

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 26

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Pastor Paul: We are back with some more Bible questions and answers. What do we have today?

Sue: Our first question is from Shelli. And she says, *“We belong to a church for many years that suggested we should not take communion until after being baptized. We now belong to a new church that does not dictate who should partake of communion. We have children who are not baptized, and I would like to know what your opinion is on what the Bible says. I do not see clear instructions on this from what I read.”*

Pastor Paul: That's because the only instructions we have related to communion are to take communion with the body in mind and to do it in remembrance of the Lord's sacrifice on the cross. That's it. Those are the instructions that were given. So everything that has come after that point, like in order to take communion, you must da-da-da-da-da, and all the other rules that churches have created over the years, those are man-made. And some of them may have been created for legitimate reasons that you have to look into. When a church says, we want to make sure you've been baptized first, they're kind of saying, we just want to make sure you're saved. I get that.

Sue: In different cultures, that might mean completely different things.

Pastor Paul: For sure.

Sue: There could be more legitimacy in certain cultures, certain time periods in history and in others.

Pastor Paul: Unfortunately, it's still not biblical. It's not something that the Bible requires. So I don't have opinions outside of what the Bible says. I believe that we're free to take communion whenever and wherever we want. And people can do it on their own or they can do it in church or they can do it at home.

Sue: And whenever you have served communion, either within the church or another way, you have always just exhorted people. You're welcome at the table as long as you are putting your faith in Jesus Christ and you're saved.

Pastor Paul: Exactly.

Sue: All right. Erin asks the question, *“My father has recently passed away at the young age of 66. My heart aches terribly and I miss him so much. My family has urged me to talk to him... tell him I miss him, ask him what he is doing, tell him about my day etc. The Bible explicitly says not to have contact or talk to the dead. I haven't seen it mentioned as to why we can't do this. What are your thoughts on saying hello to a deceased relative? Is this the “contact” we are to stay away from or is it referring to the evil practice of a seance?”*

Pastor Paul: I can certainly understand why someone's family would make those recommendations or to say, you should talk to your dad sort of a thing. They want Erin to be comforted, and that's understandable. The Bible does forbid us to speak to departed loved ones. And she mentions in here, in fact, she kind of answers her own question when she says, the Bible explicitly says not have contact or talk to the dead. She's right. So that's what you should go with always. But then she kind of goes on to say, I'm not really sure why we're not supposed to do this. The reason is there's an invitation that happens when we begin to try to consult the dead or speak to the dead in any way for the enemy to gain a foothold by whatever schemes he decides to bring into the situation and that's dangerous. We got to be careful. We're

told not to do it. And frankly, we should not do it even if God didn't explain the dangers. It's enough that God just says, don't do this. Don't do this. So we should say, okay, fine. I don't really understand. I understand that Erin misses her dad and she can pray to the Lord about her dad. There's nothing forbidding that. Lord, my dad's with you. Give him a hug for me, please. Tell her I'll see him soon or something like that. You're talking to the Lord. We are to direct our communication to God.

Sue: Grief is a very difficult thing. It doesn't pass very quickly. And we can ask the Lord, how do I manage this grief? Show me how to manage.

Pastor Paul: Absolutely.

Sue: Tim says, *“I've enjoyed your ministry for 2 years online. Something that confuses me is why the devil gets to come back after a 1000 years for another battle. It just seems after the first battle during the tribulation, God would want to be done with him.”*

Pastor Paul: I know because we all want to be done with him. I think the confusion that Tim is expressing here is really no different than the confusion that is expressed by people when they want to know why God allows Satan to do anything. Because it kind of starts with, and I've got all these questions. Why didn't God just destroy Satan when he rebelled and be done with it? And then he's done, he's gone, he's out of the picture, or why did God allow Satan into the Garden of Eden? It was such a nice place before Satan came in and ruined it all. Why does God allow Satan to tempt us and lead us astray? So why, why, why? We want to know why. And then Tim's projection here is just really along those same lines, but he's talking about the future now. So what he's referring to is that after the Millennial Kingdom, which is the 1,000-year period during which Satan is bound in the abyss and during which Jesus is ruling and reigning on the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, at the

conclusion of that time, the Bible tells us Satan will be released from his prison to go out and deceive the nations one last time. And the reason that is necessary is because there will be people born during the Millennial Kingdom who will have never really truly had their freedom to choose tested. And our freedom to choose must be tested. That's why God didn't destroy Satan at the very beginning when he rebelled. That's why God allowed Satan in the garden. Our freedom to choose does not become active until we are given a choice to either follow God or not. And there will be people, mortals, during the Millennial Kingdom who will be born who will need to experience that choice to either follow God or not. Because again, the freedom that God has given us, the free will that he's given us, is not truly a genuine gift from God until it has been tested. And there you go.

Sue: Very good. I love that. All right. Sharon says, ***“Hello Pastor Paul and Sue! I'm wondering about how the Israelites viewed the Day of Atonement, since the rituals are symbolic of the actual saving work of Jesus. Did the Israelites look at the rituals as if they are actually going to cover and take away sins, or did they see it as a symbolic act of something that was to come?”***

Pastor Paul: I'm assuming here that Sharon is asking about how the Jews perceived the rituals of the Day of Atonement back in Old Testament times, because she uses past tense language here. And the reason I want to differentiate that is because there are many Jews that still observe the Day of Atonement today. Of course, it doesn't bear any resemblance to the biblical Day of Atonement, but they still call it the Day of Atonement. So in answer to her question, how did they perceive it? I imagine that the Jews probably perceived it in all the different shades of understanding that people have today. Some understood the symbolism. Some didn't. Some did it just out of formalism of ritualistic obligation. Some did it truly feeling passionately, the essence of what it meant. But I need to be clear about something because I think there's some

misunderstanding related to the Day of Atonement as it was played out in the Old Testament. When the people during that time came to God for forgiveness, whether they did it on the Day of Atonement or whether they did it on another Day the Year, we need to understand they were forgiven and their sins were atoned for. They were covered. That's what atonement means. Their sins were covered and we need to understand that. It's not like God didn't forgive the people in the Old Testament and they couldn't be forgiven until Jesus came. What happened when Jesus came is He paid the penalty. The only thing that got deferred was the penalty. The forgiveness was given and it was given in a futuristic like, the payment is coming, don't worry about it, but I'll forgive you now. It's kind of like getting extending credit. God extended the credit of forgiveness knowing that the payment would be paid in the future. So the Day of Atonement was very real in terms of what it offered the people, which was the covering of their sin, both nationally and individually. That's an important understanding. And I believe that there were people back in the Old Testament times that understood that, that we are being forgiven, but we know that these animals that are dying and the blood is being sprinkled, they can't take away. That's not the punishment. In other words, we don't sin and animals get punished. And that's something that Paul reiterates in the New Testament. The blood of bulls and goats can't take away sin.

Hebrews 10:4 (ESV)

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

In other words, they can't pay. Animals can't pay for man's sin. Only a man can pay for man's sin, which is why God had to become a man so that he might pay the price of the sin that we committed.

Sue: Very good.

Pastor Paul: Good.

Sue: Alex says, *“God bless you and all that you do, it is truly appreciated. I’m recently baptized (full immersion) and have taken to wholeheartedly studying the gospel within the last year. As a former Roman Catholic, I was hoping you could explain to me why the belief of confessing your sins to an ordained priest is a false practice, in that it is not supported by the gospel. Roman Catholics often cite John 20:23 and James 5:16, how should these chapters and verses be accurately interpreted and understood?”*

Pastor Paul: They should be accurately interpreted for what they say and not what they don't say. You'll notice in both of those passages, there's nothing mentioned about a priest who is giving or extending forgiveness. We have the freedom to tell people that they are forgiven, but that's something all of us have. When somebody comes and they repent of their sin and they say, I'm turning to Jesus and I believe that He died on the cross for my sin, I have the freedom, you have the freedom, everybody has the freedom to tell that person, you are forgiven. But it's based on the fact that this was laid out in the Bible and that we understand that we're not extending forgiveness. It's something God has promised to all those who come to Him by faith. We're told that. There's nothing, not one single word in the Bible about a priest or any sort of person in leadership extending forgiveness. And that's what the priests do. They extend forgiveness. And that's simply not a biblical practice. So she says, how do I understand those biblical passages? Again, you understand them for what they say and not what they don't say. You can't take a passage that simply mentions forgiveness and say, see, there you go. That proves that I need to go to the priest to be forgiven.

Sue: Or a passage that says confess your sins to one another.

Pastor Paul: Confess your sins to one another. That's just everybody in the body of Christ. There's no mention of a priest. There's no mention of a person in leadership. It's just believer to believer.

Sue: All right. Our next question is from Yonara. She says, *“Hola! I hope you are doing well. A friend in Christ is currently selling anointing oils, and it got me to wondering if this is something I can or should incorporate into my own prayer life. From what I understand, anointing oils were used in the Old Testament, and I imagine the oil itself isn't the source of any power, but rather a symbolic tool used in the act of prayer and consecration. That said, I'd love to hear your thoughts and guidance on this topic, especially from a biblical perspective.”*

Pastor Paul: Anointing oil was used both in the Old and the New Testament even. We have references where Jesus was anointed before his burial. And then even after he died, they anointed the body with various oils and balms and that sort of thing. So it's a very, very common sort of a practice. It became a symbolic picture, particularly in the Old Testament or I should say of the work of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit anoints for service. So when someone was called into service or acknowledged by others that they were being called, such as David, they were anointed. They had oil literally poured over their head, which was a picture, a symbolic picture to others that this person has been anointed by God. So that's the idea. In the New Testament, James says, is any one of you sick? Let him call for the elders who will anoint him with oil. So anointing was used in the early church, even as we do today when people are prayed for because of sicknesses or issues. Again, it is a picture. It is a symbolic picture. There is nothing efficacious about the oil itself. We have to be very careful to recognize that. So I think we do need to be mindful that it's not the oil. It's the picture that the oil presents that becomes meaningful or should become meaningful. But we are turning to God. I mean, if oil in and of itself

was powerful to make a change in someone's life or to affect their life, we'd go around anointing people without their permission. We would anoint them in their sleep and say, there you go. Now you've been anointed. But the oil is just a picture.

Sue: When I read this, of course, not knowing the situation, I would hope that this friend who is just selling anointing oil is just selling anointing oil. But knowing human beings, I kind of worry a little bit. It's like, are you selling different kinds of oils for different kinds of...

Pastor Paul: Maladies or issues?

Sue: Like, we buy a whole collection of essential oils today, and anything can go too far. Anything can be taken too far. And that's the thing I would add to this person. It's like, you know what, you can just use a good olive oil and call it anointing. That's what you and I do. And it doesn't have to be anything special or be packaged from somewhere or carry a certain scent.

Pastor Paul: Exactly. This was anointing oil from Jerusalem, as if it's going to be more beneficial.

Sue: All right. Our final question is from Callie, *“Are Christian fiction authors considered teachers as mentioned in James 3.1? I've been working on a secular book for years and in the last few months have been feeling a strong nudge to make it Christian to glorify God. But now after reading James 3.1, I'm a little nervous to proceed. I need to know if I am stepping into a role of teaching by writing a Christian fiction. I appreciate the breakdown of your biblical insight.”*

Pastor Paul: I wouldn't consider a fiction author to be a teacher. That being said, I think that there's a responsibility. If a Christian author wants to convey Christian principles, they have to recognize that they're now in a position of influence, and they can influence people for good or for bad or for truth or for falsehood. So I think

that there is a responsibility. It may not be the same responsibility James talks about related to a teacher who is held under to a higher standard because they are getting up and saying, here's what the Word of God says. A Christian fiction author really isn't doing that per se, but again, they do have the ability to influence people. So I would encourage them, whoever they may be, Callie included, to submit her manuscript to a group of mature believers who are well-versed in the scriptures and simply to ask them, would you please read through this and make sure there's nothing here that contradicts or violates anything in the Bible? Because I just don't want to influence people wrongly, just because she's not a teacher, it doesn't mean that she doesn't have the ability to influence people.

Sue: And presumably she's spending her time writing to get a lot of people to read it that makes a big influence.

Pastor Paul: Absolutely. And it could be read by someone who's maybe a brand new believer or not even a believer at all. And you want to make sure that what you're saying aligns with the Word of God, even if it's fiction.

Sue: And that stretches out to a lot of our situations when we just start thinking about what is our influence and how cautious we should be about what we say on social media.

Pastor Paul: What we say at work.

Sue: What we say at work, our conversation with our family. We all have a circle of influence.

Pastor Paul: Yes, we do. And we do have to be careful in it. Exactly right. So those are our questions. So that's all we have for this time. We'll see you next time. Bye-bye.