

2006 Heart-Cry - Question Answer Panel

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer addresses the impact of sin on prayer, the importance of discernment, and the prevalence of false conversions in the church.

Duration: 1:18:13

Scripture: Proverbs 29:23, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 2:3, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Question Answer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher criticizes the current state of preaching in evangelicalism, stating that the gospel being preached is not the true gospel. He argues that the message has been reduced to a simplistic formula of 'five things God wants you to know' or 'four spiritual laws,' which does not encompass the full message of Christ's sacrifice and the call to repentance and belief. The preacher emphasizes the importance of studying the Bible and understanding the true gospel. He also encourages pastors to obtain CDs and DVDs of baptisms to witness the transformative power of God in people's lives. Additionally, there is a question raised about confessing sins and seeking a closer walk with God, to which the preacher advises seeking wisdom from an elder and being genuinely burdened for the souls of others.

Transcript

Our schedule here, we have scheduled a wonderful time of Q&A. This is generally a well-received part of the conference as well. And I would again, my name's Tom Clay.

I'm the worship leader here and extemporaneously going to try to emcee this event. I want to introduce to you the gentlemen who are sitting on the stage here. They are comprised of the speakers of the conference, as well as our pastor here.

And on my immediate left, we have Brother Matt Tomlinson, all the way from Texas. It's good to have him here. And Brother Bill McCloud, who is, I guess, would kind of be considered our keynote speaker for the conference.

He came from Canada, so it's great to have him here. Brother Bob Jennings, in the middle, is also here. He's a wonderful contributor to the conference in years past.

The guy next to him, I think you already know, Brother Paul Washer, who just spoke. And then to his left is our pastor, Dr. Jeff Knoblet. Let's all make them welcome to this time.

Now, this session is being recorded. So when you ask your questions, we need to make sure that you ask it into the microphone. So my partner in crime, Brother Chad Haygood, is going to be handling the microphone on this side.

And I'll be running the microphone on this side. So please make sure we get to you before you start your question and do your very best to project as you ask your question. All right.

So we will begin. Just just wave at us. If you have a question, we'll get to you with a microphone.

Don't everybody ask it once. All right. The question is in regards to how sin affects prayer.

We know the scripture verse. It says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Does it simply refer to if we refuse to humble ourselves and deal with it or if we have dealt with it, but we have yet to carry it out? So to speak, we've surrendered it to the Lord.

What effect does sin have in regards to prayer? Again, the question, what effect does sin have in regards to prayer? Don't everybody speak at once. Well, the Bible makes it very clear that if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. So then it's useless praying if you have unconfessed sin in your heart and you're aware of that.

I think that's made very plain in different parts of the Bible. Even praying for sick people, as in James chapter five, it goes on to say, after saying the elders, the prayer of faith will save the sick. It then says, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

But sins are not forgiven if they're not confessed. So in other words, the elders have to find out, they have to talk to the person they're praying for to find out if there is perhaps sin in their life and the sickness may be because of sin. It isn't always, but sometimes it is.

And that's the way it goes. So sin in the heart, God doesn't listen. Anything else, gentlemen? If anything can be added to that.

I think that one thing that is very, very important is the one to whom the Lord looks has a contrite spirit and trembles at his word. There is so much. I am so dull in my heart.

So many times and do not know a secret false many, many ways until I come into, you know, maybe the spirit revives me or in the word or a brother rebukes me. And I think one of the things that is so very important is this idea of of a continual brokenness before the Lord. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. There is a sense in which, you know, it's very dangerous when a person looks at their life and say, well, you know, I don't have any sin. And they walk around pretty arrogant, you know, until something walks them over the head.

But I think that there is a constant state of brokenness and humility before the Lord that even when we have confessed all that we have confessed, there's still this reality of such grace. And that when he does speak to us and answer us, it is a work of tremendous grace. Well, in that passage, isn't a key word regarding isn't there a difference between regarding sin and committing sin? It is just it is a recognition and holding on to, you know, thought occurred to me that.

If I'm praying with known and confessed sin, I'm in effect praying to an idol, not God. An idol that I'm making him out to be, because known sin in my own life is against him and against not just his law, but his very character and nature. So why would I talk to him anyway if I'm against him? So just I don't know.

Just came to my mind and any prayer effort with unconfessed sin that's known would have to be prayer to your own idol, not to the true God that you know you're sinning against. Very good. Let me also say that your questions do not have to be specifically on prayer.

Am I correct in that, Brother Paul? Any questions that are on your heart? Infrared series is a mirror. You know, anything like that. Superlative revelation.

And we got several possible start with the front here. Brother Wesley, we talk about confessing our sins. Each night I try to confess my sin, but I find sometimes it's hard to recognize a particular sin.

I know that I fall short of God's glory every day. But how? You know, most of the time when you have sin, if you know you're under conviction, you confess your sin right then. But at the end of the day, when you look back at your day and there's no you can't pinpoint your confession.

You know, how do you draw that out in order to come to have a closer walk? You know. Yes, sir. Down there.

I always want to defer to my elder. He has so much more wisdom than I do. I can hear him say something.

Then I know if I give an answer, I pretty know which parameter I can work in. Could you repeat that? I think the question was, where do you draw the line? You know, how can you make sure you confess every sin that you ever commit? And where does grace fit into that? Well, sometimes if I'm correct, sometimes the idea is you can you feel like at the end of the day you need to confess sin, but you don't really know if you've got you don't really know any specific sin. And you're just wondering what you should do about that.

The one scripture that comes to my mind may may relate is search me, oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me.

And lead me in the way everlasting. It's obviously not a legalistic work that we have to remember everything and then confess it. What the Holy Spirit brings to mind, we need to quickly agree with the Father about.

And then we know that we don't know our own hearts. And so an open, honest heart to the Father that says, Father, search me, cleanse me. That's sufficient in light of that question, I think.

I could add something here, perhaps from the book of Job. It runs like this. It says he never takes his eyes off the righteous, but with kings are they on the throne.

He establishes them forever and they are exalted. And then comes an if. And if they be bound in fetters and held in cords of affliction, what then? Then he shows them their work and their transgressions which they have exceeded.

And he opens their ear to discipline and he commands that they return from iniquity. So sometimes people, they say, well, I prayed and asked God. He didn't show me anything.

Yet I know there's something there. Well, wait a minute. God says, it says there so clearly in Job, he shows them their work.

He shows us our transgressions. What it really means is we're not listening. Maybe we don't want to hear it.

You might want to get Paul's study on the attributes of God. Yeah, that helps me. There's one thing that, and I totally agree with everything that's been said.

One thing that bothers me sometimes is, you know, the Holy Spirit in his work. He convicts us of sin. He convicts us of righteousness also.

And I sometimes think that believers also, if I'm renewing my mind with the word of God, according to Romans chapter 12, verse two, if I'm seeking to follow hard after Christ. You know, I trust and I'm asking God to search me. I am really dealing with that.

I trust that the Holy Spirit will search me. He will tell me. And sometimes he may even use other people to come and rebuke me and so many things.

But at the same time, I'm always worried that I don't hear a lot of believers rejoicing in godliness, rejoicing in righteousness, being convicted of that. I feel like a lot of times believers are just many times under the accusation of the devil. That even if even after they pray and ask God to search them and they're really, you know, desiring to be pure and to walk with God, even if they don't hear something and there's no apparent sin, they still almost walk under this guilt and this condemnation.

And sometimes I know you can get off balance with this, but sometimes I'm happy in the Lord because I know he's done a work in me and is doing a work in me and and yes, overcoming. So I don't think that believers need to assume. I mean, we know that we sin.

We know that the Holy Spirit points that out. We know that there are sometimes secret sins that maybe lay there until a greater work is done or God shows us more clearly. But at the same time, I think we have to be very careful.

It's just walking in this assumed condemnation that we were always in rebellion because that's not true. Paul said that he exercised himself to have a conscience void of offense before God and men. So he exercised himself.

He searched his heart. And but then it says, you know, on John, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God. We know when our heart is clean, conscience is clear.

Yes. It's a question back here. I don't know how thoroughly you can answer this question, but I know that I sometimes have an inclination or I feel that God may be leading me to do something, maybe witness to somebody or sometimes, like you said, some crazy things.

I was just wondering, is there a way to discern between what is God's will? If he's leading you to do it or if it's your own thoughts or if it's maybe evil? I don't know if you can answer that. Do you hear that really, Bill? Basically dealing with discernment. How do you know the voice of God versus your own voice versus the voice of the devil? Let me just say, first of all, that people get in a really bad trap in this.

They're not really renewing their mind in the word of God as a practice. And then they come to a crossroads where they need to discern the will of God. And so they go to the Bible as though a magic book to find the answer for God's will.

And that is not really how God has set it up. In Romans 12, too, we go back to that, the idea of renewing your mind to know what the will of God is. So before a situation ever comes into place where I have to discern, is God leading or not? One of the things I need to be sure of is that as a life practice, I am constantly renewing my mind in the word of God because that holds promise.

Secondly, if I believe knowing that and checking my life there, if I believe God's leading me to do something, clearly we know this. If it contradicts a direct command of scripture or biblical principles, we know it's not the Holy Spirit leading us. But let's say that that I'm renewing my mind in the word of God.

It does not contradict commands or principles or to do it doesn't contradict other things. Then one of the things that I will do, of course, I pray, but I'll also seek godly counsel. I can recall several times in my life when I've gone to men that I greatly respected and authorities over me and asked them to pray about in opinions.

And usually by renewing my mind in the word of God, searching the scriptures, praying, you know, and checking out my motives. You know, am I am I seeking first the kingdom of God, going to godly, godly men to pray with me and to pray for me? Very rarely have I have I tripped up that way. Anyone have anything else to say? Well, if all hearts are rest on that answer, then brother Bill, did you have anything? I didn't know if you were preparing to answer.

I didn't want to interrupt you, brother. Well, of course, it has to be what is what you're hearing or feeling has to be totally consistent with the word of God. And one of the problems today is this, that the average Christian knows very little of the word of God.

I remember one time this fellow taught a Sunday school class in a local church. And he heard me preach and he said, you quoted a verse and I just couldn't locate it. And I know my Bible very well.

He says, I know the New Testament off my heart. He said, but that verse. I said, what was the verse? Well, he said the verse was, how shall we escape? We neglect so great salvation.

He said, well, where is that? And I said, in the book of Hebrews. Oh, he said, I knew it had to be in the Old Testament. I know the New Testament off my heart.

You know, there's a lot of that kind of stuff going. People don't know the Bible. So they're open to satanic deception constantly.

And if they don't pray, you have to get along with God and wait on God, you know. The big trouble today in the church or among Christians is this. I'm in a hurry and God isn't.

And the Bible says, wait on the Lord. It means exactly that. And you have to spend time with God.

Maybe some hours at times, even not be not make hasty decisions on some impression we have or some impression somebody else gives to us to piggyback on his question. Can we get to the point to where we are so concerned with following God's will that we're just we we we miss the point. Oh, God, do you want me to have cereal this morning or waffles? You know, my wife always makes those decisions.

One thing I tell college students, and this is very important, college students are famous for this or infamous for this. They wear themselves out emotionally, physically and spiritually trying to figure out God's will for their life. They're going to graduate.

They don't want to marry this girl, this and this and back and forth. And I always tell them a very childlike thing that I've worked just in my own life. And it's this.

I just keep doing exactly what I'm doing and following the Lord and his commands the best that I can. And I do not worry about a deviation from that until God makes it so clear to me that I know I need to do something else, that I know that if I don't do it, I'm in disobedience. And to that point, I don't put a lot of just I don't waste a lot of energy trying to work through that.

Let me just say, you know, bloom where you're planted as a pastor. I often have energetic, enthusiastic, sometimes young Christians. How do I know the will of God? And then I'll check and they're not real faithful in Sunday school.

I'll check and they don't come to our outreach visitation program. They're not in accountability group with another believer to sharpen themselves. And so the basic things that we should be doing, we're not doing.

We want God to give us a special direction for some spectacular thing over here. Make sure you're faithful where you are and exhaust yourself in the commitments you have where you are. And I'm just convinced you're not going to miss God's will if you're faithful in the small things.

Let's say the everyday things of your local church family. So many of the decisions we make, you know, it's surprising how many decisions we make without, you know, without a prayer meeting or without having to have a Bible verse or something like that. You know, it's like 1 Thessalonians 3. Paul says when when he could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind.

Is it at Athens alone? And he said, we thought it best, you know, and so here's a Christian. He has a renewed mind and he's to that level of spirituality. And and so, you know, it seems best.

This seems like the right thing to do. It seems like the right thing to do to put my shoes on in the morning and a lot of things like that. And so sometimes we just don't have a striking revelation.

And I mean, even on a thing like that, like Paul was talking about, he says, I thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone. We sent Timothy. And so some things are like that.

We have another question here. This grieves my heart. Are we hurt? That our churches have a lot of lost people in them that I think they are saved.

They're at least attending the Sunday morning services. And I've heard it said a lot. And it's very grieving.

I was wondering how you felt about that. Question about false conversions, folks attending church without a true regeneration experience. Your thoughts.

How much time do we have? Right. First of all, it's true. We do.

And it's not just confined to Baptist. It's confined. It's not confined.

It's rampant in evangelicalism today. And the reason for it is, first of all, the gospel that is preached is no gospel at all. It's a gospel reduced from Christ, the God man, going to a tree and dying under the wrath of his father and rising again from the dead and seated at the right hand of the father and calling all men, commanding all men to repent and believe that the proof of saving faith is the continued fruit in their life.

We've reduced all that down to five things. God wants you to know our four spiritual laws. And if you jump through each one of those and say yes, and then pray the little prayer in the back, some evangelist who should spend less time preaching and more time studying his Bible declares you say I'm very opinionated with regard to this.

That's just the point. And so our gospel, second of all, there's it seems to me that when I look at I don't consider the Catholic Church to ever have been a church. But when I look at the Catholic Church, when I look at Anglicanism and what was going on in England, when I look at what was going on in New England and what goes on today, it seems to me that always the devil works it out so that the great assumption is they're saved.

The least amount of time it seems eventually is given to discerning what is the gospel and whether a person is truly saved. If they just walk up front and they pray that prayer, we declare them safe and start discipling them. We should maybe be working with this person for months that they come to a biblical assurance.

And so our churches are filled with lost people, and it's by and large because the superficiality of pastors and most of them have gone to church growth schemes and turn their church into six flags over Jesus. And they no more are preaching the gospel than a man on the moon. It's that's not a it's not just a contemporary.

No problem. I read this week for A.W. Pink. I mean, he could he got pretty discouraged at times and could be seem like he could be hard.

But in his day, in the nineteen thirties and forties, he made the statement that he wondered if two percent of Protestantism were born again at all in America. Well, even the great one of the greatest, most well-known evangelists in America today has said that if even five percent of all the people that have been converted in his meetings are Christian, he would be happy. And another thing about this so important is the idea of a compassionate, loving church discipline.

I find it very strange that people do not practice church discipline because they love their congregation more than Jesus does. Jesus commanded them to practice church discipline, not upon sinful people. We're all but upon rebels who show no fruit and will not turn.

And you see, the thing that's really bad is we have just come out of a liberalism. There was a move among many denominations, especially the Southern Baptist Convention, seeing that liberalism is out. We're going right.

It hasn't taken us not even a decade to go right back into neoliberalism, which, in my opinion, the new liberalism is. Basically, the church growth movement where everything is done on on marketing strategies and finding the you know, tell us what kind of church you want. That's what we'll give you instead of asking God what kind of bride he desires.

I have a daughter named Joanna, and she professed to be saved, was baptized, joined the church and seemed to be a very genuine Christian. When she went to school, she always had a Bible on top of her school books. The principal of school told us, he said, I sure like having your daughter in our school.

And I said, why? And he said, if there's any hanky-panky going on and your daughter finds out, she blows the lid off this place. He said, we're so glad she's there. Then during the revival, she came to me one night and said, Daddy, I'd like to be saved.

I said, what? You mean you're backslidden? She said, Daddy, I've never known the Lord. I knew the language, I got the language from you and mom, but I never known the Lord. And so I led her to Christ.

And then before the revival, I had an assistant pastor, great song leader and great teaching children. But he was with us for six or eight months, and the deacons and I felt he's not producing. And we talked with him, and finally we had to ask him to leave.

And he did. During the revival, he phoned me one night long distance and he said, Last night I was praying and God showed me that I'd never been born again. Can I come down to Saskatoon and you spend some time? And I said, certainly.

So we came down, we got some pastors together, and he knelt and we all knelt and we counseled with him and he prayed. And I'll never forget, he suddenly cried, God is real, God is real. What a transformation.

So there's likely lots of people like that to know the language. They've heard it from others, but they don't know the Lord. This must have been a burden for the Lord Jesus too, because one time it struck me that almost all, if not all, of the parables that the Lord spoke had to do with this matter of true and false profession.

I mean the two builders, the sower and the soils, wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, and just almost all of the parables have to do with this very thing. Anything else, brothers? Greatest mission field today is the church, or what's called the church. Amen.

I believe Brother Chad has a question over here. Brother Nathan? Yeah. You know, I've been thinking a lot about especially men and maybe men in prominent positions, maybe like, you know, Brother Jeff, and he's a pastor here at First Baptist.

And when you get to places like even you guys are and even myself, where you're pastoring and a lot of people come to hear you preach and speak, we're always convicted to confess our sins to the Lord and to go before Him in prayer. But how important is it, no matter where you are or who you are, to confess those sins to other men and to other believers? And how important is it to always do that? What would be the difference in would there be a time where you would just confess to the Lord and not to someone else? One thing I can say is that there is a time where the Lord may lead us, maybe even see the dictated scripture, to confess our sins to others. You have to use a tremendous amount of wisdom in doing that, because most people, and I mean most people, are not trustworthy.

Most people are gossips, and they will hurt you. For me, if I felt like I needed to go and speak with someone, I would go to the elders of my church. I would entrust myself to those men.

There are friends that I will... There are some things that I entrust with everyone. If you noticed while I was preaching here tonight, I made quite clear some of my failings and my needs, especially with regard to spirituality. I feel very comfortable sharing that.

There are some things that I can share with other brothers who are closer to me, maybe certain needs and weaknesses I have that I wouldn't share with the entire community. Then there may be other things that I would want to go directly to my elders. Those who are elders in the church and deal with them are very, very close friends.

Would anyone like to add to that? You know, I must apologize for my bad hearing. I am 88 years old. But, you know, it does have some advantages when your wife asks you to take out the garbage on a cold Canadian night.

I tell people there was a time when I could hear a cat stamping its feet on a pillow at a distance of a mile. Now if an elephant fell out of bed next door, I wouldn't likely hear it, you know. But you know what? I spent \$4,000 on a hearing aid, and it doesn't work, you know.

I might as well have bought a whistle or something. But I'm going to try again. Sorry that sometimes I don't, or often I don't hear well.

Oh, goodness. I know a lot of pastor friends that I've worked with in the past. They like to have friends out of town, maybe not in their own church.

Is there wisdom in that? Is that biblical? You know, that scares me. You've got a fellowship of believers that you're supposed to be tied to more than just about anybody on the face of the earth. Your local fellowship of faith.

If I have to go out of town to find someone that I can trust, I need to be a part of a different fellowship. I mean, they're my family. And another thing.

This is very important. I had a young man. This may help some young men here.

He called me up one day. He was just newly married. He was battling with his thought life.

You know, he'd walk down the street, battle with awkward glance and things like that. And he was confessing every battle with his thought life to his wife in order to be sincere or to be. And I said, young man, I said, you're killing her.

You're going to kill her. I said, you may be soothing your conscience. You may be calming your conscience, but you're killing this woman.

And he pulled out a bunch of verses out of context and just railed on me and went away. I would imagine he's probably divorced or either has a wife that's totally destroyed. And so be very careful.

A lot of times we're wanting to confess something to get it off of our chest, but we keep it on the head of another person. And, you know, I want to go back to church leadership. There is a reason for elders.

And there's a reason why you choose where certain men are chosen. And it's a comfort when you have men who are seeking to be biblical, broken. They're trustworthy.

It's such a comfort because that's what God has established. We've got another question here. I would love to hear you, Brother Jeff, speak a little bit about our accountability system and the way it works here in this church.

I think it would be worth these folks hearing how we how we structure that to help answer what Nathan was asking. He's talking specifically about accountability groups. And having that one on one accountability partner.

Well, we began 20 plus years ago, actually, with the students just having an accountability partner. What I like to say to keep the lazy streak in check, you know, being accountable, being accountable and quoting your verses for the week and having a daily quiet time and sharing the gospel regularly. You can do that like a mechanical robot.

We all know that. But if you love God, the power of shame is good. Brothers can help each other.

And so that's been a very, I think, beneficial thing in the body here for four years. Switching back to the original question, Brother Nate posed, I know he's going to be a pastor, has pastored and has that heart. I've been here 26 years and I have an incredible blessings confessing weaknesses and struggles with brothers.

I have also shared weaknesses and struggles with brothers who used to try to destroy me. This church doesn't need me, but it does need God's called pastor. And so there's a sense in which you protect yourself and your reputation to the end of the good of the body of Christ.

And so I would say be very careful and wise, prayerful about that. And perhaps maybe young ministers, I guess, thinking about myself, we probably overdo that. We probably err by trying to be too transparent, too humble.

Perhaps had an older gentleman in my church six or so years ago and said, Pastor, would you quit telling us how weak you are and how you struggle in all these areas? So people don't like you and they're using it. You know, so and that was wise. That was not good.

I think my motives were good, but I was unwise and immature. So you need to be careful. Great.

Great answers. Another question. Two questions to continue on with what Brother Jeff was saying.

How does the pastor begin to lead his church men to hold him accountable? What would be the process for me to have men that would rise up in my church to hold me accountable, especially in the sense of seeing how many ministers are falling these days? I know that I'm susceptible to falling myself. That's one question. The second question is not related, but the second question is in the early church, they somewhere on a minimum of three years of preparation before baptism.

And even in some moves, even before communion, how much time should be invested in supposed new converts before baptism, before entry into communion? I'd just like to hear some feedback on that. First, the first question, how to start the process of raising up men in your church to hold you as a pastor accountable biblically. Then the second question, what what type of process to prepare for baptism and what length of time? I think that on the baptismal issue that it is, you know, each person is so different.

As churches, we want to develop a system and run somebody through a machine. And that's not an that's an organization, it's not an organism. And in my mind is that, you know, a person come to a biblical assurance, a biblical assurance.

And, you know, that's through counseling, that's through loving, talking to them and waiting. And some people, you know, there's going to be is going to come quicker than others. So the idea of biblical assurance is working with each individual, taking them through scripture and saying, you know, a lot of times during, well, Wednesday night.

I mean, Jeff is back and that's it's all that he's doing is meeting with person after person. And it's not just one time. It's been times they meet with other people and it's just discern.

It's not to try to make you know, you've got to reach some certain level to be in this club. It's just that if you if you're a pastor and you really love people, the thing you're going to work hardest on is that they if they have a if they're not really safe, that that false assurance is destroyed and if they are really saved, that they have biblical assurance. And as far as accountability, one of the things that really hurt pastors hurts a pastor or anyone that God starts to use is you begin to think somehow you're different.

From everyone else in the congregation, that you're special, that there are rules that everyone else needs to go by that maybe you don't. Personally, I'm just telling you what I've heard a lot of men who have fallen say was their catch. They thought somehow it was like they were God's spoiled rotten brat and could get away with anything.

And to one thing I was bothered about when I was praying before coming out to preach was that when I remember saying to the Lord, Lord, I'm more gifted than I am godly. That's a terrible thing to think about. Your giftedness can get you in a whole lot of trouble because a lot of people will equate giftedness with godliness.

And that's not true. And so to know that another thing is, is. I feel like in my church and in the ministry here.

That I have brothers and colleagues that it's not me here and everybody else down here, but I have this fellowship of people who hold me accountable. They love me, they respect my gifts, but they don't trust the arm of the flesh, even if it's attached to me or anyone else. And so when when you're separated like you're the big deal, it's very dangerous.

But when you have elders around you again, it's the idea of elders working together as brothers and holding one another accountable. On the baptism question, you look in the New Testament. I mean, the book of Acts, you know, you see immediate baptisms upon confession.

I mean, almost immediate. And Peter, I mean, Philip said to the Ethiopian eunuch, if you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized. For what? I don't know that it's any consolation, but you find Peter baptized Simon falsely.

So even he did that. But it does seem like there's some scripture for being careful on certain categories of people like the Pharisees. You know, John the Baptist said, let's see some fruit.

And I think that would apply to children, too. I mean, just so often they just they don't understand enough. And so there's I think maybe there's some scripturalness for being cautious on those that are likely to

make more likely to make a false profession.

One of the basis of the New Covenant says they shall all be taught of God. The least of them, the greatest of them, they shall all be taught of God. And they'll have a knowledge of their iniquities being removed, taken away.

Again, dropping the ball theologically, taking, you know, when you know how many pastors have I heard say, you know, to a person who is doubting their salvation. Well, have you ever asked, was there a point time in your life when you asked Jesus come in your heart? They said yes. They'd say, well, were you sincere? And if the person said, well, I think so, they said, well, you're saved and that's the devil bothering you.

That's the extent of what it's come to. Another thing that's a big problem, and I hate to keep harping on this, but God does not have a plan B. Or he told us how to deal with his church. And one of the great problems is this, again, a biblical, compassionate church discipline is not practiced.

Because if you're baptizing people, just all kinds of people, and even no matter how careful you are, even if you're Peter, you're going to baptize someone who's a sorcerer. All right. And they're in the church and they stay there.

Why? Because church discipline isn't practiced. So a big part of this is not the problem with discerning baptism. It's the fact that once someone's in the church, they can run rampant and ungodliness and no one does anything.

And so that's a big problem. Let me throw in this that we've experienced here. We started with church discipline before we had a healthy understanding of conversion.

And I was converted at age 19, had no church background at all. And I was real troubled with the typical Southern Baptist easy believism, didn't know what to call it, call it easy believism at the time. And but yet I bought into some of it and we had something of a paradox going on.

We have discipline over here. We believe conversion really changes you. But all the known people say do this quick fix hoop jump conversion thing.

And it was a mess. But because of church discipline, I was forced to deal with the doctrine of conversion because I was having to discipline so many. And I thought, my goodness, I just baptized this person a month ago and they're already a discipline case in the church.

And it's as if God, somebody said one time that God ever spoken to, you know, it was louder than that. You know, God said, you don't know what conversion is. And I don't know thousands of hours I spent studying the doctrine of conversion.

I mean, immersing myself, church history, our Baptist theologians and others. And just the book of Ephesians, particularly because I was preaching through that book. And I mean, it was a wrestle, a fight, a struggle.

Am I crazy? Am I going too far to where now I'm at peace? I'm not saying I've arrived, but I'm at peace with how we're dealing with seekers now. And following up on what Bob said, I think Acts does appear to give the impression that folks are baptized immediately. But have we ever been in a Pentecostal type work of

the spirit? You got to take that in context.

Jonathan Edwards, I think, is so right when he says in an unusual, genuine move of the spirit, you may know in 30 minutes if a man is truly converted. But usually that's not possible. And there's a reason why Paul told Timothy, do the work of an evangelist.

And when the first time I read that verse that I can remember, I thought about the evangelist. And then I thought, what work is this? Twelve or fifteen sermons, 20 minute message. Walk down now.

There's no work. And then when I begin to understand what conversion biblically should look like and now I'm counseling with people, I sometimes leave here at nine or ten o'clock on the day I set aside to counsel with people about baptism. I'm absolutely exhausted.

It's a joyous exhaustion, but it's work. It's the work of laboring with fear before God about this person's soul and even more so the health of the bride of Christ. And brothers, those of you that are going to the pastor, here's the issue.

Do you love God? And is his bride that important to you? It is. It is that important. You know, to make you rethink and examine and reformulate everything you're doing in that area.

And it's just been a long pilgrimage and a struggle and suffering. And people misunderstanding and leaving and persecution. But if you're on that pilgrimage, keep going.

Keep seeking God. Nothing is what can be more important than the doctrine of conversion. I mean, and it's not for spiritual laws or walk down the aisle and pray this prayer.

It's massive. I don't want anybody preaching to my daughters that it's just this little thing, that little thing. I want them to care for their souls.

And so, to be quite honest, I've had to repent of a thousand and one other things you can do in a large church that's well organized and well structured like we are. Which can be idols to a pastor like myself who's gifted to do that. And get myself back to pouring over preaching and counseling those the spirit is moving in.

And realizing that is my work. And, you know, it's amazing. If that gets right, I don't mean perfect.

If that gets right, everything else starts to work pretty good. So fight that fight in that area. It's a great question.

Anything else, brothers? We'll move on. We have a question waiting over here. And then we'll get to some of this.

Hi, guys. First, I just I got to let you know I'm terrified to ask this because I know when I ask it, I'm going to be held accountable for the answer. And but hopefully I'm not alone.

I share Paul's heart on the problem that's happening in the church. This cheap, easy believism. I was a product of it.

I was saved when I was 12. I walked the aisle. Baptist Church said the prayer, got baptized.

And and at 33 years old, I started looking at my life and somebody threw Hebrews 10, 26 at me. If we deliberately continue in sin after receiving a knowledge of the truth, you know, the rest of it. And I couldn't believe that was in the Bible.

And then I started digging in the Bible myself. And I said, man, there's no evidence that the Holy Spirit is in me. And it's like it's almost as if God said, are you ready to start doing it my way now? And at that point, I had to totally turn away from my old life.

And and I never looked back after that. Now, praise God, I know I'm saved. And I so appreciate your wife's testimony to Charles testimony.

And but what would you say? What kind of advice would you give to someone who has just a burning passion to see the church come alive again? I mean, I don't have the heart of a pastor, but I preach and I have the heart of an evangelist. And I where I come from in Chicago, there are tons of churches who don't have pastors because they're failing and falling. And pulpits are empty and they need people to come and speak.

And I got such a strong burden to go and and guard the good deposit. And part of that is preaching the truth. And you always say it's a terrifying thing to preach.

Well, it's not really a terrifying thing to preach. It's a terrifying thing to preach the truth in front of people who don't want to hear it. And if I preach, I know I have to do that.

I don't have a choice, but I know I have this overwhelming burden on my heart. I'd love to just pack everything up and go to every pulpit I could and just preach the church and try and share my passion with them to see them come alive. But I just I don't even know where to start.

I. So I guess I'm just looking for some wisdom. What would you say to somebody who knows that there's a burden on their heart for that? And God's gifted them. And what do I as an evangelist? OK, there are two evangelists right over here that I can hardly recommend.

When they go to a church, they preach the truth. And I'm going to answer your question. But what you need to do is just after this service, you just need to get over here and talk to these men because that's their burden and that's what they do.

You know, they they fight that fight. They do the work of the evangelists and things like that. One thing I want to say, and this is also for the young guys here, you know, like I'm well known for my shocking messages.

He never got asked back, you know. You know, it's yeah. And but here's the problem.

When people come in and they'll hear me preach or like teach on Wednesday night here or some radio interviews I've done, they get real disappointed because they I thought you were this flame throwing, you know. And sometimes God lays it on your heart and you must preach like that and it causes things to get all shook up. But also at the same time, you walk into a church and you look at this, you just don't want to tell them they're wrong.

You want to look at these people, some of them belong to God. You know, I was saved when I was 21 and didn't believe hardly any of the truths I believe now. And, you know, I could have been crushed by me, you

know.

And the thing is, is you want to go in these churches and I'm all for men called to be evangelists. But when you go in, you need to look and say, all right, how can I bring these people? How can I reach them? It's not just about telling them what's true and showing them how wrong they are, even though that's part of it. It's loving those people.

And and for most part, you know, one of the things I always tell young guys, if you feel like God's given you a real message of truth, make sure your knees are bleeding. Make sure that you're crying for the souls of these people that you have to preach harshly to sometimes. And but I really would recommend, brother, you go over there and talk to I'll introduce you here in a little while.

We've got two evangelists here who who do that work. If there's if you don't find receptivity in the churches, you might consider the streets. You know, Paul said, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

OK, good. And that's what Whitfield did and Wesley did. And remarkably, Charles Spurgeon spent more time in the street than I was aware of.

I learned yesterday. So that's a thing to do. Anything else, brothers? The question here, many people, Paul, want to know why you moved from southern Illinois down here is because you finally found a church that did ask you to come back.

Yeah, I'm still I'm out on that one. I'm wondering why. No, the reason why this is a really good thing to understand.

And I can say this in the presence of their elders here is pastor. It was a humbling thing for me to come here. And I want to say this so that young guys will understand some things.

It was God's will for me to come here. I know it. I love being here.

I love the people here. I love the teaching that my children are getting the preaching from the pulpit. I love it.

What I'm trying to say is if I had gone to a place that was, you know, a church of a hundred, a little humble building, which is where I've always been. You know, it would have raised no eyebrows. We came here and it's a big church.

It's got a lot of people and they got a lot of things and it's a lot of things different than what I have been. And in coming here, you know, it didn't fit. It didn't fit what I was, what I thought I was or what I thought I needed to be and a lot of different things.

And it just showed me it was such a rebuke to me. That is, some people boast in being a part of a really big church with a lot of stuff. Other people boast of not being in a big church and not having a lot of stuff.

And everybody's just boasting. And the thing about it is, is, you know, I looked over at my wife one day when Brother Jeff was preaching. And just almost tears coming down her face, just so happy to be hearing the word.

And then that just sold me. She goes, I just want the word. I just want to be preached to.

And then then came here. And, you know, I'm just happy. I am so happy I've been so strengthened.

God moved us here in this church as we never wanted to put money into buildings. And we were all in a room about 15 by 18 at heart. Literally all of us in this room with a bunch of computers and working with John Green in a room is difficult.

No worries. And here we were able to to, you know, that this church has done everything. I mean, they have given us a place to be.

Just you can't you can't have something go on that there's not just I don't know, countless people saying just what can I do? Just tell me which and I've loved it. It's been a rebuke to me. You know, it just shows you how God is.

It's such working. And I wouldn't want to be any other place in the world because I know I'm right in the middle of God's will. My family's here in the word of God.

The other people who came with us, Matt and Amanda and John and Gabby and others that have come. It's all the same. We're hearing the word and there are people here.

God's really done a work they desire. I want to just say one thing. I'm going to try to get it produced tomorrow.

I don't know. I would really love for all of you that could, especially the pastors, to get some CDs that a DVD that we want to put out. That's that's of the baptisms.

I wish you could see some of these people getting baptized. A 14 year old girl standing up there. And you just think that she just read from Jonathan Edwards.

She'll tell you, you know, I made a convert. I made a profession of faith when I was eight years old. There was no conviction of sin, no conviction of the righteousness of God, no fear of hell.

I just made a decision. I sat in church. I've done everything.

But then one day, Brother Jeff said one thing in the spirit. And you'll hear these kids say this. The spirit of God began to work on my heart.

He regenerated me and I'm a new creature. And I'm going, man, that's what I want to hear. My five year old, my three year old and my wife's pregnant.

I want to hear all of them say that one day. So that's why we're here. My question is concerning mentorship.

And I would like to hear your advice to a young guy who seems to have looked quite some time in the area in which he lives and not saying that there's not godly men in the area, but not really godly men who have the time to invest in young guys. So what would be your advice to a young guy who truly longs to have a godly mentor in his life and to teach him and to show him the ways of God that seems to can't really find it? Let me say something real quick. That is so important.

When 18 years ago, when we had our first church discipline case, I could not find one Southern Baptist church that did discipline. I had to fly to California and see John MacArthur and his staff. That is a shame.

And one of the things that burns in my heart is that other pastors don't need to have to do that. And so that is so valuable. It's not where you go to school.

It's who you study under. So keep that heartbeat. I don't know who that is for you, but that is the issue at hand is being mentored by someone like John.

You know, John MacArthur wasn't personally available to me that often. I didn't mean that. But his staff was.

And, you know, more than anything, the Spirit of God will tell you the truth. But maybe you're like me. Maybe I'm just weak.

I don't know. But I just need somebody to tell me I'm not crazy. You know, everything we did here from as God's been reforming us, you know, I went through this thing of self-doubt and introspection.

You just need guys to say, no, that's your own track. That's OK. And let me sharpen and help you with your thinking.

So I believe that's the thing God is going to do as I believe there's an awakening going on, particularly young, young men going into ministry. And I think they're going to need to be equipped differently than the institutionalized, maybe Greek system of seminary, though there's much good there. And I don't mean to say don't go to seminary.

But if you're not trained in the real life laboratory and figure speech of the local church under a man of God, I think you've missed a lot. There are several men in this congregation right here that I've never lived closer than six hours to. And yet my life has been just totally influenced by them.

So don't here's the thing. And for pastors, they need to hear this. You might have a contact with a young man for 45 minutes and 45 minutes.

God use that to totally change. Absolutely. You don't have to have a program to be mentored.

You know, we want to turn everything into a program. Second of all, there are men here right now. They have mentored more that are pastors that have mentored more young guys around them.

Brother Mike Morrow's here from Kentucky. And, you know, they've got all kinds of young guys at his church that they're learning to preach by just watching a preacher and listening to a preacher and teaching them. Another thing to the pastors that are here, if there are any pastors, just look at what we're doing.

Pastors, we're not we're not marketing strategists. We're not gophers. We're not movers and shakers.

We're not planners. And we're not only we are to be men of God. And we're to take the young men, all the men were to train them were to pour our lives into them.

You know, let me also say this. A lot of you may be here. Southern Baptists.

And you don't have to. You know, Southern Baptists need to realize something. You know, living Southern Baptists like a spiritual ghetto.

Got all the money in the world. You got all the biggest buildings in Nashville and everything else. But you don't realize it to many other groups.

You're nothing more than a laughing stock. Laugh at you. It's little boys playing church instead of men of God in the presence of God, preaching the word of God.

And you're seeing two things that are happening, at least in the Southern Baptist domination. You're seeing men who are basically going for these models of how to make a church big. And basically everything they see is just going to burn on the day of judgment.

And you're seeing men who are saying, no, I'm going to preach God's word. I'm going to find out what God wants in a church. And that's what we're going to have, even if no one shows up.

We're going to just seek to do that. And part of that is that Timothy is mentoring that Timothy and pastors. You know, we're all about it.

It just seems like we've either got we either got nothing or we've got to have this big Bible institute. God brings a couple of young guys under you and you don't do anything with them because you don't have an institute. Well, maybe you don't need an institute.

Those three guys that God's given you, is it, you know, like the Zerubbabel. Should we despise the day of small things? I mean, my goodness, you pour your life into those three young men. God might use them to turn the world around.

We're just missing the forest for the trees. We're just not seeing what's in front of us to pour our lives into these young guys. But pastors, the young guys God's raising up, they don't want to learn strategies and they don't want to learn how to be a youth minister.

They want to learn theology. They want to learn what the Bible says about God. They want you to open up your mouth and teach them about the sovereignty of God, the justice of God, Christ dying under the wrath of God.

You know, the things that are the real gospel. You've got to have it to give it. I think your question is so important, not just for young guys, but young ladies, younger women with older women across the board.

I know when the Lord saved me, I was 19. And I had gotten out of church completely and I didn't know anything anyway before that. I knew nothing.

And two Christians put two books in my hand. And I said, well, this is good. I didn't know where Romans was or anything.

But one book somebody put in my hands was Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth. I read that. I was a new Christian.

I read it and my heart said, this is rubbish. And not that Satan is alive. The other book that was put in my hand was A.W. Pink's Sovereignty of God.

I was a 19 year old, brand new Christian. I read that and I said, this is great. This is true.

And what I saw God do, right after I was converted, after work, I would take my paperback living Bible to the park and I would read it until it was too dark to read. I had nobody. And I asked God to teach me.

And I asked God, even then, to bring into my life those who could influence me in the right way. That's the place to begin. The men that would mentor others may not be right for you.

Ask God to bring those. And what I began to see was, whether through books or relationships or men of God that I would hear preach, I just kind of became what I call a spiritual leech. I'd drive to hear them.

I'd call them on the phone. I would bug them in a respectful way. I'd ask questions.

And God graciously just gave me so many men that I loved and that God used all of them. There are mentors in different ways, you know, that God brings into our lives. I know I have a co-elder in my church who he thinks that I've mentored him, but his walk and example and blamelessness have mentored my life far more than I think I have his life.

And so, just ask God to bring those. You know, as the Scripture says, he who walks with the wise will become wise. Those who you see and hear the voice of truth from, hang around them.

And God will birth relationships. One of the biggest mentors in my life are dead guys. I know it sounds spooky, but... George Mueller has had a tremendous impact.

Hudson Taylor had a tremendous impact on my life. James L. Frazier, Mountain Rain, tremendous impact on my life. Charles Spurgeon, tremendous impact.

Leonard Ravenhill, even though I was able to meet him twice, a tremendous impact. Another thing, let me say this. Look for more than theological correctness.

Now, theological correctness is necessary, but look for more than that. Because I know a lot of guys are theologically correct, that are dead and adorning. It's a man of God.

Leonard Ravenhill, for example, theologically on some things, we would differ. Leonard Ravenhill was a man of God. He knew God.

God knew him. Look for that. Don't look for the... A friend of mine up in Detroit a while back, he actually bumped into a minister of a very, very large church there in Detroit.

And said, well, what do you do? And he said, I'm the minister of marketing. He was actually the minister of marketing in the church. Don't get a guy like that to disciple you.

You want a minister of God to disciple you. By the way, I have a thing called Shepherd's College. And I meet with five, six, eight men every Saturday morning for two and a half hours.

And then for any who... they don't all feel called to full-time ministry. But any who do, they come Saturday mornings. And then I have another at least one night a week that I spend two or three hours with those who feel called into the ministry.

And to date, I think four have gone into full-time work and are doing well in churches. One in Humboldt, Nebraska, and the others up in Canada. And so I'm not pastoring now.

I did many years before the Revival in 71. So I'm doing what I can. And I just pray for God to send men to me.

And when he does that, I don't advertise anything. But we've been having some great times with some of these men. One of the young men that we trained, he went into ministry about five years ago, I guess.

He was phoning me the other day, and he says, They're going to have to enlarge their church buildings. So many are being saved, you know. And really great things.

I think it's quite close to Revival where he is. And thank God for that. My daughter used to drive 30 miles to work.

And I told her, Get some good CDs right there at your Bible school. I got a letter in 1979. It had two sentences, and they were short.

Mack and Linda, I've moved to Lindale, Texas. I've started a prayer meeting on Friday nights. Come, Leonard Ravenhill.

And those in our church at that time were so hungry that we drove. Starting that month, it started several years of driving two hours one way Friday after work to be in the prayer meeting with Keith Green and Leonard Ravenhill for years. And if you're hungry, don't let anything rob you of getting under the men and women of God that God wants you under.

I could add something here, too. In my church, when I did pastor, there was a man called Gordon Bailey. And he was a cattle inspector with the Saskatchewan government.

He only had grade 8 education. And he'd been in my church six years before the revival started. He was always in church and prayer meeting Sunday morning, Sunday evening, the whole bit.

But he told me he'd never, ever spoken to a soul about Christ. He was afraid of that. He said, I used to sit in the congregation in mortal fear that you might call on me to lead in prayer, do something like that.

He said, if that had happened, I'd have dropped to the floor. Well, I spent a lot of time with him before the revival. We used to go to his farm.

He had a herd of Black Angus cattle and talk with them and talk with them. And I gave him the New Testament on tape, because as a cattle inspector, he traveled a lot. So he listened to these tapes by the hour.

Then during the revival, one Sunday morning, he walked to the front, stood by the community table, and said something like this. I've been sitting in the back row for two years because I'm backslidden, and I hate some of you people. And I've been shooting arrows at the backs of your heads.

I want to be forgiven. Can you forgive me this? I want to walk with God. So they forgave him.

I asked my deacons to take him into my office and pray with him, and they did. And he went home. Then he did something.

Listen carefully. He set out four chairs, three children and his wife. And he sat in a chair here facing them and asked each one to forgive him for being such a poor Christian, such a poor daddy, such a poor husband.

He said, Pastor, it was the hardest thing I ever did in all my life. But you know what happened? That very night, he was working in the barn with his Angus cattle, and I'll tell you what I heard him say in meetings where he gave his testimony. Here's what he said.

Suddenly, God filled me with the Holy Ghost from top to toe. He didn't speak in tongues or anything like that. All he knew was that God had filled him.

He led 30 people to Christ in about nine months just in his job. He went to an Indian reserve and led 35 Indians to Christ and got a permanent work established on the reserve. Then churches began asking him to give their testimony.

And finally, in one year, only on weekends, he preached 105 times. Nobody worried about the Queen's English being tortured sometimes. They missed all of that.

This man, the power of God was on his life in a marvelous way. You know, he had meetings where the entire congregation would come to the altar at the end of his message, you know. I asked him one day, and I'll just share this.

I said, Do you ever have any trouble getting messages? Oh, no. No, he said. I've got to know the New Testament very well.

I have trouble in another area. And I said, What is it? He said, If I have a fight with my wife, I don't make it up. And I go out to preach.

Nothing happens. I got a phone home, make things right with my wife. And then the power of God comes on me again.

Wonderful, wonderful. We have another question over here. I know that it seems like the call of God gets thrown around church a lot.

And I understand the idea that we're supposed to bloom where we're planted, as you said, Pastor. But I was just wondering what you guys thought about foreign missions, whether or not that has a special calling or if that's just implied for everybody in the Great Commission. Well, the Great Commission is for everyone.

It is. There's no question about that. Everyone with the same dedication ought to embrace the challenge of the Great Commission.

The only question is this. Are you called to go down in the well? Are you called to hold the rope for those who go down? So both of them with the same dedication ought to hold on to the rope and they ought to have scars on their hands. Now, here's an interesting thing.

I hear a lot of people who will say, and Keith Green used to say this. If you're not called to stay, you need to go. And what's amazing is for the people who really are called when they say that it's true.

Sometimes I have seen God. Let me put this way. I've seen people say, well, if you're not if you're not called to stay, you need to go and they go.

But that's the way God called them. And other people, you know, you need to realize that you have to be sensitive to the will of God in this sense. If God tells you to be a janitor in Nebraska and pray in your

prayer closet there after you get your work done to pray for four hours a day and intercede.

But you go off to Namibia and start twenty five churches. You're out of God's will and you're doing a whole bunch of damage. So you need to know, you know, it's not just knowing the will of God when to speak.

It's knowing the will of God when to be silent, not just to go, but stay. And if you will follow hard a book, I can heartily recommend with regard to the will of God. Mr. Henry Black will be experiencing God and just follow hard after him, after knowing him being conformed to his image.

And he will lead. He will lead you. I pray to God he leads you to the foreign field because there's so much opportunity there.

So many doors that have been thrown open. It's absolutely phenomenal. Let me let me add this to what Paul said.

Go to your church elders. I think God has ordained that authority and the elders of your church will have the wisdom to see you need more maturity. You need more training or you're missing God on this.

And I don't know. We seem to have had quite a few young men over the 26 years that have come and more or less said the elders. I know what God's called me to do.

You're going to get in line, you know, and sort of an independent, proud spirit. And I know I know that when I see it, because I've had it myself far too often. And so trust the security and the guidance of the men that God's put.

Because if you have a mission field, you ought to be sent out by church. And those elders should be able to discern and help guide you. And there's times when we had a family that said, God called us mission field.

We're ready to go. Well, we happen to know that this family had filed bankruptcy and owed a lot of people in town in the church. It was very hard to start raising money for someone who hadn't paid their bills already.

And so we said, you know, you need to address these things and we'll pray about this. Well, they got mad and left. And so, you know, you want to you want to use the God ordained authority to give you clarity and guidance and and help you to continue to mature in those areas.

And that's when I say bloom where you're planted. That's what I'm saying. If you haven't proven yourself in the local church you're in, please don't go to the mission field.

And like we say here, if you can't lead a small group at our church and God bless that, how are you going to plant churches on the farm field? And so I just I feel strongly about that. Having watched the young men who God's blessed and who've gone out and really hurt the cause of Christ. Here's one thing, sir.

If you're if you just keep praying, if that burden is there and it's lasting, God will get you exactly where he wants you to be. And that's what's so exciting. He can, you know, and everyone is so different.

You know, we have this mentality, this cookie cutter thing of where you're called and you need to do this and you need to do this. You need to do this. We really don't know what you need to do, except you need to grow in maturity, as we all do.

You need to follow hard after God. You need to have men around you that can be very, very godly and can give you wisdom. And God will work it through.

He really will. Anything else, brothers, before we move to the next question?

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