeah, well, yeah, that did put you in more of a bind when you had the baby. Having kids will do that to you and put you in a bind in a lot of areas. Yeah. Because, you know, this is not a salvific issue because the Presbyterians, I'm assuming it's a Presbyterian church, you know, in an evangelical Presbyterian church this is not a salvific issue because they don't believe that you're getting saved with baptism. So, yeah, had the kid not been involved in this, it'd be like, okay. Yeah, like an evangelical church, whatever. This is a tertiary issue, and I wouldn't recommend it, but you have an explanation for it and whatever. But now you have a kid. Okay. Now if it were me it's a deal breaker. I certainly wouldn't have my kids sprinkled. Well, for me, this is not fair because I'm preaching on it all the time, right? I understand baptism as maybe you do, but I'm on the record saying it all the time. This is post-conversion, and the word "Baptizō" does not mean to affuse and it does not mean to sprinkle. And so I'm convictionally a believer's baptism guy. And because of that and I have kids I'm going to wait till they get saved and they've become a disciple then I'm going to have them dunked. And that is going to be a conviction and I'm not going to have them sprinkled, because I don't believe that is bringing them into the family, the community, the covenant. I don't buy any of that. So it may be a great gospel-teaching church, and I might be there for a ton of great reasons. And I'm not going to break fellowship if there are good reasons not to break fellowship with them. But if it were equal, if I had two equal churches. Right? And I'm thinking, okay, I could go here, this would be great. I go here and this would be great. And I have options. You didn't have options at the last place, then, you know, maybe it would be great instead of explaining to my kid when they're 15 why we're going down the street to get baptized. I would maybe, you know, if all things being equal. But you asked me the toughest question of the morning. (audience laughing) That's probably what I would do if all things were



equal. Because I understand you're in some places where you're looking for a gospel preaching church and that's what you have. Yeah. Not a satisfactory answer, but there it is. Yeah.

Question: I commend you on being so brave.

Pastor Mike: Yeah, yeah. Well, I'm regretting it right now after that question.

Question: Okay, my question is two weeks ago we were at the service, and the message I got was we should give love in all circumstances. But self-love wasn't right, it was wrong. And granted, I agree extreme self-love is wrong. If I sit here, took a selfie of us and said hashtag ask pastor Mike. No, that's self-promotion. But I believe there's a humble sense of self-love which is necessary. So my question to you is what are your thoughts about the following comparison? Self-love is like airplane oxygen masks. You must put your own on first before you can help others.

Pastor Mike: Was this a sermon I was preaching where you got that truth from?

Question: It was two weeks ago.

Pastor Mike: Was it my sermon? Was I preaching two weeks ago? I don't know where I was yesterday. Was it my sermon? Yeah. Did I say...

Question: Maybe I misinterpreted the message? That's why I'm asking for clarification.

Pastor Mike: Oh, self-preservation. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Before I get into your illustration, let me just say I agree that, yes, of course. And I'll give the example from Ephesians Chapter 5, when God calls us to love our wives he gives the example you ought to care for her like you nourish and cherish your own flesh. Right? Why do you brush your teeth for people? Because you didn't want your teeth to fall out. So you're going to care for your own teeth. Why do you put deodorant on? Right? All these things you do because you care about yourself. This is natural. It's right. And it's the predicate for so much. And of course, it should be. Now self-promotion, now I was talking, now it's coming back to me, the sermon I preached. Yeah. If we put our interests before others in the sense that all I care about when I come to church is me, then you're right. But yeah, if you're going to say care for yourself before I care for others you can't say it the way you said it in light of the things that we see read, and I quoted in Philippians Chapter 2. Because as it says in Philippians Chapter 2, Christ took his interests and subjugated his interests for the interests that he was trying to meet in the people he was trying to save. So we should put the interests of others before our own. Now that can't be when it comes to me going around and brushing other people's teeth, right? I obviously am going to care for myself in practical matters. And God's not giving us these verses and asking us to click our brains off. There are obvious natural things that we're going to do to live our lives. Duh. But what we have a problem of doing is self-promotion, self-aggrandizement, self-complementary. And, you know, I just want to compliment myself. We have to know that the problem we have is I don't want to ever inconvenience myself for someone else. And that's



the problem. I don't want to help, speaking of the airlines, I don't want to help someone put their luggage up. I don't want to let someone go in front of me. I want to jump up in the aisle before other people. I don't want to let someone go. I mean, this is where I have to say other people's interests matter. People made in the image of God matter. And so I'm fighting the tide of self-interest. So everything about me wants to put my mask on first. Of course, the fears, the desires, everything wants me to put my mask on first, so I don't need to be told to put my mask on first. Right? The flight attendant says that because a mom may be so wanting to help her baby. Trust me, the businessman is not going to put his mask on the guy sitting next to him first. Never. It's the mom who can't get in on her kid and passes out because she has no oxygen. Right? And the whole point of the flight attendant saying that is because moms, I know you care so much about your kid, but you have to make sure you don't pass out. Put your oxygen mask on first. So really it speaks to a natural interest that a mom has for her kid, because you don't have to tell the businessman to take care of his own mask first. Test that theory. I'm sure there are some flight attendants here but, I mean, they didn't write the instructions, but clearly that's true. So I guess I wouldn't maybe put it that way, but yes, you have to care for yourself. Everyone cares for themselves. But we're in a stream of caring for ourselves. We have to be like salmon that are swimming upstream. And if you're not working hard your muscles to swim in the opposite direction, then you're not putting the principles of the sermon two weeks ago to work. You ought to feel like you're swimming upstream to care for other people, let me put it that way. That needs to be felt. So I never have to work at caring for myself. I'm pretty darn good at that. What I have to work at is caring for other people.

Question: Of all the translations that are out there, why does Compass use the English Standard Version?

Pastor Mike: There's a historic, and I mean our little history reason for that, and the reason, do you want the whole story? You probably do. That's why you ask the question. It's very, very hard for a church of any size to change translations. Let's start with the premise. The premise is this: that a church I think should be told we teach from this particular translation. It'd be good if you brought that translation to church. And it'd be good if we taught it in the youth program, it would be good if we taught it in every sub-congregation, because you bring that one translation to church and all the stuff is going to be based on that. And I know this as an author. I know this as a person who writes curriculum, and I know this as someone who, you know, you ask a question in a workbook, right? The wording of the translation helps us guide through everything we do, the wording of that translation. So it'd be good if we just standardized. It doesn't mean we're against the other translations. So to shift from one translation to another is a big, big deal and it affects a lot. So I start with the premise that I think it's good if we're all, when I stand up here and read a text, it's good if you have the same translation, particularly if I'm translating a text that has *biazō* in it and in the "violent take it by force." Okay? It would be good if we're all reading the same English words. And I should know the original languages so I can understand and maybe comment on all of that. But we should be reading the same English. So I taught for years from the New American Standard, a decent translation. The Lockman Foundation in La Habra held the copyright on that very tightly. I pastored in the stone age when we didn't have computers. When computers came



along, the Lockman Foundation did not let their copyright go to many people. They kept a really, Lockman, locked it down. And I struggled with that because they didn't have much in terms of variety of, you know, sizes and study Bibles. It just had very few offerings. So here the church I was pastoring grew and grew and grew and I couldn't get Bible software, I couldn't get a lot of things. So you don't work for the Lockman Foundation, do you? Okay, good. So I got to know those guys up there in La Habra. Great, good guys. I took a move to the New International Version (NIV) and I taught from the New International Version for years. Good translation. Good guys in that. I have issues with every translation, trust me. And I had issues with that, but whatever. And it's a good translation. Good evangelical scholars worked on it. So the New International Version if you know anything about the New International Version, it got to a place where they started to work on what they called a more gender-neutral translation. Do you know anything about this? Okay. So they were going to start to work on a more gender-neutral translation and that rang bells across conservative evangelical groups because it really started to affect theology. I have no problem if you take the word "Anthrōpos," maybe, and anthrōpos is the generic word for "man." And "Arrhēn" is the Greek word for "male." Anthrōpos is the Greek word for "mankind." "Gynē" is the Greek word for woman. So arrhēn and gynē, the man and woman, and then anthrōpos like we get the word anthropology from it, mankind. Okay, you want to broaden the word anthrōpos? No problem. But when you start getting into words like the sonship as it relates to the heir, that's changing theology if you want to change it to say "sons and daughters." There's theology attached to that in Romans Chapter 8, for instance. So when they started kind of putting out what they were going to do with the translation, a lot of us freaked out, and freaked out, that's harsh. But we were like, this isn't going to be good. And then they said we're not going to put out the old New International Version. We're going to stop producing the old New International Version, and we're only going to put out this gender-neutral New International Version. Okay. At the right time the English Standard Version was coming out and every conservative evangelical, not every, but a lot of us in our little subset, we just jumped ship. We said we're done. And we went to Crossway who has the copyright to this and we went to the English Standard Version because it's another good translation. And it actually moved us back toward the New American Standard, because it was a little more literal translation, which we all appreciated. Because I received complaints, trust me, when I went to the New International Version, I received complaints, but I preached in it for over a decade at least. And more than that, maybe two decades. But we got all in on the English Standard Version. Well, when I and so many other, much more high-profile people were preaching from the New International Version, Zondervan who owns the copyright to the New International Version, and when I got into the English Standard Version, the New International Version, they changed their plans. Okay, we're going to backpedal. And they did. And that was good. But the ship had sailed for a lot of us. And when we're all in they have no idea. Curriculum, workbooks, books I was publishing. It was like, I'm stuck, right? And I'm stuck. So there have been translations that have come out since that I think are great. Right? The Christian Standard Bible is a great translation, very readable. When it came out, I just read it from cover to cover and I thought it was great. And yet I'm still preaching from the English Standard Version because it's really hard to make a shift. And I would say, yeah, if you want multiple translations then you should read multiple translations at home, as long as they're good, really academic, scholarly translations, they shouldn't be Fred's translation, you know, and there are some paraphrases



out there that you should avoid. But that's why we're with this. I've toyed around a little bit with it. Even some of our church planters that have gone out, you know, we always say replicate Compass, right? Don't innovate because everyone who's going with you, because usually there's at least 100 people that go with all of the church planters, they're not looking for an innovative church. They want Compass wherever you're going. So I tell them not to innovate. Well, one of them came to me and said we want to go with the Christian Standard Bible. I said, well, I don't know if that's wise, but okay. Well, they worked on it for a while, looked at everything, kids curriculum, youth curriculum, Partners Manual and all of a sudden after about a month they were like we're going to forget it, we'll stick with the English Standard Version. Which just again reminded me, even if you're a smaller church replicating a lot of programs for Compass it is very hard to do. So I'm not saying one day we won't change translations. It has its problems. But every translation has problems. That's the long answer. What do you think of that? (audience laughing) Yeah. Did you write a translation or something you wanted? Okay. Submit it. We'll take a look at it. All right.

Question: So what are your views on Eternal Conscious Torment and Annihilationism? And also, do you believe that the righteous and the unrighteous are going to be bodily resurrected and the unrighteous are going to be resurrected only to be eternally tormented?

Pastor Mike: Yes I do, because the Bible teaches that clearly. Daniel Chapter 12 verse 2 says it. Paul taught it clearly. There's a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Yeah, but here's the thing and I answered this earlier at least it was part of an answer. No one is judged the exact same way. Everyone's judged according to what they've done, which is not just what they've done, but what they knew when they did what they did. This is why Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum are going to have worse punishment than the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. They did way worse stuff in Sodom and Gomorrah, but they had a lot more knowledge in Chorazin. So all I'm saying is the judgment is going to be different. Here's the problem. The new form of annihilationism within conservative evangelical circles is not the old style annihilationism. If you talk to a Seventh-day Adventists or you talk to a lot of different groups, they'll say annihilationism when you die, if you're not in grace with God, you cease to exist the moment you die and you never get your consciousness back. That's the old style, right? Like non-evangelical annihilationism. But now the conditional immortality that's kind of popped up in evangelical circles is the kind, well, yeah, you're going to be consciously tormented for a while and then it's going to stop. Okay. When they've introduced that because they want to take all the passages about torment and keep them because there are so many of them. There are actually more of those when Jesus is teaching than blessedness and beatitudes. So now they're going to say, okay, well, it's temporary, it's conditional. It happens for a while but then it goes away. That's even a harder doctrine to sustain. I like that they've carved out a place for the passages on torment because it's there everywhere and it's unavoidable. But now you're introducing something where there's absolute silence in Scripture, where this part ends? I want some hint of that somewhere. Right? And maybe I would look at the doctrine if, I mean, I've gone through the book a few times, there's nothing here on that. So I completely reject it. Not only that, because there's all of this language that's clearly about forever and ever, day and night forever and ever. But if you don't understand judgment and for this I recommend my book. I have three chapters on hell and judgment in



my book, *Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife*. It's in the bookstore. If we don't understand judgment, you won't understand bodily eternal separation from God. We'll think it's all the same. Do you think that Pol Pot and Hitler and Charles Manson are where your grandmother is, it's the same experience? It's not. And that's where we get it wrong. Here's what judgment is, justice is God does exactly what is right for every person. Every person is going to get exactly what they deserve. And it's not from your perspective, it's from God's perspective, but God's perspective is perfectly right. So if you want more on this, I've taught on this before, especially in light of some of the recent resurgence of a new form of conditional immortality. I know I taught it in my apologetics class at Compass Bible Institute but, you know, I have like 14 different points on this, and there are plenty of good articles that have come out lately on this. But no, I fully reject conditional immortality. I fully reject annihilationism. I fully reject the temporary torment and then annihilationism. I don't think it squares with Scripture, the language of Scripture, even the word destruction, which everyone's so big on. You know the word in Luke Chapter 15, in that section where the father says he's lost, now he's found, right? And he was dead. Now he's alive. The word translated "lost" there is the word "destruction." He was destroyed, right? And now he's found. What's the point? The point is destruction does not mean you cease to exist. It's a category of being under judgment. Right? The idea of that. That word in the New Testament is utilized that way. It's a category word. It's not like burned up, ceased to exist, right? It's where the flame is not extinguished. The worm does not die. Now, what you picture is something that's not fair, it's not right, so we have to change what God says. It is fair. It is right. It is just. That's what the word means. And trust God with this. Because you're not in charge of judgment. God is in charge of judgment. Let God judge and he's told us what it's about. And if it wasn't a motivation for salvation he wouldn't have put it in the book. It's supposed to motivate your non-Christian friends. It's supposed to motivate you. It's supposed to motivate us for evangelism. The whole point of Romans Chapter 10 is that it should be motivating us to give to missions. It should be motivating us as a church to do evangelism. It should be motivating us to apologetics. Second Corinthians Chapter 5. "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," that comes, by the way, right after the verse that says, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Okay. We should all fear the judge, and we should certainly fear the judge who is going to judge sinners. And we should be all about the work because there is hell. If not, annihilation is a great way for us to put our feet up on the dash, hit the cruise control and just see if we can have some great times of worship and Bible study. It's really about biazō. It's about the violent taking this thing by force and kicking back the gates of hell. So no, I reject annihilationism from top to bottom. It was more pleasant last night, wasn't it? It's just, I don't know, it seemed like more pleasant questions. More theoretical, more like philosophical questions. Okay.

Finishing our Daily Bible Reading a few days ago with Job Chapter 42. The chapter where he bickered with his three friends. But the point here is he went through very bad trouble. He lost his children. He lost all his riches. He also got sick. But in the end, the last chapter would make me wonder. And it's not only the last chapter there, but in the Old Testament how we see how many people God chooses. And they went through problems and they disobeyed God, but at the end some of them acquired more riches, not in the same way as Job. How



much richer he got at the end. And I wonder whether this is a blessing from God to bless you because you are faithful with riches, material.

Pastor Mike: Well, absolutely because Chapter 42 verse 12 makes that the subject, "the Lord blessed the latter days of Job." The Lord blessed Job. So yeah, it's clearly the blessing of God. Here's one of the problems that the book of Job is trying to address. It's called the retribution principle. And that is, if you're a righteous man everything will go good. If you're a wicked man everything will go bad. That's why his three friends, before Elihu shows up, they're all saying that, since things are going bad there must be sin in your life, right? That's the refrain of his three friends. The point that the book of Job provides is it doesn't mean that. Right? It's like John Chapter 9. What happened here with this man born blind? That's why the guys were like what was it, something he did? Was it something his parents did? Why? Because if it's bad, clearly it's based on someone's sin here. So Job's whole story is supposed to say no, sometimes it's stuff that's behind the scenes you don't even know. Okay. But the blessing in part, think of the things that Job said. No one's going to worship you in the grave, right? You're going to silence my voice. I'm going to die here. Speaking of the afterlife, the view of the afterlife was so minimal in the early Old Testament and the book of Job is a story looking in the last chapter at how long he lives after this all happens. This is clearly not long after the flood, because he's living way too long to be anytime other than just after the flood, and he's the priest of his family, totally off limits if this is after the Mosaic Law. So this is an early story of a patriarchal man and he's living long periods of time. So their view of the afterlife, they didn't have much of a view of the afterlife. It wasn't until Daniel in the post-exilic period where we got really crystal clear, there's going to be this afterlife where the accounts are going to be settled. So if the accounts are going to be settled it's going to be now. So part of the reason I think God is saying, okay, you went through all of this because suffering isn't just based on you did wrong therefore you're going to suffer. But you got through all of this and I'm going to show you that you're my hero because you're going to intercede for your friends and if you don't they're going to be judged. I mean, he still holds them up. And now I'm going to bless you. Everyone's going to see that I love you. And I'm going to do it in the traditional way that people see that I love you and that is you're going to be blessed. Now with Paul, he had his head cut off. It's not the traditional way. Why? Because we have all this clear teaching about the afterlife. Everyone knows the score is going to be settled in the next life. But in the Old Testament, particularly in the early patriarchal period, that's how God clearly showed God's blessing is on you, right? That's why a lot of the early patriarchs were so rich. Abraham was a rich man, right? Moses was a rich man, at least initially. So I do think that riches, as verse 12 says, were because "the Lord blessed the latter days of Job." And if I caught your question, yeah, that's what he did. And I think your question also was why. I think the context historically is why. If there was a more robust understanding of eschatology, I don't think it would have been as important in its historic setting. If you build a chart of the Old Testament, maybe you've done Bible Survey for Kids with your kids, you know Job fits way back in the timeline of Genesis, right? So it's super important I think that he is restored with all of his riches. And yet what's this weird anomaly of all this suffering? Because there's a lot of suffering you don't understand. That's the message of the book of Job. At least one of the big messages of the book of Job.



Question: I have an easy one for you.

Pastor Mike: Okay, thanks.

Question: So in the spirit of desiring to share the gospel with friends and family who don't speak English, and they're speaking Vietnamese and Chinese, for example, I'd like to know how to share your umbrella analogy and other resources. Is there something that the church has planned or should I leverage ChatGPT? And then on a lighter note, I just want to let you know that I'm working on closing the toilet bowl lid and parking my shopping cart where it should be. Things that I can achieve.

Pastor Mike: Yes. Well, congratulations on those two things. Yeah, we get a lot of requests when it comes to those kinds of materials. If you want to translate those, all we care about is that it's done accurately and ChatGPT and AI have made it really easy for people to do accurate translations, as long as you get it in the hands of native speakers and they can test it, a Christian native speaker. And that's part of the problem with evangelistic material. We need someone who knows the language and assuming you do can say this is a solid translation, it's translating repentance and faith and all the explanations clearly which the umbrella, you know, depends on how much of the umbrella you're going to share. If you go to the Partners Manual and you go to Chapter 10 and you get all the explanation that comes with it, I want all of that to be translated accurately. And since I've given all that material, I have no financial interest in that, I've given it all to Focal Point Ministries, you need to probably, if you want to do it right, just contact Focal Point Ministries. They always say yes. Sometimes I think they still write a little note just so you have it and say great, translate it. And then if you would give it to us also so that if anyone else asks for it in Vietnamese we can give it to them as well. So we like to compile because we have those kinds of materials in a lot of languages and we want to keep building that so we can give it away to as many people as possible. So just contact Focal Point Ministries, but do it, yes, we want it translated, definitely. And the toilet lid, you probably heard that from something my wife was preaching, I'm thinking right? She's telling secrets out of school. But that's what the lid is for. It has a hinge on it and it shuts. So shut the lid on the toilet. I don't know why you don't do that. Girls want the seat down. I just want the lid down. It's just another little bit of work. And then what was the other one you said? Oh, shopping carts. Come on. Of course we put the shopping carts back. Oh, that didn't get any laughs out of you because you're all guilty on that one. Yeah.

Question: I have a question. Maybe a little more meaty. It's three-fold I'll say. It's about salvation and correct theology. And so how correct does one's theology need to be for salvation? And how are we to view other denominations and to treat people with other theologies?

Pastor Mike: Yeah. Well, you didn't need a lot of nuanced or detailed theology to be saved because the thief on the cross had never been to church or Sunday school or sat under Jesus' teaching. But on the cross, after a life of crime, he could see that Christ was very important and whatever he heard, and we don't have all the details of all that he heard, a simple transfer of trust knowing he's a sinner. We know that because the dialogue between



the two thieves was, we're getting what we deserve. So we know, much like the parable Jesus tells in Luke Chapter 16, that the idea of him having this, you know, throwing myself on the mercy of God, beating my chest, I'm unworthy. That's the key. And then saying Christ is the solution. So you don't need robust theology to be saved. Here's the problem with being in the wrong organization is they crowd out that trust with so many other things. I'd much rather you be a very simple person with very little theology and have just enough theology to be saved in some outback place like the thief on the cross, than to have that and then have an organization telling you all this other stuff. Because I look at the book of Galatians, for instance, and they're saying, yeah, but... yeah, but... yeah, but... you have to get circumcised too, you know. Or Acts Chapter 15, well, yeah, but you have to keep the law of Moses also. So the problem is what's crowded out of simple saving faith when you're in an organization that's telling you other stuff. Well, you have to believe our prophet or you have to believe our prophetess, or you have to believe in this doctrine or that doctrine, or you have to believe that the grace of Christ is brokered through the sacramental system. And then people's trust starts to shift over to something else. So theology does not need to be robust to be saved. Right? You're a sinner. Christ is the solution. You throw yourself on the mercy of God and repent of your sins. I mean, it is basic. And the umbrella analogy, I think, gets down to the basics. That's the meat on the bones you have to have. But I do want people to be in a church that's not feeding them other things. So people ask me are there Christians in the Episcopal Church? Are there Christians in the Roman Catholic Church or...? Yeah. Yes, yes, yes. Methodists, of course. But if you're a good Catholic, right? If you're a good Methodist, depending on what you're a good whatever, then you may be crowding out that trust in Christ with the bad doctrine. And I don't want you to do that. So that's why I would rather get you into a good church. And like we've heard, you don't have to be in a baptistic church necessarily, but it better have good theology as it relates to, you know, the core tenets of Christianity. And if you're going to have kids, it would be good if they were in a baptistic church.

Pastor Mike: We're out of time unfortunately for this service at least. So let me have you stand and I'll pray for you. And hopefully you'll take something home from this. We do it once a year. So if you thought this was a waste, you have 52 weeks until we do it again. All right. It wasn't a waste, was it? No, it wasn't a waste. (audience clapping) All right. Good. You learn you have to keep the toilet seat down and return your shopping cart. You learned that. You do that already? All right. No you don't. No you don't. All right, let's pray. God, thanks for this crew. Thanks for just us coming together every weekend to study your Word. And now, on this weekend, just to think out loud about all these things and to try to think biblically about these varieties of topics. So dismiss us now with a desire to study your Word, to know your Word, to know you better. And we're just thankful for this congregation, thankful for this church. God, thank you so much.

In Jesus' name. Amen.