

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul - October 2024

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Pastor Paul: Good evening to everybody. We're going to be doing another Q&A tonight, so buckle up. We have certainly 24 questions.

Sue: We've lots of questions. Let's get right into it.

Pastor Paul: Okay.

Sue: Nevine asks, *“How does God perceive a married couple who have to live apart more than they are together because of work?”*

Pastor Paul: This is an interesting question, isn't it? I think there's always going to be extenuating circumstances for a married couple, for work situations and that sort of thing. But I would always encourage a couple not to be a part too long, just because I don't think it's good for their marriage. And I've even talked to couples in the past who've said, we kind of get along better when we're not living in the same place. And it's like, who wouldn't? I mean, the fact that you come together in marriage, you live with someone, and they're going to step on your toes, and it's going to create issues, and you're going to have to work through things with your spouse. That's marriage. But for those couples that have to live apart for a season of time, I think they need to do it prayerfully and wisely and work toward getting back together as soon as they can.

Sue: Well, there's military issues and we want people protecting us, and there's all kinds of reasons that someone but her question was, how does God perceive them not what should we do about it? The question is, how does God perceive a married couple that isn't together?

Pastor Paul: Well, you'd have to ask him. I mean, all I can do is look at whatever I can find in the Word. And the Bible says that a man and a woman come together, and the two are one flesh, and I expect that that means that they're supposed to cohabitate, and be together, live together, share their lives. That's what it means to be one flesh. So I think how God perceives it is probably a couple that's really not truly living in the full understanding of what it is to be married.

Sue: All right, final answer.

Pastor Paul: That means that wasn't that great pastor.

Sue: Adriano says *“In Acts 4 we learned that Peter was not rebellious but rather obedient by telling the Jewish authorities that he would keep telling people about Jesus after being told not to. If I was to not pay my train fare because I didn't want to give money to a corrupt government, am I being obedient or rebellious?”*

Pastor Paul: Short answer, you're being rebellious. There is absolutely no correlation at all between Peter's act of civil disobedience and the desire to not pay a corrupt government. So, in Peter's case, he was being obedient to the Lord because the authorities were telling him not to do what Jesus told him to do, which was to share the Gospel. So had Peter obeyed the Sanhedrin when they said, don't do this, he would have been disobedient to the Lord. So the question comes up from a lot of people, so when are we free to disobey the government? And the answer to that is when they are countermanding something that the Lord has given us in His Word. But this whole idea of I don't want to pay this because it's a corrupt government, I challenge you to find a government on this earth that has never been corrupt. You're not going to find one. And you know Rome was one of the most corrupt governments during the time of Jesus. And guess what Jesus said? He said, render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And again, he was saying that about a pretty corrupt government.

So refusing to pay a train fare or paying some people are even against paying taxes because I'm not going to give that money to a corrupt government. Well, Jesus said, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And so that's just kind of this. And if we don't, then there's a problem. There's a greater problem. And Paul actually outlines it in the book of Romans. I'll put this scripture up on the screen here. It's from chapter 13:1-2 (ESV) says,

Romans 13:1-2 (ESV)

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed. And he says, those who resist will incur judgment.

And I want to remind you, Paul was saying this during the time that the Roman government was not only corrupt, but it ended up killing him. This very government ended up executing him. And he said, concerning that government be subject to the authorities, to the governing authorities, and so that means obey the laws. It could be really challenging. And some of this even applies a little bit to the upcoming election that's going to be happening. I don't want to get. You know me in almost 34 years, I haven't gotten very political at all, but I think this question does apply to that from the standpoint that I've heard people say, I don't know who to vote for because everybody's ungodly, and I think I'm just going to withhold my vote. And my response is, first of all, I'm going to vote. But let me tell you something, I'm not voting for my savior. I've already got one of those. So the position of Savior's filled. What I'm going to do is, I'm going to vote for the one that is I think going to do the least amount of harm. Seriously, sometimes it comes down to the issue of the best you can do. You got two candidates, and you say, what's the best I can do?

Sue: There's a biblical worldview, and then there's candidates who are at some place on the spectrum away from that, who's closest? They're both away. Who's closest?

Pastor Paul: Who's closest? And just remember, you're not voting your savior into office. This is just a temporary.

Sue: I think we got off a little bit. Next question. Cathy Kauffman says, *“I hear my friends saying that departed loved ones are looking down on their family members and smiling on them. This confuses me. If there's no suffering or tears or sadness in heaven, how could departed loved ones be watching us on earth without feeling anguish and sadness for all the suffering that we are enduring?”*

Pastor Paul: You know people get so upset about things. They hear people saying, Cathy, your friends are just wrong. There is not one single reference in the Bible about departed loved ones looking down on family members. They're not watching over you. God is watching over you. He's got plenty of angels. He doesn't need your departed loved ones. So you're starting from a false premise and getting all upset

Sue: Too much infusion of. It's a wonderful life and things like that.

Pastor Paul: Something. Either way, it's just wrong. So don't listen to your friends.

Sue: Darren says, *“Is reincarnation real? Is it not written that Jesus told His disciples that John is the prophet returned?”*

Pastor Paul: No, it's not. To think that somehow Jesus was talking about reincarnation is a complete misunderstanding of what Jesus was saying and what the Bible says. The Bible says that the concerning that statement. Jesus said that the ministry of John would go forth in the power of Elijah, the spirit and power of Elijah. He didn't say that Elijah would be reincarnated in the person of John. First of all, Elijah can't be reincarnated because he didn't die. Reincarnation is the idea that you

die, you come back as another person and live another life. That's not what the Bible ever talks about. The Bible does not support any idea related to reincarnation instead it speaks of resurrection instead of reincarnation. And resurrection is resurrection of the body, but the person is the same person. We just receive a new body. So the Bible doesn't say one single word about reincarnation.

Sue: Al Gaudet says, *“My wife and I pray quite differently. She pours out her heart (unloads everything) privately while I jump from one subject to another. I cannot get myself to pray lengthy prayers. It's quite unnatural for me. Your comments are appreciated.”* I think what he's saying is, is there a right or wrong?

Pastor Paul: That's what usually people are saying, is there anything wrong with me? And I tell Christians as often as I can stop comparing yourself with other people. That is one of the fastest ways to get frustrated and discouraged about your Christian life, your Christian walk, the way you do things. Just don't compare yourself with other people. So your wife prays differently. Cool. You pray as you pray, and let her pray as she prays and everybody's good. God knows your heart anyway.

Sue: It's a colorful world. It takes all sorts of prayers.

Pastor Paul: That's right.

Sue: Tammy & Jim B. said, *“My husband and I want to thank you so much for these monthly Q&A sessions. We love them and look forward to them each month. In Matthew 18:20 we're told “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (NIV) My confusion is found in the “two or three gather in my name” versus praying to God, alone. Could you please help us better understand the difference?”*

Pastor Paul: No, I'm not going to tell you the difference, because the difference isn't what matters. This is probably one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible.

People forget that the context of what Jesus said in Matthew 18 isn't about prayer, it's about church discipline. And so what he was saying is that when you come together as the body to confirm tough decisions related to people's lives. And there are two or three of you coming together, and it's not just a single person making a decision, but there is a group of people, at least two or three. The Lord is simply saying, I will be present in your decision making. I will be there. I will be affirming. I will be confirming. And so Jesus was not saying that it takes two or three people for him to be present in our midst. But that's the way people interpret it, because they take that verse out of context. But you got to read the whole context what Jesus is talking. It starts off saying, if a brother sins. And then it goes on and on and on. And then it talks about the things you have to do related to that brother and his sin and either his repentance or lack of repentance. And then it says, you're gonna have to look at this thing make some tough decisions, but where two or three come together and make those decisions, there I am. So he's confirming his presence in the midst of tough decision making when there's a group making the decisions.

Sue: I think that's really helpful.

Pastor Paul: Well, I hope so. Because otherwise people think, I gotta find somebody to pray with, or God's not going to be here.

Sue: Right. Denzil Golding says, *“I'm aware that the church isn't seen by the prophets in the Old Testament, also Paul revealed the mystery of the church in the New Testament. But I've come across Isaiah 61:3 that talks about the (oaks of righteousness). Can the New Testament church/believer be called oaks of righteousness or is it just related to Israel only?”*

Pastor Paul: Well, it is spoken about Israel because if you look at that passage, it begins by talking about those who mourn in Zion and so it's spoken about the people

of Israel. But God is speaking about those who are receiving a spirit of comfort, a spirit of blessing from the Lord, and they're standing fast in the Lord. So I think anyone who is standing fast in their faith could be considered an oak of righteousness.

Sue: It's a metaphor after all.

Pastor Paul: It's a metaphor, and it's not meant to just be a metaphor of Israel. Just had it referred to Israel in that passage, but it could refer to anybody who's just standing fast?

Sue: Sure. All right. Donna Boyle says, *“If Mary (who had Jesus) and Elizabeth (who had John the Baptist) were cousins, wouldn't Jesus and John the Baptist have known each other before Jesus came to be baptized by John the Baptist?”*

Pastor Paul: You know what people are doing here is interpreting a passage, really, in a more modern kind of a mindset, where we travel all over and we get to see our relatives on a fairly regular basis, but they didn't back then, and even just a few miles between people could keep them apart for decades. So because people didn't travel if they didn't have to, so it's very conceivable that Jesus and John the Baptist would have never ever laid eyes on each other until their ministries were well underway.

Sue: All right.

Pastor Paul: I mean, in that culture.

Sue: We just don't know. Should I say his last name?

Pastor Paul: You can try.

Sue: Will I butcher it? Mark Ashkenazi, that's not right. Mark asked, *“Does the spirit of an unbeliever belong to Satan either directly or indirectly?”*

Pastor Paul: Have to wonder if he's asking this question because he heard that somebody say that. But let me just say this. There's nothing in the Bible that specifically says the Spirit of an unbeliever belongs to Satan. What it does say, if you look up in First John, John writes that the whole world lies under the power of the evil one, and that doesn't mean that unbelievers are possessed by the devil? It just means that those who are not in Christ are vulnerable to the worldly influences that Satan is behind the ideologies and the beliefs and the philosophies that permeate the world, many of them, maybe even the majority of them are demonic. And so everybody who isn't in Christ is certainly influenced, being constantly influenced by those things. But that doesn't mean that Satan owns their spirit, or their spirit belongs to Satan. That's a much more serious condition.

Sue: It's a good explanation. Gary says, *“What do you think of a person or an organization that charges money to receive biblical teaching that claims to help people get out of debt or accumulate wealth? Many churches seem to welcome this, but to me it seems like using the Bible in a manner to get wealth.”*

Pastor Paul: Well, the problem is, I don't know anything about those persons or organizations and what they're charging, and whether they're charging just for their materials or whether they're making a profit. I don't know. And just because somebody charges something doesn't mean they're making money.

Sue: We know all about that.

Pastor Paul: Well, we do. I mean, we charge a small amount for your study guides that are sold through our website. We're not making any money on that. We're paying for our materials. We're paying for paper, printing, binding and that sort of stuff. So the fact that someone is charging. You have to kind of ask yourself, first of all, is it an exorbitant amount that they're charging or whatever? I don't know what the intent

of the person is. I don't know how much they're making, and I don't feel qualified to judge. I don't think it's necessarily wrong for someone to charge for materials so that they might teach biblical principles, whether it's about wealth or finances or whatever. I don't see a problem with that, as long as it's not outrageous, because those things cost money to produce.

Sue: All right. Jason says, *“Hi Pastor Paul and Ms Sue, greetings from Singapore! Luke 17:3-4, seems to suggest that repentance should normally happen first before we offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged us. Is it ever permissible to withhold forgiveness if someone doesn't repent? Why or why not?”*

Pastor Paul: I have heard or been asked this before. Let's begin by reviewing the passage that he's referring to. I'll put it up on the screen. Luke 17, and so what he's saying is this passage seems to sound like somebody needs to repent before we forgive them.

Luke 17:3-4 (ESV)

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.

Now that's a great passage, and I can see why Jason is asking the question. Because it can seem very much like our Lord is almost giving permission in that passage to withhold forgiveness from someone who has offended you or hurt you or whatever, if they have not yet repented of their wrongdoing. But is that exactly what the Lord is saying? Because you'll notice that Jesus is giving instructions here. I don't know if you noticed that in the passage, he said, if your brother, so this is your brother he's talking about. I think that's significant, because elsewhere, we're told to love our enemies. Let me show you this on the screen. Luke 6,

Luke 6:27-28 (ESV)

“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

He doesn't say anything about your enemy repenting. You're just supposed to do it. So if you're supposed to do it for your enemy, how much more for your brother? How much more for your brother in Christ? I don't think if clause that's in that passage where Jesus is talking is giving us permission to withhold forgiveness necessarily, or to hold a grudge. I think it's to simply emphasize even if he keeps on sinning, even if he does it seven times in a day, even if he does it sins against you, it sins against you, even if that's where the if is, it's not you only need to forgive him. If that's not where if needs to go, it's speaking more about if a situation came up where your brother is just sinning over and over and over against you. In other words, I don't believe that passage is intended to limit our forgiveness or the forgiveness that we offer. I think it's intended to extend it.

Sue: Sure. It would be ideal if someone would repent first and then we would forgive them. That would be ideal. But, look, we all know what withholding forgiveness does to us, like why would we put ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, in a place of withholding that waiting and hoping they're gonna repent someday, it's like no get it off your shoulders.

Pastor Paul: I believe withholding forgiveness is damaging to me. So why would I want to do that to myself? I really truly believe that that having a heart to forgive is something that enhances our emotional and mental health as individuals. I believe that withholding forgiveness can make you crazy. I mean, it can make you tweaked.

Sue: So if you want to make your life better, just forgive.

Pastor Paul: Be quick to forgive.

Sue: They didn't repent. Michelle Mays says, *“In Genesis 1:29, God said that He created man and beast to live off the herbs and seeds. However, in Genesis 9:3-4, He gave permission for man to eat meat, as long as it's without blood. My question is, just because God gave His permission to eat meat after man's sin, do you think or is there anywhere in the Bible that God doesn't want us to eat meat?”*

Pastor Paul: No, there are no passages in the Bible that forbid us to eat meat. In fact, we're going through Leviticus right now and the priests were commanded to eat the meat of the sacrifice, some of it anyway, in various circumstances of the sacrificial system, literally commanded to do it. So there's no forbidding. I mean, if you want to be a vegetarian, that's your business.

Sue: That's right. Find your reasoning in the Bible. Sister says, *“Hello Pastor Paul and Ms Sue. Would you kindly clarify what it means to pray in the Spirit?”*

Pastor Paul: First of all, there are different terms used in the New Testament that can be confused. There's praying in the Spirit, and there's praying with your spirit. And people get those confused I think. The reference to praying in the Spirit is in the book of Jude. I'll show it to you on the screen.

Jude 1:20 (ESV)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in the most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.

That term refers to praying in step with the Holy Spirit, meaning praying as you're led by the Spirit. However, the apostle Paul in First Corinthians, Chapter 14, speaks of praying with my spirit. Not in, but with. And he says my spirit. So he's not talking about the Holy Spirit. He's talking about praying in or with His Spirit. And in that case, he's referring to praying using the gift of tongues in that passage. So there's a difference there.

Sue: Hope that helps. All right. Roxane says *“The Apostle Paul said that to die was to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23) and to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). In the book of Ecclesiastes, we read these words: “For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten”. Please help me understand and reconcile these verses which seem to talk of different states of the dead.”*

Pastor Paul: Well, first of all, I would encourage Roxane to go through my study in Ecclesiastes, because I explained those statements in that study. The Book of Ecclesiastes, you have to understand, is not a theology book. It's an experiential test that Solomon conducted with his great wisdom and with his practically unlimited resources, whereby he attempted to discover the meaning of life under the sun. And that term is used over and over and over again in Ecclesiastes, and it really refers to trying to ascertain the meaning of life apart from the revelation of God. So he's thinking, talking and making determinations apart from the revelation of God. God tells us what happens when we die. But Solomon is thinking like an unbeliever in Ecclesiastes. He's thinking like somebody who doesn't pay attention or take that into consideration. And it's man's way of looking at life. You ask an unbeliever today, where do people go when they die? You know what, they'll tell you, NOWHERE. They just die. They return to the dust, and they're gone. The person is just gone. What a terrible, hopeless, sort of a situation. That's what Solomon's talking about. When he makes reference to the fact that when people die, that they don't know anything. We know better. The revelation of God teaches us better.

Sue: For example, the other two verses that he brought up.

Pastor Paul: You know what, if you pull your theology out. The Book of Ecclesiastes, you're gonna be in trouble. Because he says in there, who knows

whether the spirit of man goes up or down? Who knows? Well, we know. We know because of the revelation of God, but under the sun man doesn't know those things. So you gotta know the purpose of Ecclesiastes when you're reading through it.

Sue: Good. Daniel says, *“How do we give over full control and trust to God when we see tragic things happen to other believers? I want to hand everything over to God but my mind says, “If God couldn't protect them, why do you think he will protect you?””*

Pastor Paul: Do you hear the assumption in that question? You guys hear the assumption in that question. The assumption is tragic things are happening to believers. That's an assumption. So he's taking his assumption, and he's basing his entire question, and it's actually warring with his faith. Because you can hear it coming out in his question, how do you give over? He's saying, how do you trust a God who lets things happen like this to people? How do you do that? So this kind of stuff, he sees people going through challenging circumstances, and he's like, if God can't protect these people, then how can he protect me? And should I trust him? So the key in this whole situation comes down to refusing to trust your own judgment of personal circumstances. You just can't do that. You can't just look at a situation and say that was a tragedy. Well, you don't know whether it was a tragedy or not, but yet we all do this. We judge things to be tragic, and we don't really know. Trusting God is rooted in the understanding and the acknowledgement that I can't see what's going on. If you think that you have perfect vision, you will never get around to trusting God, because you'll look at it and it will make sense, but trusting God is based on a statement that Paul made in Corinthians 1:13 now we see through a mirror dimly. So what does he say? He's saying you don't see very well. You can't see what's really going on. So stop trusting in what you can see, because you're not getting the whole picture. Trust God, not self, and that's what it all comes down to.

Sue: Gideon says, *“I have been struggling with this thought for a little while now. Where do I draw the line between unsaved friends that I can help and bring to God, and friends that I have to let go because of their bad ways potentially leading me back to old habits and sin?”*

Pastor Paul: An excellent question. And one that can be very challenging for people, because on the one hand you want to reach out to your unsaved friends and you want to share the Gospel with them. On the other hand, the Bible warns us that bad company corrupts good character, so you have to be very careful. And I think the key is expressed beautifully. When we were going through a study of the Psalms, the first couple of verses of Psalm 1 are so insightful about this. I'll put it up on the screen. It goes like this,

Psalm 1:1-2 (ESV)

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

If you look at that passage, you'll notice that the key is not joining with your unsaved friends in what they're doing. That's what the psalmist is saying. He says, don't walk in their counsel. He says, don't sit or stand rather in their way, in the way they live with their lives. Don't join with them, and don't sit in their seat. And what that all is saying in a rather poetic way is reach out to them, but don't allow yourself to be influenced by them. You've got to get your fellowship from believers. If you're going to spend time with unbelievers. And some people have to at work or whatever, or home or and they want to spend time with people so that they can be a godly influence, but you can't fellowship with those people. That's what the psalmist is saying there. And so if you find yourself being influenced by ungodliness and ungodly people, you got to pull back, you got to back off. And so

what does it say in Psalm? But blessed is the man who meditates on the Word of God. That's where your influence has to come, not from your unsaved friends. So you just gotta ask yourself, am I being influenced by my friends?

Sue: Or am I influenced?

Pastor Paul: Or am I influencing them?

Sue: And it's a matter of prayer and discernment.

Pastor Paul: Because if they influence you, you're not going to be any good to them.

Sue: All right. Allie from Texas said *“Someone told me that we can't trust the Old Testament because the Aramaic it was written in cannot be deciphered.”*

Pastor Paul: We got to find out who these some people are.

Sue: I know.

Pastor Paul: And tell them to go live in another country or something.

Sue: *“What are your thoughts? I love studying the Old Testament and seeing God's whole redemptive plan for humanity.”* And I'd say, just stick with it Allie. You love it.

Pastor Paul: Somebody told me that you can't trust the Old Testament because the Aramaic in it, it can't be deciphered. You know what, here's the interesting thing. In the Old Testament, there are a total of 23,000 verses. Of those 23,000 verses, 269 are in Aramaic. 269 out of 23,000 and they're not a problem. Aramaic was the common tongue of the Jews. And in some cases, it's even called Hebrew. They actually refer to Aramaic as Hebrew. And, by the way, I wrote to my super smart friend in Israel who has a doctorate in ancient Hebrew, and I asked him about this, and he said that he was told when he was going to school that Biblical Aramaic is

more grammatically consistent than Biblical Hebrew. So in other words, it's not hard to translate. So somebody is wrong.

Sue: There's just this misinformation floating around. We need to fact check this.

Pastor Paul: Somebody told me.

Sue: All right. Well, Judy says, *“Hello Pastor Paul and Mrs Sue. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus gave authority to His disciples to drive out demonic spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. We are His disciples today, indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Help me understand why we fail to achieve this today? Is it our unbelief or lack of faith of both?”*

Pastor Paul: Do you see the assumption in this question?

Sue: Yep, I do.

Pastor Paul: The assumption here is that we believers should be doing exactly what the disciples were given authority to do. We should be going out, driving out demonic spirits and healing every disease and sickness, not just some, everyone. That's the assumption, and that's what Judy is really saying in her question. So when she says, help me understand why we fail, she's assuming. This is exactly what we should be doing. And, frankly, that's an assumption of a lot of believers out there. But the assumption here is that we've been given the authority to go forth, that we've all been given authority. It's like, if the disciples were given the authority to go out and do that, then so are we. That's the assumption. But I see that assumption is incorrect. The reason I see it is incorrect is because you get further into the New Testament letters and you find out that there are giftings given to certain people that are different from others. And not everybody has the same gifting. Paul makes that very clear. In fact, let me show you 1 Corinthians 12, he writes,

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (ESV)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

So, you see this idea that because the disciples were given that authority to go do that we automatically should be doing the same thing is incorrect. Jesus was giving a special impartation for those to those disciples at that time. And think about it, it was just 12 guys. It was just 12 guys. It's not a huge number. So he gave them authority to go out and do what they did, and they were doing it because they were preparing people for Jesus to come after them and speak to those people as well. But to believe that he's given that same authority to all believers is going to lead you to this same conclusion, we fail. When the fact of the matter is we've all been given different gifting's, and the only time we're going to fail is if we're not faithful to use the gifting's we've been given, whatever they may be. I was given the gift of a teacher. So are you? And I don't go around healing people. It's just wasn't the gift he gave me. I can pray for people to be healed, and I do. And there have been even some rare circumstances where God has responded graciously, but that's not my gifting, and I know it.

Sue: So this week, just the last couple days randomly, I've been thinking about when Jesus said they will know you are my disciples by what? The love you have for one another. That's the universal thing. That's the universal thing. So if this is leading to

the fact that the proof of us loving Jesus or being his followers is healing people and casting out demons. What Jesus said is, the proof is the love you have for one another, which takes a miracle sometimes really.

Pastor Paul: Especially with some people.

Sue: I mean loving the body of Christ. There's a grace of God that's infused in there.

Pastor Paul: For sure.

Sue: All right. Charles P *“Question one: Should a Christian write a negative review about a company or a product after a very negative experience with it?”* Pastor Paul, what do you think about that? Should a Christian ever do that?

Pastor Paul: You darn tooting. She's saying that because she knows I've done it and I have. Here's the deal. We are exhorted to speak the truth in love. And so the issue isn't whether or not you write a negative review. The issue is, how do you present yourself? Do you present yourself as an angry, malicious, ungodly person, or do you present yourself as a person who's like, here's what's going on? This is the fact of the matter, and this wasn't a good product, and so I don't think there's anything wrong. What do you think, Mrs. Sue?

Sue: I agree with you. I think that probably sometimes you have to write.

Pastor Paul: Have you ever written a bad review?

Sue: I don't write reviews.

Pastor Paul: Okay.

Sue: That's not true. But I have only written good reviews because I'm a girl and that's more our style. But I do agree with your answer, that I think it is important because we go to buy things, we read reviews.

Pastor Paul: Yes, we do.

Sue: I count on people telling the truth. So if you don't want to uncover the truth of the matter, somebody has to be writing the better reviews. Otherwise, we all keep wasting our money.

Pastor Paul: It's true.

Sue: So his second question is, *“If good works don't save us, what do they do?”*

Pastor Paul: They do a lot. Good Works do a lot. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5, I believe it is, he said, Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven. So good works, they give glory to God when we allow them to. I can take the glory for myself, I suppose, if I want to, but good works are supposed to do that. How do I say this? They are our way of expressing God's love to people by doing things for them, they also express our love for God. My appreciation and my gratification to God is expressed through good work. So they do a lot, and there's more that I'm not thinking of.

Sue: Sure. That's a good start, though. Hailey says that *“1 Corinthians 15:52 says “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Do you think anyone will see the Rapture because it will happen so quickly?”*

Pastor Paul: She's assuming that in a moment in the twinkling of an eye refers to the Rapture. See, that's where the question says, do you think anybody will see it, since it's going to happen? That's not what Paul's saying when he says, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, he's describing how those who are alive on the earth at the time of the Rapture are going to be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. In other words, they're going to receive their new resurrection bodies just like, boom,

like that and that's what going to happen fast. We don't know how long the Rapture is going to take. And so what people are going to see with their eyes, we don't even know. We have no idea. But the twinkling of an eye thing is referring to the transformation of the bodies of those who are alive.

Sue: Perfect. Scott Walden says, *“Thank you both for taking time to answer our questions. Mine is about 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. This passage seems to be saying that a “Christian” can go their whole life without doing any of the works prepared for them (Ephesians 2:10) and yet they would still be saved “as by fire”. I do believe in eternal security but I also believe that there are those who profess Christ in such a way that Jesus will say He does not know them (Matthew 7). I ask this because my wife has always believed her three adult children are saved because they accepted Christ in Sunday School at 10-14 years of age and has very little to do with God since. All three will point to that time if you ask them about their salvation. I hope they're saved but it seems like thin ice. What say you?”*

Pastor Paul: I get a lot of questions saying, if somebody does this, will they go to heaven? If somebody goes to that church, will they go to heaven? If somebody da-da-da, will they go to heaven? And it's like, I'm not the judge, and I won't answer those questions. But there are some things I want to address in this question by Scott. First of all, he says, I believe in eternal security. And I want to just start off by saying that term eternal security that means different things to different people I have found. Personally, I don't like it. I think it's a misleading term, and I've shared many times on why. I think it's misleading. That being said, I do believe we are secure in our salvation. Don't get me wrong. There is great security, and my security is in Jesus. It's certainly not in me. Even so, I don't like the term eternal security. Here's the deal. He's saying, these kids, my wife's three kids prayed to receive Jesus when they were young, and now they have nothing to do with the Lord. So what do you think about

these people? Well, first of all, salvation is predicated on faith, and that's what we have to remind ourselves of. Paul made it very clear to us that we're saved by grace, through faith. But again that does presume a living ongoing faith. What I mean by that is it's not a faith that I express back in the past of my life, but now I don't really believe in it. The Bible doesn't support that kind of faith, and that's why I don't like terms like eternal security, because it leads people to think that. Well, my kid, when they were six, they prayed to receive Jesus in their Sunday School class, the teacher told me that send them home with a certificate. Man, am I glad they're saved and they've lived like the devil for the rest of their life because I believe in eternal security. Well, there's a problem. You got a problem with a lot of the Bible, and one of the problems is something that Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15. Let me show you this on the screen. He says,

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (ESV)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached you - unless you believed in vain.

So let me ask you a question. Is it possible to believe in vain? Paul says, yes, right here in this passage. So people who believe in this popular definition of eternal security usually really dislike these two verses that we just read, because you know what Paul does here is he introduces this conditional clause “If you hold fast”. And people don't like conditional clauses. They say, no, salvation is unconditional. No, that's not true. It's conditioned on faith. We are saved by grace through faith. That's the condition. That's not a work, that's not a good work, but it is a condition. It's free, but it's conditional. We have to believe, to all who believe. And so what does Paul do? He introduces that conditional clause, “if you hold fast”. So I would say to Scott, are your wife's kids holding fast to faith? That's the issue. The issue isn't

whether they go to church, whether they ever read their Bible or anything like that. We know those things are important because they strengthen you, but they don't save you. Jesus saves you. So the question is, are they holding fast? That's what Paul says. That's what the Bible says. So if somebody wants to know, well, as long as you know going to go to heaven, I don't know. Are they holding fast to faith? Are they holding fast to their confidence that what Jesus did on the cross was enough? If so, then they're saved. Are they not holding fast? Well, there's a problem. I don't care if they said, if they prayed the sinner's prayer when they were 6 or 8 or 10 or 14. If they're not holding fast, there's a problem.

Sue: And it's impossible for someone from the outside to make that decision, because the Bible even tells us man looks at the outward appearance. So we look at how people act, and we make an assessment, we make assumptions based on, this is what I see him doing. So this is what I think, but that's impossible to know.

Pastor Paul: Exactly. All we can do is know what we know. And the Bible says, Believe in Jesus and hold fast, otherwise you've believed in vain. That's what the Bible says.

Sue: All right. Lisha from India says, *“I would like to know if deliverance ministry is true. Can a Christian have spiritual attacks? Are there spirits of anxiety or fear that Christians must be delivered from?”*

Pastor Paul: You got three questions here actually. And you can't really just ask if deliverance ministry is true, because some are and some aren't.

Sue: What does that mean?

Pastor Paul: Well, let's start answering some of the questions. First of all, could Christians have spiritual attacks? Of course. We could be harassed by demonic spirits. That's why we're told to resist the devil by James and Paul tells us to take up

the full armor of God. Why would they say those things if it weren't? Because there were spiritual attacks going on. But that doesn't mean that all ministries that call themselves deliverance ministries are necessarily operating biblically. Some do, some don't. But what Lisha rather is asking here is, are there spirits of anxiety or fear that Christians must be delivered from? Well, first of all, it's impossible, if you need to understand, first of all, it is impossible for a born again believer to be possessed by a demonic spirit, they can't happen because you're already possessed by God. We don't use the word possessed. We say indwell. It's a little more polite. But the fact of the matter is, he's living inside you, and so he's not going to share your space with a demon that just ain't going to happen. But can you be harassed. Oh yes, of course. And we do get harassed from time to time. But this is one of those areas where deliverance ministries, I think, kind of go astray, because they tell Christians that they need to have demons cast out of them for one thing, and that is just again, completely without biblical warrant. Are there such things as spirits of fear or spirits of anxiety? Maybe. I'm sure there are demonic spirits that exploit those things. But you got to understand something about what demonic spirits can and can't do. They can't do everything, they have to play on our weaknesses. So if somebody has a natural propensity toward fear, the enemy is going to exploit that. If they're a naturally anxious person, then the enemy is going to come and he's going to ruffle their feathers related to that. If somebody doesn't struggle with anxiety, the devil's probably not going to try to work him over on that score, because he's limited in what he can do. So you have to understand that. But the bottom line is, we're told to resist as believers, we're told to resist the devil and he will flee. That's a promise in God's Word. So you don't need to have a demon cast out.

Sue: What we should have in the body of Christ is resistance ministries. We should have ministries where we help one another to resist the devil. I guess that's just the regular church, isn't it?

Pastor Paul: That's the church praying with one another.

Sue: That is just me coming together with someone, or your small group or whatever, and having a resistance ministry, it's like, pray with me that I'll be strong against this influence or against this draw that comes naturally.

Pastor Paul: Like I said, sometimes it is a natural propensity, and sometimes there can be a demonic activity behind it. Earlier, we read a passage from First Corinthians where Paul talked about a gift called “Discernment of spirits”. And there are times when you sit down to pray with somebody, and they tell you, I'm just so anxious. I'm just fearful lately. And it's just been coming over me. And that person, if they have that gift, they could say, you're being attacked. See, we say that all the time, but we don't know. A lot of people will say it without the gift of discernment. They'll just say, you're being attacked. Well, maybe, maybe not, but if there is a genuine attack there, then you need to resist the devil. If it's a natural thing, you need to exert the person to trust in the Lord with all of their heart and lean not of their own understanding. There's different dynamics and avenues that you take, depending on what's behind the situation, but demons can be behind those kinds of things, even in the life of a believer. And that's why we're to take up the shield of faith with which we extinguish fiery darts of the enemy. And those are some of those fiery darts, worrisome feelings, thoughts, jealousy, anger, bitterness, all that fun stuff.

Sue: Hey, we're on our last question.

Pastor Paul: Are we?

Sue: Yep.

Pastor Paul: Good. We're about out of time.

Sue: Fortino Silvas says, *“I know each of the four gospels was written from a different point of view, which makes me ask, did they all know each other and hang out with Jesus at the same time? Did each one write their story based on hanging out with Jesus, or are they written based on others experience?”*

Pastor Paul: I love that. It's like, they were just hanging out and, Jesus, you want to hang out. I wouldn't say that all four of the Gospels were written from a different point of view, as he says here. I mean, the point of view is Jesus. So that's consistent what they are written. I guess the difference is, is they have different emphases about the person of Jesus, His ministry and that sort of thing. There are some of those.

Sue: And written to a different audience.

Pastor Paul: And written to different sometimes to Jews, sometimes to Gentiles, you're right. We believe that the biblical writers didn't just write because they hung out with Jesus. And it's like, I want to tell you a story. It just happened while I was hanging out with Jesus. We believe they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, and they were inspired to write what they did related to the life of Jesus, and as for whether or not they knew one another. Matthew and John obviously knew one another. They were part of the 12 who ministered with Jesus. Mark, the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, we believe that he is writing mostly the memories of Peter, because we know that he was kind of a disciple of Peter later on. And Luke was the man who traveled with the Apostle Paul in his journeys. So we assume he probably met some of the other Gospel writers. How much he got to know them or if he actually got to meet the other guys? We don't know. We really only know that that Matthew and John knew each other quite well, and yet they wrote very different gospel accounts, very, very different and it's interesting. When I went to Bible

College, they love to emphasize the Synoptic Gospels, and Matthew, Mark and Luke. And they call them Synoptic Gospels because they're so similar. And there's all these liberal beliefs that one of them was written first, and the other two basically plagiarized the first one that was written, which completely ignores the fact that Jesus told those men that after he departed, the Holy Spirit would come and he would remind them of everything that he had said. And we read that in the Gospel messages that the Holy Spirit's going to remind them, and yet we don't believe it, because now they're too similar. They had to have looked over each other's shoulder and they cheated. So the Holy Spirit was behind it. That's what I believe.

Sue: All right.

Pastor Paul: That's it, huh?

Sue: Yep.

Pastor Paul: You told me that you already started.

Sue: We got questions together for November.

Pastor Paul: They've already started coming in for November. We couldn't fit them in for tonight. But anyway, that's where we stop. So thank you guys for being here with us tonight. We always kind of enjoy doing this, even though we make the AV people crazy doing this kind of stuff.

Sue: They're good people up there.

Pastor Paul: Anyway, let's pray.

Father, thank you so much that questions are a good thing. And I thank you Lord that we can ask questions. And really, truly, there's no such thing as a dumb question. Lord, we ask because we want to know. We have a hunger. We have a thirst for knowledge and understanding. And I'm so thankful, Father God, that you're the

Word of God gives answers, and we're delighted with that, and I pray Father God that we would just continue to study to show ourselves approved, that we would be careful about making assumptions that are not biblically based, And that we would rely fully on you, trusting you for those areas that we just can't figure out. So thank you, Father, for this time tonight. Thank you for our time of worship. Thank you for our time discussing the Word. Lord, may you continue to strengthen our hearts to serve you each and every day. In Jesus, precious name we pray, and all God's people said, Amen, have a good rest of your evening.

Sue: Amen!