

# Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul - May 2023

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**Pastor Paul:** We're going to do something a little different tonight. During the course of a given month, we field pretty fair amount of questions. And honestly, I used to try to keep up with them. Like, right away, shoot an answer off just as soon as they came. And I realized here in the last couple of months that I just couldn't really do that anymore. So we started compiling things, and Sue fields them now, they all essentially come to her. And so we decided that we were going to just start doing a Q&A on a regular basis. And the last time we did it, we pre-recorded it. And then people were able to play back. And we decided, since we were doing a final Wednesday here in May, that we were just going to do it on a Wednesday night in front of you all and get these questions taken care of for this month. So some of these people have been waiting, like practically a month to get around to some of these. I want to let people know that we're not fielding any questions live. We've been compiling them. And we've got more than we can probably get through tonight. But Sue is going to help me out here by going through the questions and I'm going to do my best.

**Sue:** So let's get started.

**Pastor Paul:** How about we pray and then we'll get into it here. By the way, Taylor, were we able to do anything with the picture? No, okay. Don't worry about it. I've been texting all day long with Aaron Gam in Kenya and he finally got a good signal, which is really rare. And so he was like, shooting me all these messages and sending pictures and stuff and so he sent me a photo that I wanted to share if you guys have it.



There's Aaron with some of the kids at the orphanage. They just love, he took a bunch of stuff for the kids, he took games and candy and all the things that kids love. So, anyway, I thought I'd share that with you guys so you could see it. So there you go.

All right, Heavenly Father, thank you so much for giving us this time tonight to talk about the scriptures, and to look into answers that you've given through Your Word. And we thank, You God, that our faith is one that invites questions because we know that's not the case in every faith. But, Lord, I believe that you love questions, because there's lots of answers. And I thank, You Lord, that Your Word provides us with so much insight and understanding about life. And pray that tonight the questions and answers that we go through this evening, would really be a blessing, not just to those who are here tonight at Calvary Chapel Ontario, but those who are watching us online and those who will watch later on. So we just really pray for your Holy Spirit to use this time, and to minister to hearts and we ask it in Jesus precious name, amen.

**Sue:** So the first question we have tonight comes from Gloria and she asks, *“The Apostles Creed says that Jesus descended into hell. What verses from the Bible can you give me to show that that is incorrect?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Is an interesting question, isn't it? What verses from the Bible can you give me to show that's incorrect. First of all, the first thing I need to say about that is that's the wrong way to look at it. We don't go to the Bible to corroborate a creed, it's the other way around. Creeds are corroborated by the Bible, and creeds were put together originally to just emphasize key elements of truth in the Bible. But there's an excerpt from the Apostles Creed and the lesser known Athanasian Creed, which we've got on the screen. So we'll put it up for people who are watching online as well. And this is what it says,

**Excerpt from the Apostles Creed:**

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell.*

And that is the way the Apostles Creed reads, and so that has created a lot of questions from people is that in fact, the case. Remember that's the question we need to be asking, are the statements that we read in any creed, are they consistent? And are they faithful with the revelation of God's Word? But I will tell you that this statement in the Apostle's Creed has caused a great deal of confusion. And it has also given rise to a belief and a teaching, which is unbiblical, that says that Jesus descended into hell, and suffered there, in hell, further for our sins in addition to what He did on the cross. And that, of course, is completely wrong. But some of the confusion doesn't just stem frankly from the Apostles Creed. But it also stems unfortunately, from a rather unfortunate rendering of Psalm chapter 16. In the King James Version, let me put that on the screen for you. It says,

**Psalm 16:10 (KJV)**

*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

And that is way the King James Bible renders that portion of that verse. However, hell is not a correct rendering in that particular situation. And the New King James, when it came out, actually brought correction to that, let me put that up. The New King James says,

**Psalm 16:10 (NKJV)**

*For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption..*

Notice that, and that's the same, by the way, as in the ESV, the word Sheol, is used there, instead of hell. And the word, Sheol, is Hebrew, and it means, the place of the dead, literally, the place of the dead. Now, in your Greek New Testament, that word is Hades. And so it's a different word, but it means the same thing, the place of the dead, and these places are distinguished from hell. Hell is equated with the lake of fire. And in fact, the term Hades, and Lake of Fire, both occur in the book of Revelation, and they are distinguished from one another. They are not the same thing. Jesus gave us some insights into this in a passage in Luke, and if you want to take notes and read it later, you sure can. It's in Luke chapter 16. And he tells us in a story that he told of what I believe was a true-life event that Sheol, or Hades, is a place with two sections. And one is a place of blessing where those who die in faith go. It's also known as paradise. And the other place is a place of suffering where those who are awaiting judgment go to await that time. So those are the ideas behind Sheol and Hades, and I wanted to just simply make that distinction before we moved any further.

So you say, well, then where exactly does this idea come from, that Jesus descended into hell? If the King James is incorrect, and it is in that particular rendering of Psalm 60, then where does it come from? Well, it comes from a passage, mostly from 1 Peter 4, which we'll put on the screen for you so we can see that together. That says,

**1 Peter 4:6 (ESV)**

For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the Spirit the way God does.

Now, what does that passage say? Yes, it says that the gospel was preached to the dead. It doesn't say who did the preaching. It doesn't say specifically that Jesus preached to those who were dead, but that is the way most Bible scholars by even many Bible students assume that that is, in fact, the case. And this verse in Peter is often coupled with a passage in Ephesians chapter four, verse nine, that says, *"In saying, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he also descended into the lower regions, the earth?"* And that is another passage that people link with Peter to say, Jesus descended into the lower regions. And we know from Peter that somebody preached to the dead, so since we know Jesus descended to the lower regions, it must have been him. There you go, we've got our doctrine, and Jesus descended into Sheol, not hell, and preached. Except there's still some problems to that. The passage in Ephesians chapter four is not talking about Jesus descending into Sheol. When it says he descended to the lower regions, it's talking about the Earth. It's talking about his incarnation. It simply means God came from heaven to earth. It's not talking about Sheol, or the grave or, or anything like that. So really, the only place that conclusively tells us that Jesus descended into the place of the dead is his statement to the thief on the cross, the penitent thief, when he said, this day you will be with Me in paradise. And, again, paradise is another name for that place of comfort, which is also referred to as Abraham's bosom, where people who died in faith went

awaiting the entrance, or the opening of heaven. That's the really the only passage that says Jesus went there. He went there with the thief on the cross. But I can just tell you that Jesus most certainly did not descend into the place of suffering and torment, and neither did he suffer for our sins in hell. Jesus made a very clear victorious statement on the cross. It is finished, and that means it was done. And so what he did on the cross was finished before he gave up his spirit, and there was no need to suffer after that. So that's a long answer to a short question.

**Sue:** That was really big answer.

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, it was. That's her way of saying that, gee, Paul, you're really boring.

**Sue:** No, not a bit. Not at all. We're all impressed when you can have a big answer. And that's good. But let's move on. Bridget says, *“Hello, Pastor Paul, can you tell me if portals are biblical? And should Christians be trying to open them for prayer? I cannot find that word portal in my King James Bible.”*

**Pastor Paul:** And you won't, and nor will you find it in any other Bible. Honestly, this is one of those questions where we get questions, but people don't go far enough sometimes with the question, and I would need more information to know what kind of portals she's talking about.

**Sue:** Also, it seems like there's some phraseology here, because her additional question is also, *“Do we take prayers into the court of heaven?”* So it sounds like someone has collected some phrases and is wondering about them?

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, that's probably the case. And that I can answer. Yes, we take prayers into the courts of heaven. Hebrews 4:16 says, let us then with confidence draw nearer to the throne of grace. Why do we go there? That we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in a time of need, that's why we go, that's where we go.

That's where we take our prayers to the throne of grace. And that is truly the court of heaven. So, yes, we do. But as far as the portal thing, I did some research, and I really couldn't find any specific information. So, I would really encourage you, if you can't find it in your Bible, just kick it out.

**Sue:** Move on.

**Pastor Paul:** That's just the safest way to go.

**Sue:** Here's a tricky one. Jean asks, *“Can a practicing Catholic be saved without leaving Catholicism?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I get this question a lot. And I usually answer this way, Roman Catholicism can get in the way of someone understanding salvation from the standpoint of all the things that they have added to the gospel, and all the things that they have laid out as requirements. Confessing sin before a priest, and taking the Eucharist and considering that a means of salvation, and on and on, and there's a lot of things that can become problematic if somebody is really holding very tightly to Roman Catholicism. But I will say this, if anyone, and I don't care what church they go to, but if anyone considers and believes that, what Jesus did on the cross, and He alone is the only one who can save them, by what he did, by His death on the cross, they will be saved. I don't care where they go to church. I don't care what denomination they affixed to their life. Catholic, Lutheran, whatever, it doesn't matter. If a person is trusting in the finished work of Jesus, they are saved. So that's the best way I can answer that.

**Sue:** Yes, that's good. Troy is asking question about Acts 8, *“The story when John and Peter arrived on the scene to lay hands, why did they have to lay hands on them to get spiritual gifts? Why couldn't it be enough that they just believe and have the Holy Spirit?”*

**Pastor Paul:** They didn't have to lay hands. They just did. They laid hands because laying on of hands was something they did and it's something that we do, but the laying on of hands wasn't always seen in relationship to the falling or the coming of the Spirit on people. When the Holy Spirit fell on the original, the apostles on the day of Pentecost, nobody laid any hands. And frankly, when you get to Acts chapter 10, and Peter's preaching to all the people gathered in the house of Cornelius, he's in the middle of preaching. And the Holy Spirit fell on them in the same way that had fallen on the believers in Acts 2, and there was no one who laid hands there. So, it's one of these things you got to be careful not to overthink. Just because you see something somewhere doesn't mean that that is a must in every situation. And the way we know that is by comparing it with other passages of Scripture.

**Sue:** Chris asks, “*At what point does waiting on God to do something become wrongful inaction on the part of a believer?*” That's a good question. Like, where on the spectrum are you erring on one side of the other?

**Pastor Paul:** If you're just saying I'm waiting on the Lord. In other words, where does it get to be a problem?

**Sue:** Like I need a job. I'm just waiting on the Lord, but I haven't gotten on Indeed. I haven't applied for anything. At what point is it...you know?

**Pastor Paul:** And I think there could be about a million answers, honestly, I really do. Because waiting on the Lord can become a wrongful inaction when it becomes an excuse for laziness. When it becomes an excuse for refusing to listen and obey. I'm just waiting on the Lord, but really, he's speaking but I'm not listening. When waiting fails to understand the role of faith. Do you know what I mean by that? Do we say, I'm waiting on the Lord, and the Lord says, go, and I'm not ready to go because I'm not stepping out in faith. Jesus said to Peter, when he said, if that's you,



let me come to you walking on the water. And Jesus said, come. And what if Peter would have said, well, I'm just waiting on you, Lord. He had to actually make the effort to get out of the boat into the water, and that's called a step of faith. And sometimes we can blame waiting on the Lord with the fact that I just don't really want to take a step of faith. And so there's really no one right answer for every situation. I think in each case, you have to just connect your own heart or check your own heart with the Lord. Waiting on the Lord is very, very, very tough thing to do. Very difficult thing to do. But I suppose in some cases, it could become an excuse for not doing anything.

**Sue:** Dan has a tender question. He says, *“Dear Pastor Paul, please help me with scriptural references that would help those who are suffering from cancer and have only death to look forward to. I want to visit with some cancer patients, and I need to give them hope in Jesus Christ and the resurrection.”*

**Pastor Paul:** I appreciate this question. There's a common misconception that sometimes I need to target somebody's particular issue with the Word in order for them to find hope, and whatever for their situation. And I've learned over the years that the Word of God is a wellspring of hope. And sometimes just sharing the Word is enough. But in this case, if I were going into a place where people didn't maybe have long on this earth, and I was looking for something, I would probably read passages like 1 Thessalonians chapter four, beginning of verse 13, where Paul talks about the coming of the Lord. But there's also a passage that I think people would find very comforting. It's in Revelation chapter one, where Jesus talks about the fact that he says, I am the first and the last living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades, or the grave. And to know that this thing that you're about to enter into, is now owned and operated by the Lord your God, and under his complete and total control, that I would think that would

give comfort. So I would consider that passage in Revelation chapter one. But that's a tough thing. But if you can't think of something specific, just give them the Word. I get questions all the time. People are going through a hard time and pastor, can you give me a verse? It's like, well, I usually tell people to just go hang out in the Psalms, go live in the Psalms, make that your address for the next month or so. And just study the Psalms and get into the Psalms and let the Lord use them because David went through just about every challenge known to man practically, and he wrote about it, and how hard it was and how he needed to rely on the Lord and I find the Psalms to be one of those catch all, that just gives comfort no matter what.

**Sue:** I remember when my dad was in the hospital in his last days and you usually caught off guard, you don't really know what to share from the Word, but I think the Lord just led me to Psalm 139, and it was a great comfort at that time. And yeah, so there are many, many psalms that can just be, and the Lord can use just some of the most mysterious things that the Holy Spirit gives you to share some. Okay, so I'm actually going to try this name. I looked it up. And the American pronunciation seems to be something like Bianchi Gian says, *“I have a question on Exodus 3:15. God says, The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you. What happened to Joseph there? I was wondering whether there was any particular reason that Joseph was not mentioned.”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, there is. Joseph is a son of Jacob, but he's just one of the twelve. And so there's really no reason God would regularly refer to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and, Joseph, there wasn't any special reason to mention Joseph, above and beyond any of his brothers. So that's kind of a simple thing. My question to this person would be, why did you expect Joseph to be mentioned? Because there was no reason for it.

**Sue:** Sherry said, *“I would also like to ask if it really matters to have two or more praying together about a situation?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, not really, but people love to quote that it does. There's a passage in Matthew that people love to quote and it says, if two of you on earth agree on anything that you ask, it will be done for them by my Father and heaven. Then he goes on to say, for where two or three are gathered my name, there will I be, and people have used that over the years as a little magic key to say we're going to have more power in prayer. But what they do is they leave out the context of that passage. And the context of the passage is church discipline and the coming together for church discipline, related to the goal of restoring an errant brother. And that's what's going on in that particular passage. And the promise that Jesus is giving there is really more just a figure of speech. In other words, to say that, as you come together, as you follow the guidelines that I've laid out, and you walk in unity related to these guidelines, that my very presence and power will be among you concerning this church discipline in the restoration of this individual, that's the context. We like to take it out of context, and just say, well, hey, there's two or more of us here. So let's do this. And yet the Bible says the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. So, not really.

**Sue:** Eve says, *“Many times God is referred to as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, stating that Jesus has a God. I can understand this as Jesus was human during His earthly ministry. What I don't understand is after his resurrection to heaven, why does Jesus still talk about his God in some passages? How can the resurrected Jesus still have a God if he is God?”*

**Pastor Paul:** This causes people to kind of do backflips in their brain because it's just really challenging thing to think about. But the question that this person is asking, suggests that while Jesus was on earth, it was appropriate to refer to God, the

Father as his God. But the assumption there is that while he was here on earth, he was somewhat less or lesser than after his resurrection and ascension. And because what she's suggesting here is that later on after that point, it would seem inappropriate to her that he should refer to God the Father, as his God. And so that's where the first error I think comes into place. We have to remember something that when Jesus was incarnated, in other words, when he became a man, that is when the relationship between himself and God the Father took a fundamental change, because we read in Psalm 2:7, which is a Messianic prophecy, it says, the Lord said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you. So, in other words, the Lord put a time stamp, which was today, which is the incarnation, when I have begotten you. So, Jesus wasn't begotten of the Father prior to his incarnation. After the Incarnation, he was considered the begotten of the Father. Therefore, he took on a new role at that time, but even in the midst of that new role, he was never lesser than he ever was. So, in our minds it should be just as inappropriate for him to call his father God while He was on earth, because he's still God. He's equally God then, as even after his resurrection and ascension. So, the thing that we have to remember is that after Jesus rose from the grave, he was raised, as a human being, he still has a human body. When he appeared to the disciples, he said, look at my hands, put your hand in my side, and he even asked for a piece of fish. You'll remember, he ate something in front of them on one occasion, and while they just sat and watched and so he was demonstrating for them that he is still a human being. When God, the Son, who John refers to as the Word in John 1, became a man, he became a man for eternity. I believe he will always be a man. Now he will always be God too. He is the God man. He is all God. He is all man. He will forever be those things. He took on the role of man at a particular time. But even so, he has always been God. And so, he's always going to be man. So, it is always appropriate for him to refer to his father, as my God, that doesn't time out.

**Sue:** All right. Steve says, *“As part of our men's group Bible study on the book of Acts, I'm listening to your sermons, a question came up in our study, and I'd like to get your take. Were Ananias and Sapphira saved? Did they have a new heart, according to Ezekiel 36:36? And if so, why does Peter ask Ananias why he allowed Satan to fill his heart?”*

**Pastor Paul:** This is another really common question. If God knocked him dead, and he did, because they lied. People naturally ask, well, were they saved? Or were they false professors, in the sense of the professed Christ, but there was nothing real behind it. And they think that because of two things, number one, they were killed by the Lord. Let's just face it. That was the case. And secondly, was this statement that he quotes in this question, and that is, where Peter asks Ananias why have you allowed Satan to fill your heart? And people think that that means that he was indwelt by Satan. And that's not what that means. It simply means that he had allowed his heart to become influenced by the enemy, to lie and to deceive. Now as to the question of, were they saved, there's nothing to suggest, frankly, that they were not. And just because they were put to death doesn't mean that they're in hell. It doesn't mean that at all, they did suffer the consequences of their sin on a physical level, but to suggest that that meant that they weren't saved or that that sin was so great that they lost their salvation, is simply unbiblical, and there's really nothing to support that. I personally believe we're going to see Ananias and Sapphira in heaven. But that's my personal opinion. But I believe that because I don't believe that the text suggests that we must believe any differently. Paul tells the Corinthians that because some of them are taking communion wrong some of them had died and he doesn't never say, those dirty rotten people that were never saved in the first place. He doesn't say that. He's suggesting that some of the brothers and sisters had passed away because they had taken communion inappropriately. And so in the early

church, ya, that's the way it went sometimes. Don't we wish we were like the early church, when people just dropped dead when they do something wrong? We want to go back and be like the early church. Do you really? I'm kind of like yeah (laughter).

**Sue:** Nicholas asks, my question to Pastor Paul is, *“Why isn't the Book of Enoch in the Bible? And should I read or not read the Book of Enoch? I've searched this up on YouTube and on Google, and I don't want to hear a lie. I want to know the truth.”* And so now the pressures on.

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, the Book of Enoch is not in the Bible, because it's not inspired by the Holy Spirit, the church has never believed it was. So it's not there. It's part of the works that are outside of the Bible. We call them apocrypha, or pseudepigrapha, based on whether or not the author is truly the person who said they're the author. But it is never been considered a biblical, or what we say, a canonical book. Because I get this question a lot, I tell people not to worry about it. There's enough to figure out in the 66 books of the Bible, I can tell you, I've been teaching these for about 40 years, and I still have a long way to go with the books that are in the Bible. So I'm not going to veer off into things that are not part of the Bible and waste my time.

**Sue:** I like it when someone just simplifies my life like that. Genie says, I have a question for Pastor Paul, *“When Jesus tells us about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. The rich man goes to Hades and while there, does he have an earthly body? Or is he a spirit?”* Can I read the next question? *“And if while in Hades, can everyone looked up to heaven and see what they missed out on such as the rich man talking to Abraham?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, first of all, the first question, I think she's asking, did he have a physical body because he was talking about how he was in agony. And his tongue

was literally on fire. And he asked for Lazarus to dip his finger in cool water and cool his tongue. That's an interesting statement. When you think about the fact that in James, I think it's like chapter four, James starts talking about the tongue. He says, it's a restless evil, full of deadly poison. And it is itself set on fire, by the fires of hell. So interesting connection there. But anyway, no, he was not in his physical body. The physical body dies, and when that happens, the spirit and the soul go, but we don't understand very much about that point. We don't understand the dynamics of how that all works, and how someone can actually feel what appears to be or what he might describe as physical suffering, while he has no physical body. But somehow that is a reality, because that's the way the rich man responded. And he literally talked about Lazarus dipping his finger in cool water. And that all speaks of a body, but they didn't have bodies as we know them today as flesh and blood bodies. But there was something there and what it was, we don't know. So in part for her second question, can people that are there, look up into heaven? First of all, the rich man wasn't looking up into heaven, he was just looking across a chasm to the other holding place. That wasn't heaven. That was Abraham's bosom or paradise.

**Sue:** I think her assumption, though, here is using Hades like it today. I think she's talking about today and maybe a misuse of Hades, if you're in Hades, or what would be held to it. can you look up to see heaven and see what you're missing out on?

**Pastor Paul:** It's a real easy question to ask because all I simply say when people ask that is the Bible doesn't say.

**Sue:** It's fair. Matt says, *“Can someone be gay and born again, if they put their faith in Jesus’ finished work and believe the gospel?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, that's a very good and very challenging question. But honestly, the question doesn't go far enough. Because just to say, if someone is gay, and I have

trouble with that term, anyway, so I will just say someone who has the same sex attraction because somebody can have a same sex attraction without acting on it. And I would not classify them as even necessarily a homosexual. I would classify them as someone with the same sex attraction, and that's the reason why this question doesn't go far enough. So are we talking about someone with the same sex attraction who knows that it's wrong? And is praying to God for deliverance or for God to change their hearts? Is that what we're talking about? Are we talking about someone who believes that homosexuality is acceptable to God and is living in that lifestyle because they think God is great with it? Are we talking about someone who has the same sex attraction, and yet, knowing that it's wrong, has occasionally fallen into it, but has repented, and return to the LORD, and he is ongoingly looking to the Lord for deliverance. You see, there can be all those dynamics, and so you can't just simply say, can someone who's gay go to heaven? You can't. You can't say that. What can you say? The Bible is very clear about homosexuality, very clear. There's no issues there. It is considered to be sinful behavior. It is considered to be immoral sexual behavior. When someone engages in homosexual activity, there's no question about that. But here's what's interesting, in the passages in the Bible where it lists homosexuality as a sinful behavior, it lists lots of other things. And we don't ask about those things. But it lists things like all other forms of sexual immorality, and there's lots of those. And then it lists idolatry, and it lists greed, and adultery, and thievery, and drunkenness, and abusers, and swindlers, and Paul says, those will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Now, he's not talking about people who have fallen into those things, repented and come to the Lord. He's talking about people who are living in an unrepentant lifestyle, who reject the gospel of Jesus, and they're just living their life, the way they want to live their life and they don't care. And Paul says, those people are not going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. But why is it we're focusing on this question, can a gay person be saved? Why aren't we asking, can



thieves be saved? Why aren't we asking, can idolaters be saved? How about abusers, if somebody is abusive in their home, can they be saved? We don't ask those questions. And the reason we don't ask those questions is because this is a hot button issue. And the other reason is, because right now in our culture, the culture itself is trying very hard to take homosexuality as an active lifestyle, and normalize it. And so I understand the question, and this question is responding to that effort that is being made culturally to normalize homosexual activity. And so they're saying, can they be one of us? Is it's possible for them to be one of us? Well, again, you have to ask the question, is this person living in an unrepentant lifestyle and they don't care? Or is this person, someone who says, I have had times in my life when I've recognized the same sex attraction, and I know that it's wrong, and I plan to never act on it in any way, and I am consistently praying to the Lord to change my heart. Can that person be saved? Absolutely. That person is no different from me, and all the other issues that reside inside of me, related to the sinful nature that is constantly trying to assert itself, but for which we must constantly go to the Lord and say, give me the strength to walk up rightly. Give me the strength to walk as you would have me to walk. Can somebody with the same sex attraction who doesn't act on it do that? Absolutely. And they can be saved.

**Sue:** The important part of naming it as a sin is look what happens to this question, this sentence, when you just replace it with sin. Can someone who is sinful be born again, if they put their faith in Jesus' finished work and believe the gospel? That's like every single person. That's every person who has ever gotten saved. And so by separating it out from sin and making it something different, then people begin to ponder, yes, I wonder. But if you just call it sin, it's like, every single one of us went through that process.

**Pastor Paul:** Yes. That's true. And sin is an ongoing issue for all of us. But there are a great many Christians who are absolutely mystified why after coming to Christ, they continue to struggle with sin, and they're blown away, and they'll write and say, what is going on in my life? I came to Christ and yet I'm still struggling with these areas of sin in my life. And it's just one of those things that people are really challenged by. And it's no different than if somebody is dealing with a same sex attraction that becomes an addictive habit.

**Sue:** This is a really common question we actually get very often. It's from Slu maybe, *“I've been taught that by the stripes of Jesus we are healed, and that is a physical healing. Could you explain to me what you mean when you say it is a spiritual healing, not physical?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, people hear me talk about this and they get really confused. And so they write me and I've had people write me and just say, Pastor Paul, you're wrong. And that's okay. I don't mind. But I think probably everybody here and everybody watching us too live has heard someone say, at some time or another, in reference to physical healing, by His stripes you are healed, or by His stripes we are healed. And they'll even pray it as they're laying hands on somebody or whatever, Lord, we just believe by your stripes this person is healed, and on it goes. The phrase, by his stripes, or they way the ESV puts it, “by his wounds, you are healed,” actually appears two times in the Bible, once in the Old Testament, and once in the new. In the Old Testament it's Isaiah chapter 53, and in the New Testament it's in 1 Peter chapter two. All I'm saying to people, okay, is that in both of those instances in Isaiah and in 1 Peter, if you read it in context, that statement, by his wounds we are healed, is made in relationship to salvation. That's what I'm saying. And that's the important thing. I think what is another example of where people are taking a phrase out of its context and they're applying it to something they want it to apply to. But there are

grave implications to assuming that the statement, by his stripes, or by his wounds we are healed, applies to physical healing. Here are the implications. That whole statement, by his stripes, means that this happened as a result of his crucifixion or his death for us on the cross. And what that means is, he earned this for us on the cross, by his death he earned for us healing. Well, this is where the word faith movement gets their biblical emphasis to say, healing is guaranteed to every believer because by His stripes, in other words, by his death, we are healed. And what they're saying is, there is a covenant promise. A covenant is an agreement between two people where you shake hands on something. In the Old Covenant, God made a covenant with the nation of Israel through Moses. In the New Testament, God made a covenant with Israel and the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. We call it the covenant of grace. Each covenant has terms and promises. In the Old Testament, what were the promises? Well, the promises were keep the law and the promise was I'll bless you in the land. And God actually did give them a provision of physical healing. He said, none of the diseases that the Egyptians dealt with will come upon you, if you keep the law. So he did give them a promise and under the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant, we have terms as well. It's not keep the law, it's believe. So, believe by faith in Jesus Christ in His finished work on the cross, and what is the promise? You will be saved. Now, there are other promises that go along with the New Testament, but they are spiritual promises and spiritual blessings. That is why Paul starts off his letter to the Ephesians by saying, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. That's where our blessings are. They are spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. So what is the implication here? Are we saying that God doesn't heal? No, we're not saying that at all. God does heal. What we're saying is it's not a promise that is factored in the covenant that he made with us through Jesus Christ. In other words, it isn't a guarantee. He never made a promise to us. I'm going to

always heal you every time whenever you ask. I'll always do it. He did not say that. That's what people want it to say. But he didn't say that. Now, does he heal? Yes, I've seen God heal. I've witnessed God's healing. So, healing is a reality. It is not a promise of the covenant. I hope that makes sense. So, again, those two references by his stripes or wounds you are healed, are made in context about salvation. He's talking about the healing that we have through Jesus to be saved, to have a relationship healed between us and the father.

**Sue:** It's a good explanation. Ron says in Romans one, *“Where you mentioned the righteous shall live by faith. What does he mean by righteous? What do you have to do to be righteous? Is there a reason he didn't say we as in the people shall live by faith, but the righteous shall live by faith? Maybe you could shed some light on this?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, sure I can. Because what Ron is doing is he's confusing the idea that righteous is something other than what the Bible calls it. When the Bible refers to the saints or the believers as righteous, he's talking about a positional righteousness that is ours, through Jesus Christ. And that is something we all have, by virtue of our faith in Jesus. So I can look at anybody here, who is in Christ, and I can say you are righteous before God, you are the righteous of God. And you might say, well, I don't feel very righteous. Well, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what you feel, God has declared you to be righteous. Here's what Paul said and this is the scripture I would give to Ron, and anyone else who questions this, Romans 3:21 and 22, *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, (that means apart from what you can do) although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it--the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”* So the answer to Ron's question, what do you have to do to be righteous? It is to put your faith in Jesus Christ, and the righteous shall live by faith.

**Sue:** Excellent. Donna says, *“Question, do you have to be baptized with water and baptized by the Holy Spirit?”*

**Pastor Paul:** I always love it when people, well actually I hate it when people don't go far enough with their questions. They'll say, do you have to be baptized in water, and I'm like for what, to do what, or to like be clean, or to be saved? What are you saying? Well, we can assume here, I suppose that she's asking if a person needs to be...

**Sue:** I think she means is this required to be saved, is baptism of the Holy Spirit required? Let's just assume that she's saying, are both of these required to be saved?

**Pastor Paul:** And the short answer is no. We're saved by trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are commanded to be baptized and that's why we know that it's not a requirement for salvation because otherwise we'd be saved by keeping commands. So we're told to be baptized in water, and we should be baptized in water. And we should seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit because that is the empowering of the Holy Spirit. But neither of those things will save you. Jesus saves you.

**Sue:** Someone asked, *“Who are the friends of the bridegroom?”* And then gave a few references.

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, I know, I looked up those references, and they don't really have anything to do with the friends of the bridegroom. But it is still a good question, who are the friends of the bridegroom? Because we hear about there's a blessing as we went through this in Revelation. In fact, in our study of 19 and 20, there's a statement that says, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And I talked about this in that study. So I would encourage anybody who has a question about this, to go back to Revelation 19 and 20 on our website, and check

out that study, but one of the things I brought out there is that people have a very difficult time distinguishing the different ways that God treats his people. And we think of ourselves as the church. And we think, anybody who saved is the church, but that's not true. There are people who were saved in the Old Testament before Christ, and they were saved by faith, just like us, but they're not the church. And the people who are going to be saved during the Great Tribulation, I don't believe they're going to be necessarily the church, there's a different thing. They're going to be saved. They're going to be children of God, they're going to be born again, they're going to reign with Christ, but there are different terms. There are different distinguishing groups. There's different groups that God distinguishes differently in the Bible. And so we know that the church is the bride of Christ. So obviously, the bride can't be both the bride and the friend of the bridegroom. So, obviously, we're talking about different people or different groups. And I believe we're talking about the saints who are distinct from the bride, some of the others that I mentioned. So, saints born again people who are distinct from the church. But again, that's a challenging thing for a lot of people because they just want to group them all together.

**Sue:** Yes, it requires a study too, doesn't it? Philip said, *“If you're witnessing to a work colleague and don't seem to be getting anywhere, and here's another question with an assumption, do we give up as said person may not be predestined to salvation? Can this list of the saved be changed if someone has a change of heart to come to Christ?”*

**Pastor Paul:** Well, the question almost completely misunderstands the whole concept of salvation. But first of all, predestination, which is a biblical term, and a biblical thing, is salvation from God's perspective. It is looking at salvation from the perspective of heaven. And that is why the Bible tells us that those whom God

foreknew, in other words, saw ahead of time, that they would come to Christ, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. So, remember that. Predestination is not something for you and me to think about. We can't, because we can't see from God's perspective, you'd have to literally see through God's eyes to understand salvation from the concept of predestination. We're given the idea of predestination, but we're also given the idea of eternity. We can't figure that one out, either. So, when people say this, though, when they say, does this just mean that the guy maybe isn't predestined? It's like, first of all, predestination is again the idea that God knows ahead of time who is going to come to Christ by faith, and knowing that, he predestines them to be confirmed. He's not telling us who first of all is predestined and who isn't? Because that's basically him saying, that person is going to get saved, that one won't. And I've learned that, I once asked God that when I was a brand new believer. I actually asked a similar question. I was a new believer, and I was praying for somebody who had come up after a service, and I gotten teamed up with them, and I was praying for them, and I shared the gospel. And I was burdened, because the person's response to the gospel was not what I wished or hoped. And so I said to the Lord, is he going to make it? Is he going to come to you? And the Lord was like, if I tell you, you're going to give up praying for him? That's what the Lord said to me. In other words, just keep praying, dopehead sort of a thing. So, what we ask in situations like this is, is there any way I can know whether the person might not be able to be saved, so I can maybe move on to the next one. Or is there a way, and he even asked the question, can the list be changed, which is like, yeah no, God sees things from his perspective of heaven, and he sees them perfectly. And so I think people still have this idea that God just puts a checkmark next to people's names who he wants to be saved and puts an X next to the ones that he doesn't, and maybe I'll erase that x eventually, and put a checkmark and let them be saved. That is not predestination. That's not biblical predestination. And it's a perversion of the whole

idea, frankly, and it really messes with our minds. So, the answer to this is, there's no way for you to know.

**Sue:** So if you're witnessing to someone and you don't seem to be getting anywhere, all it means, what you're saying, is that they just have an unbelieving heart.

**Pastor Paul:** Well, yes...

**Sue:** In that moment, but that might change, that can change in the future.

**Pastor Paul:** Exactly. I remember reading things like George Mueller, he spent 50 years praying for like these five guys to come to Christ. And three of them came to Christ during his lifetime, and the other two came to Christ after he died. But he didn't ever stop to think about are they predestined or not, he just prayed for them. And he believed, and they all came to Christ. And so, I really think that's a great example. I just tell people just don't stop praying. If they're not responding, that means their heart isn't in a place to respond right now so just pray for them. And people forget that sometimes, they think that if they're going to plant the seed in this person's life, it's going to grow if they're open to salvation, or if they're going to be saved. Well, not necessarily. There are times when the soil of a person's heart just isn't responsive to the Word of God, but it may be responsive at some point in the future, but it's not now, so you need to pray for that soil to be ready.

**Sue:** We have one question left. This person says, *“I am a born again Christian, so is my dad, but my mother and brother followed the Ethiopian Orthodox religion. They do believe in Jesus but most of their views are unbiblical and most of the followers of that religion don't read the Bible. Rather, they read small prayer books written by their popes and bishops and those books preach idolatry, whether it is saints from the old ages, or even they are create new ones. I do pray for them to turn to Christ only with all their hearts and try to share the gospel with them*



*but it's been hard. And tonight, I was watching the sermon on YouTube and Matthew 25, part two, and while you were describing about there being no judgment of sin for Christians, it got me to thinking, does it include those in Orthodox faith, or even Catholics?"*

**Pastor Paul:** Yes, and what he's referring to is that, you guys hear me say this, I say this regularly. If you are a born again Christian, you will never stand before God for your sin. You will not stand in judgment for your sin. Jesus already stood in judgment, or I should say he hung in judgment on the cross for your sin. He paid it, he said it is finished, it's done. And that means there's nothing left for you to pay because he paid it all. And I like to say that because it's true. So that's apparently what this individual heard me saying, and he's now asking, okay I've got my family, they're an Ethiopian Orthodox kind of a church situation, and they kind of believe in Jesus. This is really a very similar question to the whole Roman Catholic question we started off with.

**Sue:** Yes, just putting labels, making labels really important.

**Pastor Paul:** Yeah, and so we always have to answer the question by coming back to the basics. How is a person saved? A person is saved by putting their faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross, being confident, by faith, that what he did was enough. I don't care what church you go to. I don't care. If you believe that, and nothing else is standing in the way, and you believe that it's by Jesus and him alone, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. So, are they going to stand before God for their sin? Yes, if they haven't put their faith in Jesus, then the only other option is to stand before God themselves. But if we put your confidence in Christ by faith, then that judgment is passed. Right?

**Sue:** Right.

**Pastor Paul:** Let's go ahead and close prayer tonight. Father, we thank you for the time you've given us this evening to just get into the Scripture and talk about things and to lay things out in an understandable way. And I thank you, Lord, once again that there's a freedom in the body of Christ to ask questions. We thank you for that. And we just pray that all the things that we learned from the Word, we would take to heart and that it would build our faith as we trust in You, put our hope in You, and rest in You for the finished work that You accomplished through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, amen. God bless you.