

Q&A 2018-Part 2

Pastor Mike Fabarez

Pastor Mike: Well you've come on an interesting weekend here at Compass Bible Church if you're new because this is not normally what we do at this time. Normally, we are expositing a passage of Scripture, passage by passage in sequence, and we're in the middle of Luke 22, which we will continue with next week. But we set aside one weekend a year and all three services do nothing but answer questions. So, we will do the best we can here with no prearranged questions, no plants, no scripts just an open mic and I got two people on two microphones, here's Jay Wertin over here, Pastor Mark over there, and we'll just take our normal study time to answer whatever questions you might have about the Christian life, about the Bible, about theology, whatever it might be. So, wave down either Mark or Jay and while you got a mic on this side and if there's someone on the other side just wave them down and we'll just go back and forth. We hope and pray as we have and this will be an edifying good time together. So let's start right here.

Question: So, in First Corinthians 7 we have Paul, he speaks out of turn or not from the Lord when he says this is coming from me not the Lord. So, can you talk about that when you look at all Scripture is inspired by God and defend that. And also if you go to Chapter 7:40, he says, "I think I'm speaking for the Holy Spirit." So, you could talk a little bit about that word, "I think" as opposed to being convicted.

Well, first of all you got to define the word "Lord." In the passage he's talking about marriage in First Corinthians Chapter 7. The Lord he's referring to, because he's specifically talking about the commands that have come from the Lord regarding the covenant of marriage, and so he's saying the Lord said this, he speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ said this. Remember this is an early letter, it comes before the writings of the codification of the Gospels. So he's making sure that he's being clear about the fact that this isn't something that I'm saying Jesus taught. Right? This is something I'm telling you now. He'd already quoted what Jesus had said. Now he's going to say what he says. It starts the book in First Corinthians by saying, "Listen I have this apostleship from God. I speak for God." Matter of fact, when that passage we often quote about, you know, "no eye has seen, ear has heard, or mind can see the things that the Lord has planned for us." We always quote that as though, "Oh, isn't that neat, there's a lot of stuff we don't know." He goes on to say, "But these things we've revealed to you." He is an apostle, the apostle is speaking revelatory truth. He's making the distinction there because they're not saying, "Oh, wait a minute, we know that's not what Jesus said. We know that's what you're saying." They're both of equal value in terms of authority. That's what the whole apostolic position is, they're prophetic. That's why in today's Bible reading, they are doing miraculous signs, as Hebrews Chapter 2 verses 1 through 4 say, so that he can affirm his apostleship. That's the point of those miracles we read about in the book of Acts this morning. So, the point is that just because he says these are the things that I say, not what the Lord said, is because he's already been talking about what the Lord Jesus had said about the topic. Now he's saying what he says and then at the end he says, "And I think..." which is the way he often speaks especially to the Corinthians, "that I have the spirit of God." And read Second Corinthians if you think the "I think" is an equivocation or doubt. It's clear that he's saying, "You guys need to know, I have spirit of God." So, rhetorically he uses that phrase but it's clear throughout all that Paul writes to the Corinthians, he is an apostle, they're trying to undermine his apostleship. There's more sarcasm in First and Second Corinthians than any other writings from the Apostle Paul, and it's not that it's a sarcastic statement but it's a rhetorical way to state the fact that, "Guys, you know I have the spirit of God. You know I'm speaking authoritative." So, there's no, "Hey, do not be like me here quoting a passage of Scripture and then saying, 'Oh, you know the Bible says this, oh, but I say

that," and then you know oh, one has authority from God and the other one's Pastor Mike's opinion. If you read that passage that way and think, you know, that's what we've got going on. That's not what we have going on. We have the apostle who speaks authoritatively, but he is distinguishing that Jesus talked on the topic, but certainly he didn't want to lead them to believe that what he went on to say about it was something that was quoting Jesus' earthly ministry, because Jesus did talk about those very topics in First Corinthians 7 and Matthew Chapter 19. And the things that he said in Matthew 19 he refers to and ascribes to the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, not the Lord God. Yeah. Good question.

Jay Wertin: They must know everything. That is all we've got.

Pastor Mike: OK, let's pray. We'll go get some omelets and maybe I can squeeze in a brunch before our next service.

Jay Wertin: I do get a lot of questions from Focal Point. One I just had recently that you might want to address is about forgiveness.

Pastor Mike: Are you serious? We've got no one here ready. Come on. Are you kidding me?

Jay Wertin: No, I'm not kidding you. There we go. All right. Never mind.

Pastor Mike: Please wave down Jay. He'll feel like it's something he did. All right.

Question: A woman called and she babysat for her daughter, two children, little, who had recently remarried another woman. Her question was do I need to walk away from my daughter because of what she's done, or can I stay and continue babysitting?

Pastor Mike: OK, let me clarify the org chart here, restate the relationships. This is someone's daughter who has come out as a lesbian and claims to be married to another woman, and she's wondering about her relationship with her grandchildren.

Question: Correct.

That's great. I mean, I think a godly grandmother is needed in that home more than ever. So, I would be 100% behind that. You know, what I don't want is us as Christians going around endorsing something that God says is to him repugnant and an abomination. So I don't want any kind of, "Hey, this is all copacetic and cool and, you know, we Christians are all behind you." Because we would be deceivers and liars if we said that because we know the Bible is very clear about those issues. But certainly, the opportunity to have an influence as a grandmother on the life of your grandchildren, not to mention your daughter, even though that she's rebelling against God's clear standards in the Word. Yeah, I would definitely keep that door open without a question.

Question: My question is in Romans 6:7. "For the person who has died with Christ has been freed from the power of sin." So, can you elaborate more about the sin itself. From my understanding sin reflects about sin nature and throughout the Bible does say about sin, singular, and sins with "s" which are personal sins. So, is there any way you can try and explain that to us?

Pastor Mike: What should be really clear from the beginning of Romans is the equation that is set up. And when he starts using shorthand about that equation by saying, "set free from sin," we've got



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to understand what he means. Matter of fact, if you have your Bible there open, you should go over, let's start with Chapter 8 where he really comes to the crescendo of this argument. The first eight chapters are a unit here, if you will. And so he says in verse 1 of Chapter 8, "There is therefore now," see this is the whole summary of what he said starting in Chapter 1 about the sin problem going through Chapter 3, the universality of the sin problem, and then faith and demonstrating that faith that is now saving us, then the focus of faith, which is Christ, and all the issues leading to this. "There is now no condemnation for those in Christ. For the law of the Spirit of life," which is a way to summarize what he's just said in Chapters 4 through 7, "has set us free from the law of sin and death." Here's the law of sin and death, which he stated very clearly a couple of times, I mean, almost verbatim, "The wages of sin is death." Right? "But the free gift of God is eternal life." So when you talk about what is the power of sin? He says it also in First Corinthians Chapter 15, the power of sin is this: if you do wrong, you're guilty and you will be punished. God has to punish sin. That's the law. "The wages of sin is death," not just biological death, but all the whole realm that goes with it. Now here's the great news. Jesus Christ came to reverse that problem for those who would put their faith in God's Son. And that law of sin and death, we are now freed from. That's the picture of release. So we talk about being freed from sin, if you're looking at the context of what Paul is saying in this book, it's that that law that you should be condemned, because the Old Testament made it very clear: obey, you'd be blessed, sin and you're going to be cursed and punished. Now all of a sudden we get a freedom from that. You and I can sit here today as being sinners, we've sinned against God. We continue to sin, hopefully at a less clip, but we now are set free. Why? Because the law of the Spirit of life. God intervened, by his Spirit, proclaiming Christ to be, as it says from the fourth verse, the Son of God by the spirit of power when he was raised from the dead. That arrangement of God and the power of the Spirit has now given me life even though I deserve death. So, to be freed from sin is to be freed from, in most of what Paul is talking about in the first eight chapters, freed from that equation of condemnation, and he's saying that's what the point of the Gospel is. Now, are there issues in Chapter 6, which he goes on to talk about, in terms of the freedom that we have to no longer continue in a pattern of sin? Those are the distinctions between justification, which I've just summarized, and sanctification, which is: how does sin have a hold on us? Chapter 6 goes on to say, now you need to consider yourself dead to sin. If the wages of sin is death, I realize this, I've been freed from that equation, that law, I'm not going to be condemned. But now I have this continual problem of temptation and sin in the world, in my flesh, the devil is trying to get me to sin. So now I have to see, in that passage, Chapter 6, that I'm going to consider the members or parts of my body as instruments of righteousness. And he says, "Okay, you are freed in the sense that even in your sanctification you don't have to do what you used to do." And Paul makes this clear as he writes in Ephesians, that futility of your thinking of doing what you did as a non-Christian, you now have a new capacity. Now here's something not taught as much as it used to be and it should be, and that is the miracle of regeneration. There is something about God regenerating us, changing us from the inside, that changes my relationship to sin. Whereas before, I was like a lion who had a choice between fresh lamb meat and a salad. OK? I'm just going to choose the lamb meat every time. That's my nature. That's what I do. But now, as a Christian, God says I've changed your heart. That's advantage number one. I'm no longer, to put in terms of Jeremiah 31, no longer have that heart inside, in Jeremiah 34, of stone. In Ezekiel, I'm sorry, uses that analogy, and now, Jeremiah 31, he's made a new spirit, he's made me a new spirit, small "s". Second capacity, he's put his spirit within me to move me to keep his law. So now, all of a sudden, I have two brand new capacities that I didn't have before. And I can start to do things, as a Christian, that before I couldn't do. I cannot please God because my mind was hostile toward God. Now, I'm not. So, in that sense, there is a sub-theme going through Romans 6, you've got a freedom there too. Does that mean we'll never sin? No. James makes that clear. Right? We all stumble in many ways. And if you could keep your mouth from sinning, you know the rest your life would be in check.

John says, "I write these things to you," First John Chapter 2 verse 1, "so that you may not sin. But if you do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." So, we know this. You're never going to be sinless in your Christian life, contra the Wesleyans and other perfectionists. But you are going to sin less, according to First John. First John Chapter 1 says if you claim you have no sin you're lying. In Chapter 3 it says you better not continue in the same pattern of sin or you're lying. So as a Christian, I know I have a new capacity. But the major theme of Chapters 1 through 8 in Romans is I'm freed from what should legally be my future, and that is I'm tied to the problem of sin. Now I'm freed from the problem of sin in justification and now, even in my daily life, I have a new capacity to be practically free from those decisions and temptations of sin. That's why sanctification is progressive and justification is immediate. So, I love Chapter 6 because it's the one place where Paul pushes really hard in the first half of the book on the issue of sanctification. And I like that because it's a whole treatise about justification. But nevertheless, I'd say the one is complete and it's absolute at the moment of our conversion and that we're free from the law of sin and death. No condemnation, I have no future condemnation before God. It's the sanctification process that Chapter 6 is talking about and we're also freed in the sense that we don't have to sin the way we used to.

Pastor Mike: See, I can go longer with the answers if there's not many questions here today. Now, we had a ton last night, so here we go. There, now we just primed the pump, we were getting it.

Question: Good morning, Pastor Mike. I'd like to have, know what the Christian view is on donating and transplanting organs.

Pastor Mike: Yes. This book, and I kind of hate bringing up this book that I've just written, but it's coming out August the 7th. I have a chapter on... And it's called "Ten Mistakes People Make About Heaven, Hell and the Afterlife." In one of the chapters that I think is one of the mistakes is: it doesn't matter what happens to my body after I die. It's Chapter 10. In that chapter I make a case for Christian burial. That has been the biblical pattern and it's been the pattern in the Christian church until recently. And then, of course, I have a subsection in there, what about organ donation? OK. I try to make a very important distinction. When people try to attack my view on following the biblical pattern of setting the body aside and waiting for the resurrection as we did with Christ's body and all the bodies in the Scripture, with few exceptions, and those that did, even as we read in our Daily Bible Reading this morning, it was a statement of God's judgment, they say, "Well, you're not consistent because I'm assuming then we can't be kind and benevolent by being engaged in organ donation." And I make the case in that chapter that's not at all what we're saying. OK? Even as the Galatians, as Paul wrote to the Galatian churches and the Galatian Christians and he said, "If you could gouge out your eyes and give them to me you would have done it." Well, it wouldn't have helped because there were no cornea transplants or whatever it was that Paul needed. But there is today. OK? And so that organ transplant as an act of love in granting part of my healthy body to someone's body that is not healthy, I'm saying to myself that is a very different motive than what has grown up in Europe and eventually has spread to the United States in trying to make a statement actually against the afterlife and against God by saying we're going to burn our bodies and cremate our bodies. I'm not here to introduce guilt if you've done that, but I would suggest you think that through and maybe my book or others like it may be helpful and kind of rethinking what you do with your body after you die, or what someone else does with your body because you won't be around to do anything with your body. But, I would say organ donation is in a completely different category. God is obviously able to take a cremated body because he will have a one to one correspondence between what dies and what is resurrected. He can take from the blueprint of the genetic material of that person and rebuild the entirety of the body. If I give my corneas or my

kidneys or my heart or whatever, there's no issue there, obviously, before God. But I do want to respect my theology by the way I deal with the bodies of my loved ones when they die. But I have no objection to organ donation. Although, with that said, asterisk, I do think you need to be careful about what's going on in the organ industry today. Some of you are in the medical industry. But I do think we've got to be smart and careful about that and judicious about what's going on, and not just say, "Oh yeah, let's just all think everyone is on the up and up when it comes to those things." Yeah, that's probably should not have been said because I'd have to explain myself. But I can explain it on the patio. Just be careful. I have no problem with organ donation. I don't think it's an unchristian thing to do. You're going, "Of course it's not." But if I believe in burial then you're going to see an inconsistency or you're going to try to see one and I'm going to say, I don't believe there is. Those are two categorical different things. Yeah.

Question: So this year for my Daily Bible Reading I'm doing a chronological Bible. I find it very interesting because it takes you back and forth between parallel accounts and passages of different books. Sometimes you see differences or apparent discrepancies. One that I had a question on was between Second Samuel 24 and First Chronicles 21 about the census where Samuel, it says God had incited David to take the census and in Chronicles it says Satan had incited him.

Pastor Mike: "Ultimate cause" and "agency of cause." Yeah, it's like in Job 1, if I looked at Job 1 and I read Job 1 and I see in that passage all the details that I have, I'm going to say, "Who caused Job such grief?" And I'm going to say well, because I read all the details, Satan caused it. Right? But even in that I'll bet..., I don't know how actively personal Satan was involved, perhaps he was, but he might have sent some henchmen to do this. A lot of things were going on at once. You know, with the Sabeans coming in and taking the, you know, the cattle and his kids dying and weather problems and all of that. Nevertheless, we say Satan did it. But then if you just had summation of that and you looked at what happened, you'd say, well I know in summary it wouldn't have happened had God not said, "OK, Satan, you can do this." See? So the permission that is granted by God letting the leash out on Satan in that passage still attributes him to the fact that God is responsible for what happened to Job, and you'd be accurate in saying that. He is the "ultimate cause" in that sense, but he's not the "immediate agency" of that evil and he never is. See? Every problem in your life, if you think about it, that is a negative evil problem, your intersection with evil, God says, you can't blame God for that. God is a holy God. You can only hold him responsible as a sovereign God. He's even saying I'll cause all those terrible things, Romans Chapter 8, which includes famine, sword, pestilence, death, persecution, all of those things are going to work together for good. OK. Just like Joseph, when he sat there and got sold into slavery and all the bad things happen to him in the prison. And then he says, "You guys meant it for evil, God meant it for good." Wait a minute. You meant it? Yeah, they did mean it. They didn't like Joseph. God meant it? Oh, God had another intention for it. Who's ultimately responsible? God is. So who incited the census? Well, Satan was the agency of it. Ultimately, it wouldn't happen had God not allowed this to happen and so God is credited with that. And we see that sometimes in Scripture. Like, can destruction come to a city if God did not first decree it? Right? As we were looking at the end of the period of Judah in the Old Testament in the 6th century. Those are statements where we say was God's going around destroying cities? Well, there's a lot of passages you can see that's exactly what's happening. But we know there's an agency. There are evil kings or evil people, even in Daniel, we'll see there are evil spiritual forces at work. So distinguishing those two make both of those statements accurate. Just like you would say, if you get cancer or if you have some problem financially, I mean, God is not going, "Oh, man, I turned my back and look what happens." Right? He knows what's going on. He allows what's going on. He has, in his will, mapped out what's going on. So, he's ultimately responsible, but he's not the agency or the cause. He's not nefariously coming up

with these plans as though he's trying to inflict evil on his people. So, there's the answer to that. Yes?

Question: My question is a couple of months ago a Jehovah's Witness came to my door and it has now transgressed into back-and-forth e-mails, Peets coffee, and we are now at the point, after going through Scripture and trying to look at the entirety, interpreting it correctly, including John 1:1, John 1:3, Colossians 1:15, the Old Testament. We're now at a point... How does the Jehovah's Witness decide what Scripture they are going to include, because they changed it from the King James to the New World Translation? So, when they made the change to the current translation from the King James, they said it was because they found these manuscripts which were so much better. What approach would you use if somebody said that to you?

Pastor Mike: I would say you're full of nonsense. That's the nice way to say it.

Question: I'm trying to keep the ball in the air and can't intellectually understand through the power of the Holy Spirit what the truth is.

Pastor Mike: Well, pick a word, but I'm going to make it clear, it's folly, it's nonsense. It's pure fantasy what you're saying. The four guys responsible for the New World Translation, who finally came out that these were the guys that did it, none of them knew the original languages. One guy had like two semesters of Greek. Right? And then when they were put on trial at one point they couldn't even recognize or translate a simple sentence from Hebrew or Greek. These guys don't know what they're talking about. They took an English translation and built their theology into it. The New World Translation is a mess. Anyone after taking two semesters of Greek can read parts of it and know, "You don't know the language." It's a joke, it's a fraud. It is not true. And if you're a J.W. and you happen to be here or you're listening, it's a fraud. Come in, we'll look at it, we'll open up... Talk about the anarthrous use of the word "theos" in John 1, because they're going to say, "The word was a god." I mean they love that passage in John 1:1. It is a complete and utter grammatical joke. There's not a non-Christian atheist who teaches in the classics department at any university in the country, who is teaching Attic or Koine Greek, who would ever say, "That's a good translation of that passage." It's insane. I can point out to you 12 other anarthrous or the word God, "theos", that doesn't use an article in front of it, to clearly, grammatically, because of the many rules. This is clearly God. There's no doubt about it. These guys didn't know the language, they didn't know what they were talking about, and just like every other cult group out there, you have to undermine your confidence in the reliability of Scripture. And that's what they've done. They come to your door, they talk to you, and they basically have to say, "This is not a reliable text. But you know what? Judge Rutherford and Knorr and all these guys, they fixed it for us." OK? Just like Joseph Smith and Mormonism. "Every single denomination and religion is all perverse before God. But, I'm here to fix it all. And I've got some special gold tablets. No, you can't see them, or I'm not going to let you have them, and I'm not going to tell you where they are. But here's my new thing. I'm going to tell you what it is." These are the kinds of things that you need to know. When they're undermining your confidence in the Bible, I would just say, "Go to our bookstore or go online and get any good book on the history of the Bible, how it came to be." And when they say, "Well, your Bible, you know, we found new manuscripts and all this is wrong." It's nonsense. It's utter nonsense, if you do any of the work to look at the history and reliability of Scripture. Everyone has to undermine the Bible, even Islam. Right? They want to say, "Oh, we believe in Esau, we believe in Jesus. He's a prophet. Oh, but what your book says about it is all wrong. We'll just tell you what the Koran says about it." Well, even the textual criticism of the Koran itself, we can undermine, as compared to the Bible. The Bible stands alone in being an accurate representation of what was written from

antiquity. You don't get any other book like this in terms of its reliability. You may struggle with the supernatural issues, but I'm going to say the ongoing supernatural issue is prophecy. They don't have any of that. They don't have any of that. And guys who want to come along and change the Bible to fit their theology, which is exactly what they did in the Watchtower and Tract Society, same thing they did in Mormonism, same thing they did in Islam. Right? They're going to have to make you believe the Bible isn't reliable. So spend your time... I mean, you can spend time learning JW theology or Mormon theology or Islam, but spend your time knowing whether or not this is an accurate reflection of what was written in Hebrew and Greek in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Then you're going to come away saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, I'm done soon as you start saying we have this all wrong." There's no book that's had more scholarship given to it in terms of where it came from, how it got here. I've been to Yale, I've been to places where I can sit with second century manuscripts of this book. You can't do that, you can't say it's all been changed when I can pull out, you know, papyri from Acts that I've held in my hand between two pieces of glass and say, in the Antiquities Library at Yale, "Yeah, it's all been changed." It hasn't been changed. I've seen it for myself. So, they don't know what they're talking about. And I guess you can continue on with this if you think you're making progress. But here's what I ask anyone who wants to spend my time debating their cultish views. I would say this: "If I could convince you and answer your questions and intellectually satisfy, right now, that whatever you think is wrong with this book I could prove you, whether it takes me two days or two years, would you become a biblical, Bible-believing Christian and leave behind the Watchtower and Tract Society or the Mormon church or your mosque in Islam?" If they say no, then we're done. Right? I don't want to waste my time. Right? I want someone who is saying... because here's what I'll say: the day they knock on my door, and they've mark me now in my neighbor, they don't come around anymore, which is kind of convenient for me. But I will say to them, "I want to become a J.W. I want to become one today. I want to become one, if you can prove that it's true." Right? I just want the same commitment from you that you're willing to leave this all behind if it's not true, because I'll leave behind biblical Christianity, you've just got to show me is not true. And they can't. I got in the bookstore Ron Rhodes' book, their little book, "Reasoning From the Scriptures." That was his first book in the series that he wrote, "Reasoning From the Scriptures with Jehovah Witnesses." Are you familiar with that book? That would be a good book to have because they're apologetic playbook is well traveled. They know, you know, how to respond to the average evangelical Christian. Ron is a very smart guy. We've had him here preaching for us before. Those responses point by point in that book by Harvest House Publishers, it's called "Reasoning From the Scriptures with Jehovah Witnesses" is very helpful. And if you think, "Well, that's too big, too detailed for someone else. You just thinking I just want to know a little bit about it. He's got ten things to say, it's a short little book to Jehovah Witnesses, and I think it is "The 10 Most Important Things You Can Say to a Jehovah Witness," and that series became "to Mormons" and, you know, "to Islam" and all the rest. But, I'd recommend that. I'll bet we have one in the bookstore. Yeah.

Question: I've always wondered about this. First Corinthians 5:11. Paul exhorts us and says, "But now I'm writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of Christian if he's guilty of sexual immorality, or greed, or as an idolater, a reviler, a drunkard or a swindler - not even eat with such a one." My question is what if it's even a family member?

Pastor Mike: Go back up to verse 9. This is where we start. "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and the swindlers, or the idolaters, since then you would have to go out of the world." OK. The point of this, and he's keeping it very tied to the beginning of the chapter, Chapter 5, where he says there's sin in your church, people sitting here in an incestuous sexual relationship, and

you're greeting them at the door, handing them a bulletin, so to speak, and having a doughnut and coffee with them after church as though everything's copacetic. It's not. You need to set that man out of the church because he's sinning against God, clearly unrepentant and claiming to be your brother in Christ. OK? That's what he's talking about and he's having to clarify, "I didn't mean everyone in the world." Guess who's in the world? My family members. Right? That's a structure that did not get built on doctrinal connections, that's what the Church is built on, doctrinal connections. We're here together because we share a commitment and a devotion to the truth. That's not how I got in my family. I got in my family because our biology is the same. Right? Or maybe because you were adopted into that family. That's a legal arrangement, a biological arrangement. You know, it's Christmas time, it's Thanksgiving. This passage does not apply to them. That's not what this passage is about. See? There's a distinction. Go ahead, follow up. No, it's good. OK.

Question: They claim to be Christians.

Pastor Mike: If they claim to be Christians, I'm going to make this clear, even though the context here is about the church. I still want to make it clear to professing Christians, "Hey, you know what? I see a big distinction between what you're saying and living, and what the Bible says. I bet they already know that about you. Do they not? Ok, most people who are concerned about that, they already know it. Just like my family. Right? My extended family. They know, it should be obvious I guess for me, the pastor man, but they know I don't agree with your moral choices. They know that about you. I'll bet your very presence there has already caused them some angst. And I bet you're not invited to some things. Right? Man, I know a little bit about that, not being invited to certain things because they know I'm a conviction just being there and you are too. And so I would just say, be kind, be nice, if it's Thanksgiving, even though they claim to be Christians, they are living a flagrantly immoral life, whatever it might be. I'm still going to go to Christmas, but I'll bet I don't have to say every time I'm with them, "Hey, I disagree with your moral choices." They know that and that's why they're not saying, "Hey, let's go hang out after this," because they don't want that conviction. So, just continue to be the light, which doesn't mean you have to preach at them every time you see them. But whenever it comes up, if there's ever chance for you to go, "Oh, well, that's not biblical, that's why I don't support that or applaud that," then keep that up, but I'll bet you're there.

Question: I have a question, two questions, rather, the first from Mark 10 where it refers to James and John. Specifically, when they ask to sit on his right hand and his left, Jesus makes pre-conditions, to drink the cup that I drink and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. I always thought the cup was the wrath of God. So if it's not, or if it is, why would they have to drink that like Christ did, go through his baptism? I thought his baptism was separate from ours.

Let me answer that first, then you can ask your second question, OK, unless are tightly related. Okay. Because there are a few things I want to make sure I get out and don't forget. Good Friday, some of you were here on Good Friday. I guess it was a year ago now, when I had the cup of the blessing, the cup of God's wrath. OK? The cup of God's wrath, very specific, in terms of what was going on at the death of Christ. Obviously, it's an illustration, it's an analogy, drinking the cup. That cup analogy though, throughout the Scripture, drinking a bitter cup, a Hebraic kind of idiom, it's a set of words that gives a sense of: "I have to go through something terrible." Okay? In the category of going through something terrible, clearly the followers of Christ didn't have to go through terrible things. Christ's terrible things that he went through wouldn't even have been on the table were it not for the fact that he was sent specifically to give his life as a ransom for many and absorb the wrath of the Father. So his cup was specifically about the cup of God's wrath. But just as it says

that we are filling up what's lacking in the sufferings of Christ, I know this: Christ said "tetelestai" on the cross, "It is finished." Paid in full. His suffering for the specific absorption of the wrath of the Father was completely done. And yet he says to us, there's a lot more suffering that needs to be done in building this Church and you and I are going to continue that on until Christ comes back. So the cup in that sense goes from the specific cup of the Messiah dying on a cross to satisfy the wrath of God, to being persecuted, which they would. Right? Eleven of the 12, or if you get Judas out of the list, 10 of the 11 died a horrible death. Even John, who died at an old age, died as an exile. So they're enduring the wrath of this world that would be like the old idiom of drinking this bitter cup with the dregs in it. But Christ's was much, much more specific. So they're not doing anything for the vicarious atonement or any kind of satisfying of God's wrath. But they're just finishing up the suffering that all people who ally their selves with Christ have. There's the prophecy given to Mary in Luke Chapter 1 that Christ would be, Simeon said this to Mary when Jesus was just a baby, a week old, that son of yours is going to be a sign that all of Israel is going to come against. It's like a target. That's the way I remember preaching it. The idea of he's a target. Now, you go stand with a target. You don't want to go down to, you know, on target, you know, where they say, "Go stand by the targets down there." Right? No no no. I want you to stay here behind the line. Why? Because you're going to get shot out there. Satan's shooting at God, as I said last week, and Christ in particular, and if you stand with him you're going to drink some of the cup, not in any way related to our vicarious atonement. So, in this sense I'm going to say Jesus is using that phrase as more generally you'd find it throughout the Old Testament, although you do see specific references to God's wrath. But it's not God's wrath. Right? First Thessalonians makes it clear the wrath that we receive is not the wrath of God, it's the wrath that comes because we stand with God. Anyway. Ok, second question unless there's more on that one that I missed.

Question: Can you talk about the baptism aspect of it as well?

Pastor Mike: Baptism "baptizo" means to be placed into, to be placed into. Even to be baptized by fire, is the way that John used it in Luke 3, to be placed into fire. Baptism didn't have just to mean be placed into Christ judicially when I put my trust in him. It didn't just mean get placed into water as a symbol of my justification to people in an initiatory rite for the church. Baptism means to be placed into. And so that picture, in this sense, was a context of negative, of pain, of suffering. People who are going to climb in places of prominence in the kingdom are going to go through a lot of suffering for their loyalty to Christ in this life. They're going to drink the cup that's similar to the kind of cup that Jesus drank, that though, like our immediate question that Jeff asked about immediate cause agency and ultimate cause... Right? Who killed Christ? Well, the Romans did. Well, the Jewish leaders did. The people jeered at him, they put thorns on his head. OK, but it was God ultimately. So, if you step back from God killing his own son, as Isaiah 53 says, you've got people going after him. Well there's the similarity. Drinking the dregs, drinking the cup, painful. The baptism. What is that? It doesn't have to do with any kind of rights in the church. It has nothing to do with being placed into Christ for my salvation. It has to do with being placed into this difficult situation. It's like John saying in Luke 3, to be baptized with fire, which I think is a negative reference, not a Pentecostal reference about something, which I think some people go there with that because they've heard that from platforms, but the context is clearly God's judgement. The axe is at the root of the tree. It's about to be thrown into the fire. To be baptized into the fire is to be thrown into pain. So the disciples were going to be baptized into pain. Two ways to say that, it's like drinking the cup, it's like being baptized. With the baptism I'm about to get thrown to the wolves, so to speak, as the kangaroo court of Caiaphas and the Jews and the high priests and the Sanhedrin and the Roman officials and Pilot and then the Roman soldiers. That's what I'm about to go through. You want to sit at a high place of prominence in the kingdom, you'll be that loyal to me, that you're

going to have a lot of pain too. Baptism. Cup. Does that help? Follow up if there's more to this. OK.

Question: For my second question, kind of give your opinion on the pros and cons, safety and dangers of holding to a historical confessional like the Heidelberg, or Westminster or Baptist Confession over just like a statement of faith. Like for a church to hold to a historical confession is just kind of common.

Pastor Mike: Yeah, I have to be careful here because I have so many friends who hold to, you know, Heidelberg and Westminster Confession of Faith. Confessions can be helpful. Just like on my shelf, I have a long shelf full of, as all of our pastor do, of systematic theologies, which are nothing more than explanations of doctrinal positions, and those can be very helpful. But just like I can pull off, you know, Ericksen off the shelf, and I can pull off, you know, Raymond or I can pull off Chafer, or I can pull off, you know, whoever. Grudem, your favorite guy who does systematic theology. I can lay them all out and find that they disagree. And just because I have within the reform circles some confessions that agree, and when I make a case to my reform friends why is it that I'm stuck on those, here's the response I've gotten from the Ph.D's of the Ph.D's. They say, "Because that was the era for writing confessions." Right? "That's when the mind was the best." And I'm not sure I'm buying that. I understand they didn't have iPhones to distract them or whatever and all that, but I don't think I'm going to kind of memorialize one little season coming out of the reformation as the golden era of thinking theologically and every other systematic theology since has just been trying to live up to the big giants of the confessional writing of the 16th century. I'm just not of that opinion and I don't share that with my reformed friends who are so reformed that I hear them quoting the confessions more than they quote the Bible. And I hate to say that, but that's what I hear. And so I'm just saying this: I think we can have a doctrinal statement, particularly in a ministry and a church like ours, and say, "Here is our doctrinal statement." We can go into great detail as they do in the confessions of the post Reformation period and learn a lot. But even those, I can show you, I've got a book on my shelf that's the harmonies of the great confessions and in parallel, much like we do with a lot of things that we put in parallel, you'll see the distinctions even between the confessions. And then I want to know, you know, where do I stand? Eventually, you're going to pick one or you're going to pick another or you're going to say, "Well, I just I'm going to pick 80% of that and 20% of that and 10% of that." I'm just saying they're great. They're helpful. I've studied them. I read them. I've got a parallel on my shelf that sometimes I pick up to try and see how they, across the board, deal with any particular issue. I mean, I was just reading the confessions two weeks ago. But it doesn't mean that I'm saying that's the snapshot, that's going to be the governance for our church in terms of all that we believe and all that we practice. Although I have great, great respect. Brilliant people put the confessions together, but I don't think that everything else after that time is not worth having on my shelf. Or governing our thinking as theologians or pastors who try and distill a doctrinal statement. And I guess the other thing I would say is they are much more broad and I'm thinking, what's helpful for our fellowship? First Corinthians 1:10 says in a church we should be perfectly agreed in mind and thought. I want to know what's the standard for that? How far do we go? Do I want to get down to every detail that the Westminster Confession had articulated? Probably not for us as a church say, "Hey, we're going to be a church." I think as a group we're bigger, we're better, as a larger organization. Now people argue with me about that. But that means I can't go into every single detail that I'm going to find in all the confessions. Great question though. Appreciate it. Yeah.

Question: Thanks for your ministry, and I'm thankful that Compass is our home church. Last week, I think it was, you preached on David and Goliath and described it as a PG-13 topic in the Scriptures. And my question is just similar counsel for going through those kinds of passages in

Scripture with young kids. We have kids 5 and under.

Pastor Mike: Great, great question and was just talking about this the other day with my wife. I have never been, you can interview all three of my sons, or my children. My daughter doesn't appreciate being called a son. My two sons and my daughter. Mom and Dad, as teachers, want to teach. The most important curriculum in the world is the Bible. I am not going to come across incest with Lot's daughters or a prostitute, you know, in the patriarchs or temple prostitutes or homosexuality in Leviticus 18, and say, "Let's not let them read that. I don't want to explain any of that to them." There are ways to explain prostitution to a 4-year-old that doesn't involve a gratuitous explanation of things that they're not even clued into yet. But I want to explain that this is what this means. This is what happened. I mean he paid money to have a kind of ooey-goey relationship like your mom and dad have and they did it for an hour and a half or so and that's what prostitution is. Here's what a prostitute is. I've taught my kids all of that from the time that they were old enough to hear my Bible stories, which we read to them from the time they were infants before they went to bed. We've been reading the Bible to them from the time they were little. All I'm saying is I'm not holding anything back. I may not sit there and describe all the ins and outs of Leviticus 20. Right? With all the rules about, you know, here's what you should do if there's incest or whatever. But I'm going to make it clear to them in terms they can understand what these things are. And yet I'm not the parent sitting there showing them horror movies. Right? We don't watch them, we don't have them, we never watched them, we don't take an inch of recreational interest in gratuitous gore. We just don't. And yet, if there's gore in the Bible we're going to talk about it and I'm going to explain it to them and I'm going to explain it as early as possible. But I'm not going to be gratuitous about it. So, I'd say don't hold back, don't hold back in terms of the content. I want my kids to understand what was going on in the Bible because it's only going to be a snap until they're talking about it on the playground anyway. "Well, I'm going to home school them." Great. Unless you put a brain-a-scope on their brain and lock it down with a password... They can't drive down the freeway without getting, you know, the gentlemen's club with someone in their underwear. "What's that about dad?" And if they don't want to even ask you because they know you don't talk about those things and they're intuitive enough to know we avoid anything that's embarrassing, then they get their education elsewhere. I want my kids to see me as their primary discipler and that means I'm explaining in detail, without being gratuitous or going over the top, with anything we read in the Bible, because it is a PG-13 document. Right? In Judges, we're chopping up women and sending them throughout Israel. What's that with dismemberment? I've got to talk about dismemberment with my 4-year-old? I did. Right? But we never took any interest in that. Right? My kids never had an interest in those things, well they're fallen, so they had some interest, I suppose, but we never gave them an outlet to have an interest in those things. Great question. We were just talking about that two days ago, my wife and I.

Question: I think one of the biggest issues in the modern-day Christian church, is not the value of men and women, because I think we all agree that it's equal, but the roles that men and women play within marriage and out of marriage, within the church. How do you discern what is specific cultural direction from the apostles to a specific church in that time? And just sort out what are timeless principals and timeless truths, just like in First Corinthians 11 with the head covering or...

Pastor Mike: That's a great question and I would go for a lengthier answer, a two-hour answer, to Focal Point and download a little series from that passage called "Your Gender Matters To God." And in that passage I make very clear the distinctions in how we distinguish between universal truth in that text and cultural expressions of those truths. And you've got to be careful with that passage because Paul does this: back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, talking about the principle,

the order of creation, the relationships that God made, and then the expressions of them in the Corinthian church. OK. Here's the thing. We cannot fit into our culture's definitions of any of this. So you've got to be ready right now to know I'm not going to fit in, it doesn't matter. The world's going to change their views, they constantly do. Look at this whole, you know, this explosion of sexual ethics and sexual rights that we've had in the last 20 years. They have changed the rules themselves, repeatedly, about what's right, what's wrong, what we should do, what we shouldn't do. Is my desire for a gender, is it fixed or is it fluid? Can I change who I am? Can I not? You know, is this inborn, is this preference? Those are things that they're constantly going to debate. So, I'm going to go to the Bible and find out what those principles are. And I'm going to look at what is given to us in that format. This is called hermeneutical. We're trying to carefully decipher what the intention of the text is. And when you see things about complimentary gifts between men and women, therefore they have complimentary roles, I've got to recognize that those statements are given within the context of creation. In other words, God keeps going back in the Word and showing us, this is the way I created it, this is the way I set it up. Those things I can't change. Now, the expressions of them in the church, I've got to find out what in this passage has an expression built on that principle. And all I'm saying is it's too easy for us to say, "cultural, cultural. It's over." Just because I'm looking at head covering and seeing that this expression of femininity in the church, well that's not an expression of femininity now unless you're in a Muslim country. Right? So it doesn't apply. Oh, I agree with you in that regard. But I don't agree that the principle's not valid. And the principle of headship there is as clear as it can possibly be, because we have complimentary gifts. And the Bible says because we have complimentary gifts as male and female and therefore we are to fulfill complimentary roles. That's why we have pastors who are men. Not because we're misogynistic, not because we're male chauvinist, not because we think men are better than women, but because God said this is the pattern for leadership in the church. It's not cultural. In First Timothy Chapter 2, it's not cultural, throughout First Corinthians 11 it's not cultural, it's rooted in creation. Therefore, I don't change it. I can't mess with it. OK? The expressions of what a... Go back to Leviticus when it talks about a woman, the way that it's described as a woman should not wear man's clothes. That's how the text reads in most English texts. That Hebrew word is really for a uniform, what was considered manly in that cultural context. And in that point, that changes, does it not? Right? To say a woman can't wear pants then. Right? If that were something that our grandparents said in the Midwest, they should wear dresses and all that, perhaps in a day that made sense, it doesn't make sense now, unless you walk in and go, "I can't tell if that's a guy or a girl." That's the kind of distinction I try to drill down two or three layers into in that series, "Your Gender Matters To God." And the first one is a little bit more of a look at the misogyny, there's a word we don't hear much anymore. You know misogynistic, misogyny. You probably don't know the word misandry, which is the opposite. Matter of fact, I tell the story when I was creating that sermon, that if I misspelled misogyny, Microsoft Word goes "You can't spell." If I put misandry in there it goes, "What's that word?" It's interesting. And even software company back then, which I hope it comes up now. There is a fight against males today. It's one of the reasons I wrote that book "Raising Men Not Boys" and I think we've got to see in that first message, you may want to get right to the second message, but that first message about men, I think we've got to see in our culture the attack against our boys, the attack against male leadership, the attack against male distinctiveness. And so I spent a lot of time in that first message. But the second message may be the one that will give you more of the answers to the questions you're asking. But you've got to look at every passage that gives distinction between male and female and find out what's rooted in creation, what is stated as an eternal principle, and what is an expression of those principles in the given passage. Yeah.

Question: How do I explain Hell being a place of the absence of God but knowing God's attribute of being omnipresent.

Pastor Mike: Omnipresent. Let's think about that philosophically for a minute. To say that God is omnipresent, what are we saying? We're saying Psalm 139. If I went to heaven, he's there, if I went to Sheol, he's there, I go across the sea, he's there. There's no where I can go where I'm outside his perception. Right? His perception, his ability to do something powerfully. He is everywhere present. Now, that's not a bad word, omnipresent. It's just that you got to think of it more than some statement of physics. Right? God is Spirit, he takes up no space. He doesn't have hands or eyes or hair follicles. Christ does, the incarnate second person of the Godhead does. So, what are we saying? God is able in every place at any time to exercise whatever power, whatever presence, whatever perception he wants. That is God. There is a place, here's how it's described though, Paul writes to the Thessalonians, he says, "Away from his presence..." Well, let's just look it up because I don't want to misquote God's Word. Second Thessalonians Chapter 1. He comes back in judgment, "inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction," an ongoing bad situation, "away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might." OK? So the combinational phrase here is he's "away from his presence." What do we mean by that? Well, what do you normally mean we talk about the presence of God? Not talking about his perception, clearly. He's omniscient, he knows all things, but "from the glory of his might." OK. The word I'm thinking of in the Greek, which I'm assuming is there, I don't have my Greek New Testament, but is the determined expressed power of God to do something, his might, his glory, glory, "doxa", his greatness, his goodness, everything that is good in experience comes from God's expression of glory. He does something..., when you eat a good meal today it's of the glory of God. When you get a nap this afternoon, it's the glory of God. That is God's expression of his grace. There is a place where God says you can't have any of that. The expression of my glorious might is removed. So that's the active participation of God in a place where he's decided, I'm not going to have that active presence. I think presence is defined and mitigated by the next phrase, which is the glory of his might, the English Standard Version translates it. So, it's not as though there's no perception. It's not as though this is not... I mean, it's not like Satan is the king of the Lake of Fire because God's not there. Right? God is in charge of everything and all things. Not a molecule anywhere that God isn't in control of, not a spirit that God is not the Lord of. It's just that here he says, I'm pulling back my gifts, my power and my glory, which is a really bad thing. And that's why you don't want to go there. Yes.

Question: Recently in the Daily Bible Reading in Acts Chapter 16 when Paul meets Timothy and wanted Timothy to accompany him and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews because they all knew his father wasn't a Jew. The letter that they're sending saying no sexual immorality, you know, other things in other passages, like don't eat what has been sacrificed to idols. They clarified that that, in and of itself, isn't anything, but just for the conscience of others believers. Right? If he circumcised Timothy, at what point does it become kind of like you are copasetic with what they are saying?

Great, great, great, great question. We have to go to Galatians to see where Paul now is vehement against them being circumcised. And you ask, "Wait a minute, you had Timothy circumcised. What are you talking about?" And he makes it clear, if you allow yourself to be circumcised Christ is of no value to you. Those statements plucked out of context would be like, you've just condemned Timothy. You got him circumcised. OK? You've got to put together the argument of Galatians, which in the immediate context is the fact that they are relying on the Law, in that case the ceremonial law. "I want the signs of my Judaism to be something that I say makes me right with God." It's why at the beginning of that book Paul has to lambast Peter for withdrawing when he, you know, didn't want to show himself as eating non-kosher food. And he says, "No, you're wrong,

we are free." That's the problem. "These judaizers," he calls them, "I wish they'd go on and emasculate themselves." What a crazy, colorful, dramatic way to put it. These guys are all about circumcision to make themselves right with God. They believe that those signs of the Covenant were necessary. And so Paul goes, "You guys shouldn't do that." Clearly whatever is going on here the same guy who wrote that is saying, "We're trying to do an evangelistic ministry here among the synagogues and I got a guy here, they know his background, they know his parents, they think he's not, you know, a Jew, they think he's not circumcised. So, we're going to go have him circumcised." Then I've got to go to Corinthians say, "Why would he do those things?" Just like you said, why would even at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 then be worried about meat that was, you know, offered to idols. Who cares? He says in Corinthians, "Eat it, don't ask any questions about conscience." Corinth is a very different place than what Paul was addressing in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. They were in a very, you know, Greek oriented Roman-Greco culture and it was like, it doesn't matter, unless it does matter, and if it matters to someone then don't embolden their conscience and make them stumble. He writes so much more on the other side of this to the Romans saying, "It doesn't matter. If I eat meat, it doesn't matter. I don't want to cause my brother to stumble." I know that when Paul says, "I become all things to all men, those under Law as under the Law, yet not without the law of Christ." Those kinds of statements prove to me that what he's doing here is accommodating the cultural expectation for the sake of his ministry. And that is, "Listen, I don't want to be excluded from the synagogue. I'm in there," as we read today in our Daily Bible Reading, "in the school of Tyrannus. I want to be in the synagogues reasoning everyday with them about Christ. I don't want the circumcision thing to stand in the way." The circumcision thing at this point in the ministry in this specific location was to them a... It's like wearing a yamaka as you went to a place. But the clarity is that Paul doesn't have the problem that the Galatians have. That is they want to put themselves in the ceremonial law to get right with God. I know you got more to that.

Question: So, at what point does it become that the Jewish people that he's doing this for to minister to, they feel like you're one of us. You're agreeing with us in our stance.

Pastor Mike: No. I don't think there are two minutes with Paul opening his mouth when they don't make very clear that what you're doing is wrong. Right? It be like you and I, if I had a chance to take you to one of my Orthodox Jewish friends and I said, "We're going to go to his house to share the Gospel." And I said, "But I'd like you to put on a yamaka on your head when you come into his house." I think that's the equivalent of what Paul did here. You'd put it on your head. You're going in there to share the Gospel and you'd say, "OK, I want to talk you about Christ. Let's look at Isaiah 53. Let's talk about Messianic prophecies." And you'd throw that thing on going, "It means nothing, it means nothing. But I'm going to do that because I want to share the Gospel." Now, over here in this church, they're all putting it on going, "You can't be saved if you don't put that on your head" That's what circumcision was to the Galatians churches. And he goes, "Stop it. If you put a yamaka on your head, then Christ is of no value to you," because they are trusting in that as a means to get right with God. Yes. Oh man. Last question. Sorry.

Question: How would you balance helping someone resource-wise versus enabling them in light of things like bipolar manic depression, whether they are actually on medication...

Pastor Mike: Restate that question. When you say resources what do you mean?

Question: Meaning financially or opening your house to people. Financially bailing someone out who is in need versus enabling them, but they're bi-polar. You've done this for ten years.

Right. Yeah. And that you'd have to look at a case by case and look at where in the world you're going to have to say this is enough. When you say enabling, you have to make sure that that's really what you're doing at this point because you would rather err on the side of being kind and being compassionate and being helpful. So, I'd say, if you think the line is here, go another mile or two past it to show that I'm going to be kind, unless you think, no, it's very clear, I'm causing more harm than good. And it's like tough love with parents. At some point you're going to have to say, "I'm going to let you fall on your own in this." I've got a situation I was talking to someone about a brother was a drug addict and was more than just taking pills for psychotropic or, you know, for psychological diagnoses. And it's clear, I'm not going to give you money because you're going to go out and use those for your drug habit. So, you've got to know in every situation, where am I starting to make my help unhelpful, it's counterproductive. And I'd say that's the kind of situation, every single case by case you probably need to come in with an outside, objective, another brother in Christ and just lay it out on the table and go, "Help me make sure I'm not missing anything." And of course any of our pastors are available for that kind of thing. Let's look at every situation. Let's make sure that you're not abandoning someone you could help and that the help that you're providing is truly helpful because that's a hard situation. But we run into that all the time and it's tough. But that would need more than just a general sketch. Make sure your help is truly helpful and you know what it is to enable someone. If a drug addict comes to the parking lot today and says, "Hey, give me some money." Right? I'm not going to give him money. Right? "I'm not going to give you money. Money is not what you need. You need to get involved in something like accountability, discipleship, relationship," like I've had in the back bedroom of my house, where they vomit all over my mattress, then go through detox and become non-drug addicts. I mean, we need more of that, not that my house is now your place for your drug addicts, but I've been through it. And I know that's the help they need. Not, "Here's a fifty-dollar bill, have a nice day." And you know that, right? I mean, that's why, I'm sure, you look carefully, especially in Orange County, at people who are saying, "Hey, give me some money." Right? And telling you they are not going to eat without it, which, of course, is not the case in Orange County. There are a million resources and you could carry those around in your car, not that you are going to make any friends by handing that out. But, we have to be shrewd and wise about those kinds of thing. But we want to be compassionate and that's why I'd rather err on the side of being kind, but I want to make sure that that kindness doesn't turn in to enabling someone to hurt themselves, which can happen.

Pastor Mike: All right. Well, that time goes really fast even though we were off to a slow start and you guys didn't ask many questions and you hurt Jay's feelings. Besides that, it was a good morning, I hope. But hopefully, my prayer is every time we do this that there's something to chew on, something that will encourage you, something that will motivate you, something that will challenge you, that you'll take home. And I pray it'll result in something good even though we didn't walk through a text of Scripture.