

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul – Episode 9

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Life Bible Ministry

Pastor Paul: We are back with yet another group of questions that you've sent in. Time for some more Bible questions and answers. I'm Pastor Paul here with my wife, Sue, and we've got some good ones this time.

Sue: And I see that the first three questions are grouped such that they have some commonalities. There's questions regarding either the supernatural or the prophetic or catch phrases that gain traction in certain groups. And I've noticed that we have a lot of viewers from other countries and this one comes from a gal in Africa. Her name is Rhoda and she says, *“I'm confused and heartbroken about the teaching that's becoming popular in my continent that emphasizes ‘the supernatural’. It's often characterized by words like ‘realm of the spirit’ warring in the spirit and ‘prophetic words’ usually around the theme of faith. In my opinion, it presents Christianity and the whole concept of faith feels performative. They call it the rhema word. Is this whole concept biblical?”*

Pastor Paul: That's the thing that's so difficult about these things. They have their roots in biblical concepts and biblical ideas, but the problem is that they just go beyond, they take things beyond, and they become fixated and focused on particular elements of the supernatural, of the prophetic, and so forth to the point where it really, truly does get out of balance.

Sue: Well, it gets the spotlight. It takes center stage.

Pastor Paul: It does. It totally takes center stage. So she mentions, the rhema word, which simply means the spoken or prophetic word. And this has been around for

a long time. I mean, I remember dealing with this back in the 1980s when you and I were just kind of getting started walking with the Lord. So these things kind of get recycled and re-energized and become popularized. And I have learned that in the continent of Africa particularly, they have gained a lot of traction. She's right. It does center around the theme of faith. But they come up with all of these catch words and phrases and things that become these super emphasized focus points. And it takes away from the beauty and the magnificence of understanding the simplicity of the gospel message. I don't think people grow in their faith, frankly. They come up with a different definition of what faith is, as a matter of fact. And it all becomes very challenging. So I understand Rhoda and I understand her heartbroken condition over this thing, it's too bad. When people get involved in these movements, they don't grow in their understanding of God's Word. They might focus on a specific understanding, but they don't get a whole Bible view. And so it becomes very tainted and very twisted. Disproportionate is maybe a good word. So it's one of the reasons why we have tried to stay the course teaching the whole Bible and do it from Genesis to Revelation. And sometimes people would come up to me and say, "Pastor Paul, you don't talk enough about the prophetic." And I'd say, I talk about it as much as God does, as much as it appears in the Bible. That's how much we talk about it. So for Rhoda's sake, I would just encourage her to pray for those Christians that are being swept away with these winds of doctrine and just she herself just stay on the path. And eventually these things begin to burn out. And people sometimes get to the point where they really yearn for just the Word of God, the pure Word of God. And I would encourage Rhoda to be ready for when that happens and she can just pull people in kind of out of that mire of craziness and doctrinal weirdness.

Sue: Here's another one from Giovanni who says, *“I have a question about reading books that are supposed prophecies from the Lord. Should I read these with skepticism or accept it as a word from the Lord?”*

Pastor Paul: I think the really popular one, way back when you and I were just starting off was “God Talking.” Was that what it was called?

Sue: And then more recently, it's not even recent, but decades ago was “Jesus Calling.”

Pastor Paul: Oh, it was calling, not talking. God calling. It started off, I think, with God calling and you're right, it went to Jesus calling. You're right, these books tend to speak directly to the reader a message from the Lord in the first person. I'm going to do this and that. And they're not from the Bible. They may borrow concepts from the Bible, but it is not a direct word from the Lord. It is not a prophetic word. So I think they're dangerous and I think Christians should stay away from them. If you want to hear from the Lord yourself, read the Bible. He's got all kinds of messages in there for you.

Sue: Well then here's the third one that this person says, *“Dear Pastor, I trust you are well. What are these “courts of heaven” teachings all about from some pastors or teachers? Is anything biblical about this teaching because I read my Bible but I haven't come close to it or something similar to it.”*

Pastor Paul: You know what, I've taught through the Bible 3 full times and I don't know what that's all about. It depends on how they're using it. I haven't heard the exact teachings “courts of heaven.” I don't know, I haven't heard it for myself. All I would say is just stick with the Word of God. Just stick with going through the Scriptures chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and you're going to be safe and you're going to be balanced.

Sue: I think also, if something mystifies you to the point that you actually type a question into us, that's a signal right there that you're already unsettled about something, and maybe you should stick with what you are settled about.

Pastor Paul: That's a really good point. I think people don't even notice sometimes why they're asking the question. They're asking it because that unsettledness could very well be the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart saying 'red alert.' This is not good.

Sue: Like no one has ever written you the question, I'm just not sure the book of Matthew should be in the Bible.

Pastor Paul: That's true. They never have.

Sue: There are so many things about the Word of God that do not unsettle you. So there's so much to stick with.

Pastor Paul: Absolutely.

Sue: Next question is from Fortino who says, *"John 3:16 states that believers shall not perish but have eternal life. I believe that wholeheartedly and I know we can't be saved by works. What about believers who believe but don't study the Word? Are they still saved? I ask because I know my parents pray and they are believers and a lot of my friends are but they don't study the Word."*

Pastor Paul: Let me let me ask answer the question directly. You can be born again, saved, trusting in the Lord and not studying the Word. You're not going to grow as a Christian. And what that usually just means is this individual has just never really developed an appetite for the Word of God. And they may be an environment where they're told that they really don't need to read the Bible that you just come to church and we'll tell you what you need to know sort of a thing. Reading the Bible,

consuming the Word of God, is something that grows in us the more we do it. But can someone be a born again Christian and not study the Word of God? Absolutely. Absolutely. Listen, we're saved by trusting that what Jesus did on the cross was enough and that's it. I understand what Fortino is asking, he's basically saying, when somebody's saved, shouldn't they have a hunger for the Word of God? Shouldn't that hunger be there? Well listen, there's lots of things we can do in this life to tamp down what would otherwise be a work of the spirit in our lives. We can resist, even as believers, the Holy Spirit and the impulses of the Holy Spirit such as a hunger and a desire for the Word of God. I know some people get saved and they just naturally just start devouring the Bible. Well, that's not everybody's story. So, yes, people can be saved and not studying the Word, but usually all it takes is to get started studying and they start loving it.

Sue: You know what I see in that question?

Pastor Paul: What?

Sue: Is someone who loves to study the Bible and just like, why doesn't everyone do this?

Pastor Paul: I can't understand why you're not doing it. So I would encourage Fortino to grab his parents or family members and just say, let's do this together. Let's read through a chapter of the Bible. We'll talk about what the Word says and then we'll pray about it. It's really simple. You don't even have to be a teacher. I think a lot of people don't do something like that because they're intimidated. They think, I can't teach like this person can. But you can read through a chapter and just talk about it and then pray about it. So I would encourage this person to do that with their family members and develop that appetite for the Word.

Pastor Paul: Okay. Aariah says, *“Jesus says in Luke 17, ‘The Kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you.’ Does this mean that Jesus won’t return physically to rule and reign in a real millennial Kingdom? How can I understand this Bible verse?”*

Pastor Paul: You understand this Bible verse in the context in which it was given. And this is Jesus speaking primarily to the Jews because there were all kinds of ideas that the Jews had about how the Messiah was going to come, how he was going to establish the Kingdom of God and how it was going to play out once he did. And they of course missed the idea of the Messiah coming and suffering. Even though God had prophesied that several times in the Old Testament, they just kind of miss. So they kind of hung on to the elements of coming of Messiah that they really liked or that were sensational or exciting. So Jesus is speaking and he's saying, look, it doesn't all come about in the way that you expect. And it's not something you can kind of point to and go over there or this or whatever. So this is not speaking at all about his rule or reign in the Millennial Kingdom. We're given very specific information about the coming of Jesus, about the establishing of the millennial reign and things like that. So this is more Jesus speaking to the Jews who were kind of set in their ways concerning how the Kingdom of God is going to develop and operate and play out?

Sue: Okay. Well we have a question that came from our Episode 1 Q&A. And Lilian asked, *“Pastor Paul, Genesis 9:4 says ‘But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is its blood.’ How does this apply to consuming rare or medium rare steak?”*

Pastor Paul: It really doesn't. Because two things: number one, we are not under the law that God gave to Israel through Moses. The Church is not under the law from the standpoint of many of those prohibitions. Secondly, God was teaching the people

of Israel the importance of blood and he told them several times, don't do this, don't do that with the blood. It is reserved for the sacrifice. It was for the pouring out on the altar for the sins of the people. And God wanted the people of Israel to learn to respect the blood and to honor the blood and so forth. And because of course, all of this was going to ultimately play out in the person of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood for the sins of the world. So God gave them prohibitions in the infancy of their understanding. And that's the way we kind of look at it. It really doesn't have anything to do with eating rare meat or that sort of thing. It was a prohibition against using and abusing the blood. And, in Pagan rituals, they didn't always bleed the animal before they consumed. I mean, God even gave them directions for the Israelites dig a hole and bleed the animal properly before you take the meat and eat it and prepare it and that sort of thing. So it was really directed to the nation of Israel primarily.

Sue: So one can eat their steak however they prefer. On our part, we're no pink people. I think I would be afraid to order steak at a real steakhouse restaurant because as soon as we said no pink, they would show us the door.

Pastor Paul: We've got some family members who like it rare and I kind of cringe, to be honest with you. So I'm not a person that likes my rare meat.

Sue: Here's our last question from Andrea, ***“Hi Pastor Paul and Sue, I've been so blessed by your ministry. I'm writing because they came across someone who said cremation is not right for a Christian as it is not biblical. I would like to know whether this matters or not, and if a Christian should only be buried?”***

Pastor Paul: It's interesting that people will say things like you shouldn't be cremated because it's not biblical. What is biblical? Do you know that Bible never sets out to tell us how to take care of our dead? All it does is tells us how different

cultures did it, and primarily the Jews. And we know that they went through a preparation of the body and then usually put those bodies in a tomb. We're also told about the Egyptians who went through this long, arduous process of preparing the body. I think it went on for 30 or 40 days, something like that and they did a good job of preserving bodies, as we know from archaeological digs. When we find mummies, they're fairly well preserved. But there's never a place in the Bible where it sets out to say, do this. It's only given in the midst of a narrative where we're hearing about how these other people did it. So we're left to deal with the, how do I want to put this, the exited body, the corpse of a person who's moved on and the Bible doesn't say. It doesn't say. Here's the point though, even for those people who were buried, when you think about hundreds of years ago, hundreds or even a couple of thousand years ago, there's nothing left of that body.

Sue: Well, I actually looked it up recently, a human bones can decay to the point of just returning to dust anywhere from 10 to 5000 years, depending upon the soil acidity, the depth of a grave, the aridness of the climate. So if you bury a human body in a shallow, moist grave, it can be done in 10 years.

Pastor Paul: Like, gone.

Sue: But then the Egyptians, like you were saying, cool deep, like they could preserve those bones for quite a while. Anyway, your point that you're getting to is that someone in many, many, many, many, many humans over the course of 6000 years, they're completely disintegrated anyway, but yet God knows how to resurrect the body.

Pastor Paul: Yes, he does.

Sue: And that is a great mystery. I think about that sometimes, like how can God do that? He will resurrect our bodies.

Pastor Paul: God even said, you will return to the dust from which you came. So we shouldn't be surprised at the fact that a human body will eventually turn to dust and that's okay. So I personally don't have any problem with cremation. And there have even been Christians over the years who were burned for their faith, burned at the stake, and it's not like God's going to say, bummer, you got burned at the stake and so there's nothing left for Me to resurrect. So I guess you're not going to get a resurrection body. That's ridiculous. God is going to recreate those bodies and we shouldn't worry about it. So when somebody says it's not biblical to be cremated, I would simply turn to them and say, what does the Bible say we should do with our bodies after we've exited them? Because they're not going to be able to answer you.

Sue: It only serves to show how much we depend on tradition.

Pastor Paul: Boy, isn't that true?

Sue: Whatever tradition we are raised in, we naturally think is the proper way, and something else is unbiblical because it's not part of our tradition.

Pastor Paul: Not part of our experience. Absolutely.

Sue: That's a wrap for today.

Pastor Paul: That is a wrap. So some good questions, some very practical sort of questions that we've gotten, and we appreciate everyone that we get from you. If you have a burning question in your heart, you can e-mail us by simply writing the e-mail to questions@lifebibleministry.com. And if you'll be patient, we'll get to it as soon as we can. Thanks so much for joining us for this one, and we'll see you back next week. God bless.