

Ask Away: Navigating Faith's Questions with Scripture

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 February 2024

Preacher: Pastor Patrick Dailey

[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daley preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. All right. Let's go ahead and find our seat everyone, and we're going to go ahead and get started.

Well, it is great to be here this morning as we are going to be, well, we're going to be opening the Word of God, looking to the pages of scripture, and answering some of the questions that have been submitted.

So it's going to be a continuation of the Q&A session, but this time it's going to be questions on scripture and questions on theology. So before we go any further, I'd like for us to turn to the Lord. Let's open an award of prayer. And there are seven questions that I have prepared, and then one that was submitted this morning that we'll turn to as well.

[1:11] So we're going to, Lord willing, get through all the questions. There's going to be a lot of verses, as you can see on your notes. So feel free to follow along on this as we are going through this.

But let's pray to the Lord together. And Father, we come before you this morning as we are going to be just going over some very deep, biblical and theological questions, questions about your Word. May we be reminded that there's nothing wrong with asking questions as we can be hungry to grow closer to you, to grow in faith in you.

And we get curious about who you are. There's so much to this world that you've created and so much to this life that you have given to us and so much to what your Word has to say.

We ask that you are with us and you'll just help us navigate through these questions. We ask that you send down your Holy Spirit with us to soften our hearts and our minds, open our minds to the truth of your Word.

[2:15] It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together, amen. So I wanna first start off with the question that was submitted. Do I have to be baptized to be saved?

It's actually not gonna be that first question. Just go ahead and go back to the title slide. This is one that was submitted. Let's turn our Bibles to the Gospel of John, John chapter three.

So one question that comes up all the time is, do I need to be baptized in order to be saved? Okay, so we're gonna look at the Word of God.

It's gonna be John chapter three. So here we go.

John chapter three. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that your teacher come from God for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

[3:23] So this Pharisee is recognizing who Christ is, right? That there's something different about him. And Jesus answered him, truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Okay, that's pretty self-explanatory, right? Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?

And Jesus answered, truly, truly I say to you, now pay attention here, this is very significant. Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

So on the surface when we read that, it would appear, okay, you must be baptized and you must believe in the Lord to be saved, right? You must be born of water and of spirit. But let's go to that next verse.

Okay? That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. That's very interesting.

[4:25] Well, water, a water birth of flesh, what does that sound like? Doesn't it sound like the water breaking when someone is born of the flesh, so to speak?

So what Christ is talking about is you must be born into this earth, right? And then you must believe in the Lord, you'll be born again because Christ is answering that question that Nicodemus is asking, how can a man be born again when he's old?

He can't enter the womb again. So he's responding to that. So Christ is going on in verse seven, do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.

So even Christ is saying, don't get confused by this, right? Don't marvel, don't overthink it here. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear it sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit. So that is the quick answer for that. We understand and we recognize that baptism is important as it is an outward expression.

[5:37] It is the public proclamation of being a believer. It is saying to your friends, to your family, to your church, to your community that you are a Christian and that you are saved by grace through faith and you're publicly displaying that.

Because when you make a decision for Christ, that's a very personal decision, right? That is between you and the Lord. And when we're considering baptism, it is something that we should all do, certainly, but we must remember that baptism itself does not save you.

So I thank you for the one who submitted that question and we're just gonna go right on into the questions that you'll see on your notes. So the first question that pops up is question one.

It says, over the years, they say that they found letters that belong in the Bible and these were either taken out of the Bible many years ago, or they were never put in your thoughts on if we will ever know what they said and if the letters are true.

And so the first thing that I want you to keep in mind, there's two aspects to this. There are books that are not a part of canon, right? You have the Apocrypha and you have non-canonical books such as the Gospel of Thomas, which was written in the second century.

[6:59] But then you also have lost books of the Bible that were mentioned in scripture that we just have no trace of. So when I'm speaking of canon, I wanna make it extremely clear that we're talking about the 66 books that we have in scripture.

There are some Bibles, such as the New Revised Standard Version that have the Apocrypha.

There are some King James versions of scripture that also contain the Apocrypha.

And there's also other books that just didn't make it into scripture. And so the canon, like I'm saying, is why it is in scripture is because it is consistent with itself.

You've heard me mention before the idea of looking at the context when we're reading the Word of God and the connections with scripture. Through the context and through the connections, we also have to look at the consistency.

Does this book, is it consistent with the rest of scripture? And if it is not, it makes one wonder if it should be in scripture to begin with.

[8:11] So examples of books that we have no trace of would be found in Numbers 21, 14, if you wanna write that down.

It is known as the Book of the Wars of the Lord. If you wanna take a moment to write that, that's Numbers 21, 14. There's also, and I'm gonna be going through a lot, so just bear with me here.

There's the Book of Jactr, which is found in Joshua 10, 13, and 2 Samuel 1, 18. So those are two, there's actually quite a few examples of books that we just don't have any trace of.

And for one reason or another, it just, maybe it was the Lord's will that wasn't meant to be in scripture. There's also the Book of the Acts of Solomon, which is found in 1 Kings chapter 11, verse 41.

So there's quite a few more of other books that are just, again, not found in scripture. So those are books that are lost. So what about non-canonical books?

[9:17] What about the Apocrypha, and what about the Gospel of Thomas, or the Apocalypse of Peter, or the Book of Judas, or these other books that you may have heard about? I know for me, I go on TikTok and I go on YouTube, and every so often, I'll see a content creator who's posting these, did you know there's secrets that are, there's books that are just not in scripture, and they're lying to you and hiding things from you?

Well, no, they have been reviewed by the early church leaders. The early church leaders, they found inconsistencies as well as the facts that these books were written in the second and third century, far beyond the scope of the New Testament writings.

Many non-canonical books, they talk about things that are contrary to scripture. For example, in the Apocalypse of Peter, there is the idea of suffering in heaven.

Well, that's something that is contrary to scripture. There's also something in one book that teaches about self-baptism, that you yourself can baptize yourself, which is something that is pretty wild if you go on into that.

We're not gonna go into all of the intricacies, but just giving you some ideas. The use of magic to cast out demons was another one that's been used. Secret knowledge and Gnosticism is a very big one that there is this secret knowledge that you must learn in order to get closer with God and things are being hidden.

[10:49] Well, the secrets of scripture have been revealed in the New Testament, and the secret of the Old Testament is the coming of Jesus Christ and salvation being available to all.

There's no secret, there are things that we can discover, but when we're talking about Gnosticism and secret knowledge, it's this kind of this holding close to this knowledge and nobody should know it, or only certain people should know it, which is something that we are against.

There's also praying for the dead. There's also giving to the poor as means of salvation. There is even in the Gospel of Judas, which was also written between the second and third century, which is making Judas the hero.

That's wild. What's going on there? So it's, again, it's inconsistent with the canon, with the 66 books of scripture. And because they're written so far beyond the Pauline letters, the Gospel accounts, it's something that is just found to not align with the bulk, with the canon of scripture.

And one thing to keep in mind, if you are raised with the apocrypha, or you're raised reading or studying these other books of the Bible, one caution I must give to you is that you must reconcile with what those books have to say, along with the rest of scripture.

[12:20] And what happens is you either end up ignoring it, or you blatantly disregard certain parts of scripture. And so that creates a very big issue.

For example, there's some people that believe in praying to the dead, and they believe that there can be communication between the dead, which we find that that's not consistent with scripture. But if you elevate that, that actually will change your faith, your theology when it comes to scripture. And so all that to say, we're blessed to have our scripture that stood the test of time.

I'd like to put, we're just gonna go through a bunch of verses, 2 Timothy chapter three, verse 16. This is in your notes. And it says that all scripture is breathed out by God, which means it is divinely inspired by God.

It is profitable for teaching. The word of God is being used to be preached, to be taught to people, right? Reprove the idea of conviction, the idea of correction, right?

[13:20] Oh, we don't like that. We don't like being corrected, right? But it's part of the molding process that God does with us. That the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work.

Revelation 22, verse 18 through 19. This is talking about the prophecy of the book. If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

And if anyone takes away from the words of this book, God will take away his share of the tree of life. There's some pretty big warnings in there. In Deuteronomy chapter four, verse two, I know I'm going quick here, so just bear with me.

You shall not add to the word that I command to you, nor take from it. And then in Proverbs chapter 30, verse five through six, every word of God proves true, which speaks to the consistency of scripture, right?

That the word of God is true, that the word of God is pure, it is consistent within itself. Let's go to question two. Does God allow some people to go through punishment?

[14:24] And this is a very interesting question because I want to make the distinction that there is a difference between punishment and discipline. Punishment is referring to the consequence of rejecting Christ, right?

Believe in the Lord and be saved. Well, if you don't, there is a punishment that comes from that. Discipline, on the other hand, is more of the molding, right?

It is the process in which God is working in and through you to be more like him. So there's a difference and a distinction between discipline and punishment.

So I'd like to speak to discipline and we'll go into punishment a little bit further along. In 2 Timothy chapter three, verse 16, as I've mentioned before, all scripture is breathed out by God.

That reproof is the conviction of the Lord. So we think of the word of God convicting us to act, to change, to be sanctified, right? To be molded and to be more like Christ.

[15:29] And we can see that in scripture, it says that the word of God is living and active, that God will train us and prepare us to be more like him.

And this process, it does require the believer to become more disciplined. And sometimes God corrects us. It's a means, it guides us to be more like him.

Another verse that I'd like to share with you is from Isaiah chapter 64, verse eight. But now, oh Lord, you are our Father and what? We are the what?

The clay, right? When you're thinking of a potter, being literally molded, right? Being the potter is working in as, you know, it's spinning around and you're seeing, it's turning and taking shape and form.

How many of you have worked with clay before? It's pretty cool, right? It's pretty amazing how that molding process, so to speak, happens. And so in second Peter chapter two, verse nine, that's a couple of verses ahead, the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

[16:40] And then in Revelation chapter three, verse 19, those whom I love, this is a difficult one, those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. So be zealous and repent.

Okay, question three, did God say that He would not allow Israel to be attacked by its enemies ever again? Very good question. If you go to Isaiah chapter 60, that whole bulk of it is talking about the future of Israel.

But a verse that I want to specifically point out is from Isaiah chapter 60, verse 18, violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders.

You shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise. So this is specific because look, Isaiah chapter six, it's a prophecy of what is to come in the future.

The prophecy is talking about when God will finally establish peace. This is a time where there will be no conflict for Israel. So the answer is yes, it's just further along.

[17:48] And look, I understand that this is very difficult for us, especially when we hear about the conflict in the Middle East, right, with Israel and Hamas happening.

It makes you wonder, well, why is there conflict that's happening? Well, the reality is it makes us not only turn to the word of God, but understand that God will see to it that he will fulfill his promise.

It's the timing that we have to consider. In Ezekiel chapter 37, verse 26 through 28, this is basically God making a covenant of peace with them, the everlasting covenant, right?

Set them in their land and multiply them, right? So this is where in the very beginning, we see that covenant. So we know that in the future, there will be a time where Israel will see peace.

Let's go to that next question, question four. The Bible said, when Jesus returns, the dead in Christ will rise first. Don't the dead go up before heaven then?

[18:51] This is a very, very interesting one. Let's go to that next one. First Thessalonians chapter four, verse 16 through 17. Let's read this. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

What does it say then? And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So we will always be with the Lord.

And then in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 52, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed. So the thing that's interesting about this is when you're reading this on the surface, it almost appears like when you die, you just stay in the ground. And that's not accurate, because what happens here, I want you to think of this idea of already, but not yet.

You see, we have a physical body, amen, right? We have a physical body and we have a soul, amen, right? When we make a decision for Christ, it means that you will only die a physical death, but it is your soul that will go to heaven.

[20:04] It will be present with the Lord. Consider 2 Corinthians chapter five, verse eight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

So there's a distinction here between the physical body and the spirit or the soul. So our soul will be with Christ, right? That is the already with the Lord, and then there's the not yet, because our physical body is either going to be cremated or it's going to be in the ground.

It's very kind of sad when we think about it, like our body's just being left behind. But our physical bodies will be resurrected at Christ's second coming, which is what the first Thessalonians passage is mentioning.

This is where you see that the dead in Christ will rise first. We're talking about restoration of the physical body, because you see also, I don't have this in the notes, but if you want to write this down, in Revelation chapter 21 and 22, we're talking about the new heavens and the new earth, right?

That there will come a time where our physical bodies will be restored. It'll be nice to have a new body, right? When we're thinking of all of the physical issues or the mental issues or whatever issues that we have with this body, getting a new body would be wonderful.

[21:21] And to be able to live in the new heavens and the new earth, it is what the Garden of Eden was supposed to be, right? Before sin had entered the world, it is the completion of the timeline, right?

Of Scripture, the Garden of Eden where there was no death, there was no sin, but then it entered the world, right? So not only was there physical death that could happen once sin entered the world, there was also spiritual death.

So God allows had Christ come to earth, right? The whole gospel account, believe in the Lord and be saved. Your soul will be taken care of, it will be saved.

Your physical body, that's gonna take some time for the end. And these are future events that we find in Scripture, the new heavens, the new earth, the new body.

And in Philippians chapter one, verse 21, right? Many of you know this, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.

[22:27] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, right? For that is far better.

And you'll see in your notes, there's second Corinthians, chapter five, verses one through eight, which kind of go on further and speak to that as well. Question number five that comes up.

And I realized that in asking this question, this is a very difficult question that comes up. It's a very sensitive topic. I wanna go to that first verse here.

It's from Romans chapter eight, verse 38 through 39. I am sure that neither what? Death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to what?

Separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let's go to that next one, John 3.16, right? For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes, right?

[23:37] In him should not what? Should not perish but have eternal life. And we can answer this question. This is part of the fundamental of our faith. Believe in the Lord and be saved.

You will not perish, period. We know that in scripture, it doesn't matter what your background is. It doesn't matter what you have gone through.

It doesn't matter what you are going through. Believe and be saved. To live here on the earth when I was talking about the Garden of Eden and sin entering the world, right?

There was physical death. There was imperfection that happened, right? And what's so interesting about the Garden of Eden is we see a decline in the human condition.

New diseases, new issues that happen with the earth because I know unfortunately culture teaches that the world is getting better. It may get better technologically but is it really getting better?

[24:39] Do things in the earth seem to be more complicated or more simple? What do you think? I seem to think it's more complicated as times going on which goes to show the fact that when we're thinking of the Garden of Eden, there will be the decline but there will also be the restoration that happens.

And so to live here on earth, it is to be in the human condition where we are imperfect people who hear is perfect, right? Didn't Christ say, let he who is without sin cast the first stone, right?

And nobody did, right? Because we aren't perfect here. We are imperfect people in an imperfect world, right? We're not perfect people in a perfect world.

If that was the case, we wouldn't need Christ but the reality is we do need Christ. And because sin entered the world, there's separation from God. And many of us in this imperfect world as imperfect people, we have physical complications.

Some of us have mental complications. Some of us have emotional complications, right? It could be disease. It could be all sorts of things. And especially as you get older, my dad used to jokingly tell me, I mean, he's much older than I am.

[25:54] He'll tell me the older you get, the more you start falling, the more you fall apart. And I didn't really like that hearing that as a kid but it's the reality though, right? That as time goes on, things just won't work as well.

Even if you had a beautiful body or a beautiful mind, we still live in an imperfect world. Look, I'm here to tell you, you're not perfect and neither am I. That's just the reality here.

But as we are imperfect, that goes to show our need for Christ. That goes to show our need for that which is perfect. So even when it comes to the question of suicide, we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

In fact, unfortunately, this did not end up on your notes. I don't know why. John chapter 10 verse 28, we'll put it up here. What did Christ say? I give them eternal life and they will never perish, amen?

And no one will what? Snatch them out of my hand. And I want you to understand, again, I know this is an extremely sensitive topic because the hope, the truth of scripture is that no one can snatch us from Christ.

[27:12] That is why it is so important for us. No matter what you are struggling with, no matter what sin you have, no matter what imperfection you have, come to know the Lord.

And even in our darkest moments, look, when we believe in the Lord, does that make our life perfect? Are we still going to sin? Are we still going to be imperfect? Well, the answer is yes.

If you don't know that, you should know that now, but there's security and salvation. That's so powerful because even in our darkest moments, we are still secure in the salvation that comes from believing in the Lord.

And if you are depressed, if you have suicidal thoughts, speak to one of us at church. And if that doesn't help, seek a professional by all means.

Because God has equipped doctors and specialists to work with you with these diseases. And by all means, us as Christians, certainly, let's not forget the power of prayer, praying for those who have those thoughts.

[28:17] For some people, it may be a struggle their entire life. For others, maybe not so much. In Psalm 34, verse 18, it says, Lord is near

to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in the spirit.

That's a very hopeful verse. And in Matthew 11, chapter 28, verse 30, very famous verse, come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you what?

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly and heart and you will find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy in the burden and my burden is light.

Question six that comes up. Excuse me. If God is loving, why doesn't he save people who don't know him?

And this is the classic question that gets asked all the time. You have people who are not Christian, those who do not believe, who do not know the Lord and even Christians ask this question.

[29:22] You see, God, his love, it extends to everyone. When we're talking about salvation, the availability is for everyone. It is not an elitist group.

It's not a country club. Salvation is not available for only the rich, right? Or only the tall, right? I've mentioned this before. It is available for everyone who believes.

So God calls us and we should respond to his call. God gives us the freedom and the free will to say yes or to say no.

It is important for us to know that God desires for all of us to be saved by grace. And what needs to happen is that we, all of us need to hear the word of God and respond, learn the truth of scripture. When we see diseases and we see a lot of issues that people have here on the earth, and a lot of us want justice, a lot of us want peace on earth.

[30:27] A lot of us want healing and restoration. And they ask the question, why doesn't God intervene? When if God were to force someone to believe, is that love?

I want you to think for a moment. Now, I love my wife, right? She is a wonderful wife. Can I force her to love me? And even if I could force her to love me, is that really love on my part?

Am I exhibiting love to her if I'm forcing her to love me? The same applies with God. God gives us this choice. And we must remember it is our responsibility for us as Christians to proclaim the gospel, the good news to the world.

That's why the Great Commission exists. That's why it's so important for us to do that. In 2 Peter, the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that what?

That any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. In 1 Timothy chapter two, verse four, that God who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

[31:53] Ezekiel 18:23 says, this is God talking here. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declare the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

What a great question, right? He's asking, do I have any pleasure of the wicked perishing of those who don't believe to perish?

Because God's giving us again, the ability to choose him or to not choose him. And then finally in 1 Timothy chapter four, verse 10, for to this end, we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the what?

The living God who is the savior of all people, especially those who believe. I want you to keep those verses in mind. And finally, question seven, why did God favor David?

Interesting question, right? Well, what's so interesting about David is that he was a sinner, right? He wasn't a perfect guy, much like, you'll find in a lot of scripture, right?

[33:03] Matthew the tax collector, right? You find a lot of the main characters, the stories in scripture speak of people who are imperfect.

And David reminds us of a man who was a sinner, much like how we are sinners. He, David was a man who was after God's own heart.

David had demonstrated a deep faith, a repentance for his sins, and a willingness to follow God, follow where God would lead. So in Acts chapter 13, verse 22, and when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king of whom he had testified and said, I have found in David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart who will do some of my will.

He'll do all of my will, right? First Samuel, but now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his

people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

When we think of David, right? It's a reminder of us that we are sinners. We repent of our sins. We go on this path with Christ to allow for God to work in and through us in our lives.

[34:28] And what transformation that can happen in our lives? When you make a decision for Christ, it is the beginning. It is not the end. When you believe in the Lord and when you're saved, be on a journey to be more Christ-like and do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

David's life shows us God's grace. When we fall, we have God who is always there with us.

God is always available for us. And that's so important for us. God is ready to forgive and to restore us. How many of us screwed? I mean, you don't have to raise your hand.

How many of us have screwed up before, right? We have a God who will forgive us and restore us. And that David, Solomon, the disciples, it goes to show imperfect people.

Because think of it like this. God takes imperfect people and uses these people for great things.

Allow for God to work in your life.

[35:38] And you'll see some wonderful things that can happen through the working of the Holy Spirit by God directing you in your life and the word of Christ dwelling richly in you.

And so that is our seven questions that we have today out at I Do On Time, right? At 11, right? So that was pretty good. So I know there's a lot of verses, but my friends, check it out.

In your notes, you'll have all of the verses for you to open scripture and for you to read. Look at the context, look at the connections and know that there is consistency in scripture.

That helps us understand the power of the word of God. That helps us come to know who the Lord is, but also helps us grow in our faith.

And so with that, let's pray together. And Heavenly Father, as we conclude our time together today, we thank you for the light, for the truth that comes from your word.

[36:44] For this light has, it helps us discover who you are, come to know who you are and grow in faith. Through the reading and studying of your scripture, through the preaching and teaching, we ask that you guide us in our lives.

May our faith be strengthened as well as our understanding of your unchanging love and grace.

May we come to know you. May we know who you are and believe in you.

May we grow in faith by being convicted and moved to live like you. You are perfect and we're certainly imperfect and we need you.

May we reflect this truth. May we exhibit this truth and show this truth in our everyday interactions with people and the things that we say and the things that we do.

May we recognize that there is simplicity in you, that we just have to believe in you. May we be encouraged to be baptized as a public proclamation.

[37:52] May we do good works, do good service to this church, this church body and to the community, to our neighbor, doing good in your holy name.

May we bring glory to your name. We ask that your Holy Spirit will work with us and that it will transform our hearts and renew our spirit, that it will transform our minds and it will lead us on a path of knowing you and lead us in a path of living out this faith and being curious about knowing more about you.

Certainly we realize we may not know everything about you but may we still have that curiosity nonetheless. It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together amen.

Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast. For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org.

May God's blessings be with you.