

Bible Q&A with Pastor Paul - June 2023

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Pastor Paul: Hello everybody this is our June version of Bible question and answer. I'm Pastor Paul here with my wife, Sue. And we're here again to answer your questions about the Bible, which are taken both from our YouTube channel comments, as well as emails that come into our office and that sort of thing.

Sue: We have an interesting variety of questions.

Pastor Paul: Good. Shall we get to them?

Sue: All right, let's get started with the first one. This one came from a YouTube comment. YouTube has interesting variations of a name. So, we'll just call it a YouTube comment. This person said, *"I listen to you every day, thank you, since God never changes, and Adam and Eve were vegan? Don't you think that God doesn't like it that we eat animals? We have dominion to take care of them. I'm asking because I just don't know."*

Pastor Paul: Well, you got to remember, Jesus ate fish, and we have no reason to believe He didn't partake of the other things that were common to the Jewish diet, which did include meat, and we also know that in a vision that God gave to Peter, concerning all different animals, He said, get up Peter, kill and eat. Obviously, God wouldn't...and I know that vision wasn't just about eating meat or even unclean animals. It was a picture to Peter of God's embrace of the Gentiles for the gospel. I get that, but God also was not trying to mislead Peter in any way as well.

And so we know that all foods, including unclean animals, have been declared clean, if you will, for the Jewish people in the Bible and we see that it's never something

that God forbade His people from doing, under Jewish law, really the only rules were don't eat an unclean animal and secondly, make sure you drain the blood. There were some other things about the fat when it came to the more religious aspects of the usage of animals, they were to burn the fat on the altar, and so on and so forth. But, no, I wouldn't say...I agree with this person, that it appears very much that God created Adam and Eve, or our first parents to be vegetarian. But somewhere along the line that changed, and God seemed to be just fine with it.

So I don't think there's any reason...I guess what I'm saying is, there's nothing we can point to in the Bible that would say, we ought to be vegan or vegetarian.

Sue: Sounds good. The next question comes from Bridget who asks, *"Is it biblical that we as believers can send the Holy Spirit to hover over people to minister to them?"*

Pastor Paul: This is a very interesting question. I've never actually heard this, said or claimed, that we as believers can send the Holy Spirit to hover over someone. I'm assuming they're taking this from Genesis chapter 1, where the Bible says that the Spirit of the Lord was hovering over the waters, and that maybe in like manner, we as believers can command the Holy Spirit to do that over the lives of people. That sounds like a conclusion somebody would come up with, which people do all the time, they'll take something from the Bible, and they'll use it to jump to another conclusion.

There's nothing in the Bible that says that believers can send the Holy Spirit to hover over people. Now that being said, we pray to the Lord, particularly for unbelievers and that sort of thing, for God to move in their hearts. Now we know that that moving takes place through the Holy Spirit. God sends His Spirit to move upon people's hearts, to soften their hearts, to open their spiritual eyes, and so forth. All that work

is done, if you want to call that hovering, I suppose you can. But that's not really biblical language.

Sue: So if you just take that word aside, you and I even pray that the Lord would grip someone's heart, or we pray that the Holy Spirit would grip their heart and would convict them.

Pastor Paul: All the time. We just don't use the word hover.

Sue: Well, the next question actually has two parts and I'll give you the first part, *"What does the Scripture say about female roles in the church? Is there anything in the Bible that clearly prohibits women from teaching men and women in the church? If we are new creations in Christ doesn't that mean that we are all equal and old laws no longer apply?"*

Pastor Paul: This is a really common mistake when it comes to understanding the roles of men and women in the church. The mistake is that we assume that what the Bible does say, addresses the issue of equality. It does not. The Bible, as far as equality goes, there's nothing in the Bible that would suggest that men are superior, and women are inferior, that they are not equal. In fact, quite the opposite.

So we need to first of all, when we talk about the issue of the role of women in the church, and their ability to teach, and so forth, whether it's teaching just women are teaching women and men, we need to get the issue of equality out of the conversation. This is not an equality issue. This is an order issue. This has to do with the order that God has created for men and women, and that sort of thing, and how it relates to their roles in the church.

So with equality safely out of the conversation, now we answer the question, is there anything in the Bible that speaks to that issue of women teaching men? Yes, Paul specifically says, the apostle Paul, not this Paul (points to self), the apostle Paul

specifically says, I do not allow a woman to teach and to have authority over a man. You see, it all has to do with that last statement, teaching is a role of authority. When somebody steps up to teach and instruct others, they are taking authority over those people, in a very real sense. And so Paul said, I don't allow that, and the reason is, is because it defies the order that God created for men and women in the home, which Paul talks about in Ephesians, chapter 5.

I would encourage this person, and others who are interested, to go through Ephesians chapter 5 and to refresh themselves on the order that God created in the home. Because that order is to be honored, Paul made some guidelines for church services and in the church, so as not to violate the order that God had created in the home between the husband and the wife. He said, therefore, I don't allow a woman to teach a man because that would violate the order that God created between a husband and a wife, because a wife, we're told in the Bible, is to submit to her husband as to the Lord. If she then gets up in church and begins to teach him along with other men, he is now submitting to her, and so it's a reversal of the order that God has created. Now, again, this has nothing to do with equality.

Is it saying that women shouldn't teach? Not at all, Paul speaks to Titus and talks about how the older women should teach the younger women, and train them, and so forth. So women are tremendous teachers. I'm married to one. And you teach the women here at Calvary Chapel Ontario and of course beyond, and there's nothing wrong with that whatsoever. So I get that question a lot. Can women be teachers? Well, of course, they can. The real question is, as this person asks, what about women teaching men?

Sue: And the real question is, does it violate the order of the home? Does it violate the order of marriage?

Pastor Paul: And yes, it does. For women to teach men.

Sue: Well, there's a second part, *"If a woman is unmarried and believes she is covered by Christ, and Christ is covered by God Almighty, would it not be inappropriate to question the sufficiency of that covering?"*

Pastor Paul: And I'm assuming this person is asking this question again, in relationship to teaching. So...and she's using passages that talk about the fact that we all have a head, and we're covered, and the head of Christ is God, and the head of the man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the husband. And she's saying, in this case, if the woman is unmarried and has no head, as her husband, but she is claiming that her head is Christ, is that not sufficient for her to be able to teach and wouldn't it be wrong to question the sufficiency of that covering?

Well, that's not the way the Apostle Paul looked at it. Sure, a woman can say that anytime she wants. She can say, well, my covering, or my headship, is Jesus. But that's, again, we're talking about the order of the home and honoring that order in the church. So by telling a single woman that she should not teach men, we're not questioning her covering. What we're doing is we're saying that's not consistent with what God established for the home, women to teach men.

Sue: Sounds good. Kelly asks, *"What does it mean when the Bible says to work out your salvation with fear and trembling?"*

Pastor Paul: Very common question. That word, work, just causes people to stumble because we keep telling people you're not saved by works. You're saved by grace through faith. And then they come to this passage where it says, work out your salvation, and it sounds to people like the apostle Paul is saying, work for your salvation, but that's not what he says. He says, *"Work out your salvation,"* and by the way, Paul is assuming you are already saved. You are saved by grace through faith.

Now, work it out. Now, walk it out. If Paul were saying this in our common modern vernacular he would say, walk out your salvation with humility and the fear of God.

Sue: I think it was maybe Warren Wiersbe who said, work to the outside what God worked on the inside.

Pastor Paul: That's really good.

Sue: Marie asked you, *"What does Galatians 5:4 mean, when it says, 'You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law, you have fallen away from grace'?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, if you read the whole book of Galatians the whole issue there was that the people, the believers in the region of Galatia, were being drawn away from the sufficiency of the cross of Christ and they were beginning to adopt Jewish rituals, such as circumcision, as a means of being accepted before God. Paul was leveling some very stern warnings throughout that book, as to say, don't mix the cross with any other means of justification. So, he made this very serious statement, and that's not the only serious statement he makes in Galatians, but he tells them that if you do this, if you rely on something other than the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for your salvation, you will become severed from Christ in your attempt to be justified by the law. And in that sense, you will have fallen away from grace. So that's what he's saying in that passage.

Sue: It kind of requires a deep...broader study of Galatians to know all the nuances of what that sentence means.

Pastor Paul: And I would really encourage Marie, you can tell that Marie hasn't gone through my study in Galatians because I do explain that in that, but I would encourage her, and others who are interested in and maybe even challenged by verses

like that, to go through the entire study of Galatians because I think the light will come on.

Sue: George wants to know, "*Were dinosaurs created in Genesis?*"

Pastor Paul: Well, if they weren't, I don't know when they would have been. God created all things and so we don't hear specifically in Genesis about the creation of dinosaurs by name, but our assumption is that they were created when all other living creatures were created. There's no reason to believe otherwise.

Sue: Annette has a question that has been surfacing for about three years. We haven't answered it in a little while. She said, "*Do you think in any way that the COVID virus has anything to do with end times and if someone received the vaccination are they doomed because they received the mark of the beast?*"

Pastor Paul: Okay, that's really a two-part question. Let me answer the second part first. Do I believe that the vaccination in any way dooms someone as having received the mark of the beast? Well, first of all, that's not possible because the mark of the beast doesn't take place until midway through the Great Tribulation Period when the Antichrist exalts himself as God and demands worship of the people living on the earth at that time. We are not in the Great Tribulation Period. Therefore, the vaccination cannot be the mark of the beast.

Sue: And I think that's such an important point because I think it sets a lot of people at ease to hear that because over the course of my lifetime, I've heard a lot of people so worried that they've accidentally taken the mark of the beast in some way.

Pastor Paul: Nobody is ever going to accidentally take the mark of the beast. But the first part of the question is, do you think that in any way that the COVID virus could be connected, or have anything to do with end times? Yes, I do but only for this reason. I believe that what we've seen as the result of COVID, or I should say,

maybe the pandemic and the way government systems responded to it, and how people responded to government control. I think that this was a dry run in many ways. What we saw is, we saw an alarming attitude of the people to comply to government mandates, which I think are certainly going to come into place during the last days, and particularly during the Great Tribulation, and there's some elements of what happened that are...or I'll use the term a dress rehearsal, in some sense, of what we're going to see during the Great Tribulation.

Sue: This is a really a thoughtful question, I think. *"If John the Baptist performed baptisms of repentance so that the hearts and minds of the people would be open to what Jesus had to say, can baptisms of repentance still be conducted today to help people hear God speak through His Word?"*

Pastor Paul: It is a good question because...

Sue: The logic behind it.

Pastor Paul: The writer of this question is recognizing, correctly, that John was called by God to offer a baptism of repentance to the people of Israel, so that their hearts would be open to the words of Jesus, and his baptism of repentance worked. Luke tells us in no uncertain terms that those who had been baptized by John embraced what Jesus had to say, those who weren't baptized did not, they rejected God's purpose for their lives. So, the writer is correctly deducing that repentance can create an openness in people's hearts to hear the message of God's Word.

That being said, the question is, is there any reason why we couldn't use baptism today, in order to create that same openness? Well, the Bible knows nothing of that practice, and it would, frankly, be confusing because baptism now is something that we do after we're saved. So it would be a little bit weird to baptize people before

they got saved, and then afterward, and then you try to explain the difference to people. We are baptized into Christ now once we come to Him by faith.

I will say this, I have noticed when I'm talking to people who come up after a service who are not yet believers, that when they are aware of their sin, there is an openness, there is a soft-heartedness to the Gospel, to be able to share that. If somebody comes up to me and wants to chat after a service and they really have no concept of their sinful condition, we've got a long way to go before I can start to give them the good news because they haven't even dealt with the bad news yet, that you're lost through your sin but when people do recognize their lost condition and their sinful condition, there is an openness.

So, the writer is correctly deducing that this idea of recognizing sin is an important first step to the Gospel. We just don't use baptism to do it.

Sue: Repentance and humility are like first cousins, you need to have a lack of pride or humility, in order to embrace the fact that there's nothing you can do to receive salvation. You need to have a lack of pride. (correcting herself) You need to have humility to be open to the fact that Jesus did it all and I can't do it.

Pastor Paul: That's the first step to salvation, really, is coming to that realization that I'm lost, and I need a savior.

Sue: Catherine, *"I would like your thoughts on Masonry?"*

Pastor Paul: I think what Catherine is thinking of is Freemasonry. Freemasonry is a non-Christian religious organization, that in many cases, through their teachings and instruction, contradicts the Bible, contradicts biblical ideas and it can be very, very confusing. I encourage Christians to steer clear of Freemasonry and the female version of that, which is Eastern Star. So you've got the Freemasons and you've got

the Eastern Star for the women and both of them just have concepts that just go...run contrary to the Bible, and frankly, to salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Sue: Well, Susan asks, she said, *"I was studying Job and wondered why God declared Job blameless in chapter 1, verse 1? I don't understand how he could have been blameless - doesn't fit with the state of man's heart without Jesus. Could you explain what God meant by that statement?"*

Pastor Paul: Well, again this shows that Susan didn't listen to my study that explained what blameless meant, and this is a common mistake that English-speaking people have regarding this word, blameless. They believe that means perfect, and it doesn't, it just means not subject to blame, and the term blameless is used throughout the Bible. David uses it many times in the Psalms not to mean I am perfect, I am without sin. David was very aware of his sin. He knew that he was a sinful man and yet he spoke of being blameless before the Lord, but he meant that whatever is going on in life that is producing the circumstances, that I am currently involved in, I am blameless. I had nothing to do with that element. And that's the point of Job 1:1, that Job was about to endure tremendous suffering for which God declared him blameless, not perfect, not sinless, but through no fault of his own.

Sue: Another gal, I think it's a woman, I'm not going to try and pronounce her name said, *"Regarding the wedding supper and the seven days in the bridal chamber, the bride and the bridegroom emerged to join their guests for a joyous marriage feast. Playing of music and dancing was a regular part of the celebration. The question is - when the bride is hidden with the bridegroom, who are the guests that the bride joins to rejoice with? Are they also believers?"*

Pastor Paul: We can talk about this from different perspectives of different passages, but this person is asking about the parable of the wedding banquet in

Matthew 22. And it's a great parable, one of my favorite, frankly, in the Bible and I even say that in my study of Matthew, and if you go through that. Actually, if you go through my study in Matthew, I don't think this particular question gets answered. It is a good question.

The question is, who are the guests? Because we know, as believers, that the church is the bride. And so this writer is saying, if the bride and the bridegroom are in the chamber, then who are the guests who are now celebrating? There is a common error when we attempt to interpret parables in the Bible, and that is to try to attach every element of a parable to something in reality because they don't always work that way. In other words, every person or every event, or every group doesn't always necessarily have a correlation to some other biblical truth. Many times, a story is just told for the final point, the final emphasis.

And so, when you try to force the parable of the wedding banquet to refer to the wedding banquet that follows the marriage of Jesus and the church, you unnecessarily complicate the elements, or the imagery, of this parable because like many other parables, this has a main idea, and the main idea of the parable is to talk about the joy of the wedding banquet. It's almost a distraction and it distracts you from the real point.

The real point is that the Jews considered wedding banquets to be times of great joy, exuberance, much like we talk about our receptions after weddings, but they of course, the Jews, it would go on for a week at a time. And the picture that Jesus is trying to convey in this parable, is the great joy that heaven is going to be. And so, the wedding banquet is more of just a picture of the joy of heaven and in this case, it is speaking of frankly, the rejection of a Messiah by the people of Israel. That's the point Jesus is making in this. Don't try to interpret who the individual characters are, interpret rather, the theme of the parable. It's a joyful coming together with the Lord.

Who is going to be involved in that joyful coming together? You'll notice in that parable in Matthew 22, that there are people who reject that coming together, not that they couldn't attend, they chose not to. That was the point. That's the warning that's in the parable. It's not about Jesus and His bride, the Church. It's about people rejecting God's invitation to be saved.

Sue: Well, Donna asked a question that really could be a companion to what you just talked about a few minutes ago. She said, *"In Galatians 5:2, it says, 'Indeed, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised Christ will profit you nothing.' (NKJV) But Timothy was a Gentile and a Christian. Why in the world did Paul encourage Timothy to be circumcised, which Timothy did? In your Hebrew chapters 6 and 7 teaching, you said, 'if you mix the cross with something else, you dilute the cross. It is Jesus Christ alone that saves us.' Paul spent so much time in his letters warning the church of Judiazers, who kept trying to get the Christians to be circumcised in order to be saved. Why would Paul turn around and do this to Timothy? Thank you for your ministry."*

Pastor Paul: What Donna is missing here...well, first of all, Timothy was half Gentile and half Jew. Secondly, Paul did not circumcise him so that Timothy could be saved. Timothy was already saved. However, Paul's ministry was to Gentiles. Peter's ministry was to Jews. Paul knew that he was going to mostly go to Gentiles. However, he would run into Jews on a regular basis. In fact, Paul's plan was essentially to go to the Jews first in an area, and then after they had fully rejected, he would then go to the Gentiles.

So here he's got this unique situation with this guy who is half Gentile, half Jew. Well, he didn't want Timothy to be a stumbling block to the Jews and so he encouraged Timothy to be circumcised, not for salvation, and Paul would have vigorously refuted the idea that Timothy was circumcised for salvation. He was

circumcised, so as to make sure the Jews did not stumble over him traveling with and speaking with and ministering with this half-Gentile, who was uncircumcised, and this is a principle that we see in the Word of God.

Paul talks about it later, related to other things like eating meat sacrificed to idols, drinking wine, doing something that's going to cause a brother to stumble, this was Paul's philosophy and he was consistent with it. He said, if I'm with a brother, who does want to...thinks that eating meat is wrong, I won't eat meat. If I'm with a brother or sister who thinks that drinking wine for a believer is wrong, I won't drink wine. I will do nothing to cause my brother to stumble and that's exactly why he had Timothy circumcised. It was a stumbling issue, or lack of a stumbling block, rather than a salvation issue. Paul knew and understood.

Sue: It's a really wise principle for us to consider.

Pastor Paul: And it's one that I find Christians don't consider very often, particularly when they are writing things or showing pictures on social media. They are not thinking about whether or not they could potentially be stumbling a brother or sister. I find that Christians have, by and large, stumbled over this issue. Which is kind of crazy when you think about stumbling over us, stumbling philosophy.

Sue: Well, it's almost like Paul was saying, if you're going to reject me, it's not going to be because of who I brought with me. It's going to be on you, that you rejected this. Nathan says, "*What are your thoughts on a pastor who claims to be in deliverance ministry?*"

Pastor Paul: So, Nathan writes in and says he's got a pastor in his life, or heard of a pastor, who has claimed to be in deliverance ministry. Here are my thoughts. I don't care whether somebody claims to be a deliverance minister. I don't care whether somebody claims to be a teacher, whether somebody claims to be an

evangelist, or whether somebody claims to have the gift of encouragement. I don't care. That's not the issue. The issue is not the claim.

The issue is the fruit. Jesus said you will know them by their fruit. So the issue is this person says or claims, I'm an evangelist, are people getting saved? They claim that they're a teacher, are people being instructed in the wisdom and truth of God's Word, with clarity and insight? The person claims to be a deliverance minister, are people being set free from a demonic presence? The claim means nothing, anybody can claim anything. We've seen people come along for years and years and years making all crazy and whacked-out claims. I guess we'd like to say the proof is in the pudding.

Sue: That's good perspective. Niebo says, *"If you believe the gifts are for today, why did the Apostle Paul leave his ministers sick and go on without them? Why didn't he heal them, or call on those with the gift of healing?"*

Pastor Paul: This is a confusing question to me because first of all, he says if you believe the gifts are for today and then he starts talking about yesterday. I do believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for today. I don't think there's anything in the Bible that would suggest that they have passed out of existence.

But what he's asking is, why did Paul leave his ministers sick? In fact, this only happened once where Paul left someone ill and went on to the next area to minister. I think it was Trophimus that he left ill, if I'm not mistaken. I'd have to go back and confirm that. But the question is, why didn't he heal them?

Well, the question assumes lots of things like, if the gifts of the Spirit are present, everybody's going to get healed all the time, 100%. Well, that didn't happen even in Paul's day when the gifts of the Spirit were in an overwhelmingly extraordinary sort of a way. The Bible tells us that God did extraordinary miracles, through Paul, to the

point where even his sweatband would heal people. Peter's shadow fell upon people who were crippled, and they were healed. That's extraordinary. Well, even then, not everybody got healed. So, yes, we believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for today. Do we believe that God heals everybody all the time? No, we never have. We never have believed that.

Sue: So, would you say that believing that the gifts of the Spirit are active today means that something can happen but not that something will absolutely 100%?

Pastor Paul: Here's the point. We don't know what God's going to do. And so many times we go into it with expectations, and our expectations aren't met, but that doesn't mean God isn't working. I may pray for someone's healing, and I may not see them instantaneously heal, but that doesn't mean God isn't working, and that doesn't mean God isn't going to bring about that healing, that it might be delayed. We don't know and it's not for us to know and to judge the situation.

We are to bring people to the Lord by faith, believing that God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond what we could ask or think, that's our role. And when I pray for people, that's what I try to do. I bring them...Lord, You're able to do this. I don't know how You're going to do it. I don't know how the healing is going to take place. I don't know what Your plan is for this person, but I trust You, Lord, and I believe that You're able, and that's not a denial of anything. In fact, that's an acceptance of the sovereignty of God.

Sue: All right, here's a YouTube comment and I can tell this person has listened probably to your Acts study, *"I wonder if your 'Spirit upon' gospel waters down the true belief and true repentance."*

Pastor Paul: Can I stop right there?

Sue: Yes.

Pastor Paul: First of all, the person says, my "spirit upon" gospel. The Spirit upon has nothing to do with the Gospel. When we go through the Book of Acts, we talk about the fact that the Spirit comes in for salvation, that's the Gospel. After the person is saved, the Spirit comes upon for empowering. But anyway, I think there is a question here deeper into this question.

Sue: *"If the Holy Spirit does not come on a Christian with gifts, power to teach, power over sin, etc. upon believing, but it is only distributed upon a second baptism of the Spirit, then it allows a believer to have an excuse for habitual unrepentant, willful sin. The example would be Simon. Simon as a believer was unable to recognize he was deep in sin until Peter called him out. (He's talking about Acts) If a second baptism empowers, then there's an excuse for the willful sinner."*

Pastor Paul: This is a complete misunderstanding of the role of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower believers for service. There's nothing that suggests that when we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation, that...that work of the Spirit isn't sufficient to overcome sin. There's nothing in the Bible that suggests that, and this person is misunderstanding that role thinking that empowering means power over sin. It's empowering spiritually to minister.

Sue: Well, empowered to be my witnesses.

Pastor Paul: That's what Jesus said, if you go to Acts chapter 1, you will receive power to be my witnesses here in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. So, he didn't say, when the Spirit comes upon you, you'll finally get a handle on sin.

Sue: Yes, you'll have power for Christian living.

Pastor Paul: No, we receive power for Christian living when we're born again, through the Spirit. So, this is just frankly a misunderstanding of the roles.

Sue: I hope that cleared it up for some people. Last question from YouTube. *"Hi, Pastor Paul, I follow your Bible studies and they have helped me a lot, thank you for that. However, I'm a bit confused about something you say...If works don't save you and don't keep you saved, isn't saying that good works are the proof that we are saved the same thing? Isn't that implying that we need to DO works to be saved?"*

Pastor Paul: Yes, that's a good question. I understand where this person is coming from because we do throw around this idea of good works and we say, you're not saved through works. Paul makes that very clear in Ephesians 2:8-9, you're saved by grace through faith. And then we turn around once a person is saved, and we start talking about works and that really messes with a lot of people's minds, although, because they seem to forget, I'm already saved now.

So now I'm going to talk about works in a completely different context. The context is no longer salvation. The context is now what I'm doing for the Lord because He has enabled me, and gifted me, and I just want to love Him and show Him that He's my Lord and Savior, and I want to serve Him and so forth. And so this person says, but aren't good works a proof that we are saved? Well, that's a sticky wicket right there. Because my response would be, proof to who? To you? To me?

Yes, we can look at people's lives, to some degree, and when they make claims like I was talking earlier, I'm an evangelist, I'm a teacher, we should be able to see that fruit in their lives. But to look at somebody's life, who has confessed Christ, and yet isn't showing good works and then to conclude, well, I don't think you're saved because you see, I've heard that good works are the proof of salvation and in fact, James does talk about that. There's no question about that. But James was confronting people who were just casually saying, confessing Christ, but there was

nothing in their lives that would be even remotely or even contrary things in their life to confessing Christ.

Well, James, from the authority of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit was moving through him, was giving a warning in that book. That's not licensed for you and me to look at somebody's life and make a judgment call based on what we think their works prove or don't prove. I've made the point before that Jesus told us that those whom God loves, He prunes, He cuts back, so that those who are fruitful will be even more fruitful.

Have you ever seen a prune tree? They look dead. I've seen some. I've told about the fact that we had some trees here on our property, years ago, that got pruned by one of our members and I was horrified. I drove into the parking lot, and I was like, what happened? They killed these trees. Well, I know nothing about trees. It wasn't maybe a month or two later, those trees were so full of leaves, and they had this like new lease on life. But when I looked at those things, after they got pruned, they looked absolutely dead.

And there are times we look at somebody's life, and we don't see what God sees. So, yes, works play a role. Good works play a role once we are saved. But again, that's not a license for individual believers to look into the life of another individual believer and say, I don't see good works in you. That's God's role. That's God's role.

We should be praying with people, working with people, discipling people. I've met a lot of Christians who truly believe in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross but have never been adequately disciplined to begin to live out and walk out their faith in the way of good works. So, we have to be so careful making these sorts of judgment calls on people. So no, I would disagree. I don't think that good works imply that it's necessary that we have them in order to be saved.

I think that when a believer is a true believer, there will be good works. That is not what saves them. That is not what keeps them safe. It is simply the evidence. It's like an apple tree. The apples that show up on a tree don't keep that tree an apple tree. They just prove that it's an apple tree and it's the same thing with our good works. So, I think that's maybe a good way to think about it.

Sue: Well, that's a wrap.

Pastor Paul: Really, that's a wrap for June. So, I guess that's June. What that means is we'll start compiling the questions that come in here in the last few days of this month, and also throughout July, and we'll get back to you probably toward the end of July and we'll do this again and we'll talk about more questions and answers. Until we do, we hope to see you next time we're with you. We'll be here on Sundays and Wednesdays and we invite you to join us live and also to go through the teachings through the entire Bible, which you will find at <https://www.ccontario.com/through-the-bible>. So join us and stay in the Word. God bless you. Bye.