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Alright, as we get started tonight, for those of you that are maybe watching online or maybe those in person who are not aware, this is Spring Break here in Opelika, Alabama. So obviously as far as on campus activities are a little bit slim but glad you're here. This yellow piece of paper is our circle of concerns, otherwise known as our prayer sheet. Just a reminder as I do every week, if there's a concern, a person, an individual, a situation that you know of that we need to be praying for, please let us know here at the church office. We will get it on there as soon as possible whether a part of our family directly or connected to our church family, we want to be praying for them.

Also, just something I remind you about every single week is on the back there are those that are serving in the military and on the mission field. Please make it a point to pray for them on a regular basis. Oftentimes we pray for those that are sick and they get out and we celebrate the healing of their body and such, but often those that are serving overseas or even stateside in the military or on the mission field, maybe there for months and/or years at a time, and so I just want to remind you to continue to pray for those individuals.

Now for those of you who are deep steeped Baptists, do not panic, Wednesday night meals will return next week so you do not have to pray for supernatural manna to start occurring here at First Baptist, next week we will once again eat again.

So let's pray.

Lord, as we gather tonight, Lord, on a night where our campus, at least, doesn't have as many bodies as we're used to, Lord, thank you for the break and we do pray for those that are a part of our community, those that are a part of our church family as many of them are traveling, as many of them are going to see family and even vacationing. Lord, we do pray for safety and, Lord, we pray for those that are on the sheet that are suffering physically, many of them with illnesses and diseases and some even with diagnoses that are unknown yet. So Lord, we pray for wisdom for those in the medical field, Lord, we pray for diligence for those that are dealing with this situation and, Lord, for caretakers and for those who are family members and loved ones and friends, Lord, we pray for peace and oftentimes emotionally and mentally as difficult if not more, helping, assisting as it those that are sick. And Lord, we know there is nothing that is on this list, there is nothing on our hearts that you're not beyond capable of addressing and so, Lord, we do what Hebrews 4 says, we come boldly tonight not just hoping or wishing but believing

that you are capable of addressing every situation that we've brought before your throne tonight.

As far as those that are serving on our behalf, Lord, for those in the military, Lord, we thank you for their selflessness, for their willingness to give of their time and their energy, oftentimes in very physically dangerous situations so that we can have the freedom to do what we're doing tonight without fear of retribution. Lord, for those young men and those young women who are being very faithful to defend us physically, Lord, we pray that you would protect them physically as well.

And for those who are on our behalf spiritually sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, oftentimes in places that we're not even allowed to speak of, Lord, we do pray that you would strengthen them, Lord, in those cases where oftentimes they don't have many believers around or fellow churchmen and women, Lord, we pray that you would, Lord, surround them with a community of encouragement as they go forward with the task of the Great Commission.

Lord, for us tonight as we're gathered when we pray that you would guide us in your work, Lord, we don't want another man's opinion, we've got plenty of those; we don't want the world's philosophies, those come by the hundreds; Lord, we just want to know what does your word say. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Alright, tonight I want to begin with a PSA or a public service announcement. For those of you that are a part of here at First Baptist, Opelika or maybe even those that are watching online that are connected to us through the virtual world, one of the things that we have been advertising and communicating is we want access to be able to communicate with you via text message. It's an easy way that we can get a kind of a way of communication out. If you are not already a part of our text messaging "blast," please consider being a part of it. I'm going to give you a real life illustration. If you will, if you text, if you will text to the number 43506, if you will just text fbco, you will then get a response so that you can register for our group texting here at First Baptist. Now you say, "Well, why is that so critical?" Well, we found out about five minutes before we started tonight that one of the means by which we stream online which is Facebook, somehow, somehow in the technical world it is down, and so we just sent a text message to folks saying if you're planning on watching online, you're going to have to go to the website, not to Facebook. And so whether it is inclement weather, technical difficulties, or change in schedule, we just want to be able to communicate with you as effectively as possible. Now there are hundreds of you that are already on board but if you're not already, the phone number 435506, if you will text fbco to that number and then hopefully you can be a part of that. It doesn't cost a thing unless they charge you to receive a text and most plans today do not.

Alright, one other public service announcement before we get started. Several months ago a group of our men came to me and they were somewhat conflicted. They said, "Jeff, we love to have a men's Bible study on Wednesday night but we want to be a part of Ask Jeff. What do you suggest that we do?" And I said, "Go to the men's Bible study." And

they thought I'd lost my mind. They said, "Really, you don't want us to come to Ask Jeff?" I said, no, because I said what we do on Wednesday night you can get online but you cannot get that in person accountability online, you have to experience that. But tonight being Spring Break, they are not meeting and some of those guys are with us here tonight and so in communication the last week, one of them just came up to me and said, "Hey, we're only going to be there for a week, it's not like, you know, it's repetitious. Is there any way that we could get some of our questions in?" So I took liberty tonight and said, "Sure, why not?"

So we're going to begin tonight with some questions from one of our men's small groups that meets on Wednesday night. So I'm not going to go to the database to begin, I'm going to go with their questions because they're with us tonight. I announced it on social media tonight was going to be a special night, this is the special night. Now there are going to be more special nights in the future. In April, we're going to have a night where all of our students are going to be with us here on Wednesday night and it's going to be student driven. So as we go on, there will be some, you know, special nights.

So we're going to begin with some of the questions that our guys sent in and the first one is: what happens the minute after you die? That's a great question and really to be quite honest with you, I had a conversation with a young man today who just turned 90 years old and that's an important question to him. It should be an important question to all of us.

Now when you answer this question, obviously I'm going to get to the Bible in just a moment but the naturalist or the person who just believes that you came from dust, you return to dust, what many of us would call the uber-evolutionist, they say that when you die, the next minute you're just in the ground and you cease because you're nothing but flesh, that's it. The pantheist or the one who believes in multiple layers of spirituality oftentimes we associate that with Hinduism or Buddhism or many Eastern religions, they believe the minute after you die, you go to a next level or to reincarnation or to a next layer because they believe that humanity is a body and a spirit. So the naturalist says you're just a body, you're just molecules, the pantheist says you're body and a spirit, but the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that you have a body, a soul, and a spirit, and the Bible makes it very clear that the minute after you die, you go somewhere and it's not the ground.

Now for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, 2 Corinthians 5:8 says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. What that means for a believer in Jesus Christ is the moment, and by the way, the question and I love the way it was worded, what happens the minute after, let me rephrase that, what happens the nanosecond after. There is not a, you know, there's not a 60 second wait for this to occur, you are in the presence of the Lord which means that as the Bible describes oftentimes in Revelation 4 and 5, we see what we know as the angelic host worshipping, we see the crystal sea, we see the throne of the Lord with all of the things that are happening. That is the "physical place" that Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 called paradise where a believer in Jesus Christ goes one minute or one nanosecond after they die.

Now for somebody who is not a believer in Jesus Christ, the Bible makes it very clear that their destination one second, nanosecond, or minute after death is a place the Bible calls hell. I do want to address the situation that many people get caught up in, that after physical death there is an opportunity for either, A, a second chance, or B, a time of purging. Now about 500 years ago, there were a group of people who systematized this thought and they called it purgatory, a purging of one's sins, but according to Scripture Jesus Christ has done the purging on the cross. There is no intermediate state. There is no pause state. There is no holding tank, triage, or any other word that you want to utilize. The moment you breathe your last breath on earth, you're either in the presence of the Lord in a place the Bible calls heaven, or you're in a place the Bible calls hell.

Thoughts, questions, follow-up, expand on? And there were crickets in the room. Going to the next question. That's fine. That's why, we... Go ahead. Make sure I didn't miss a hand there. By the way, those of you not normally, you can ask questions. It's okay. I know we didn't feed you. Oh, yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, great question. She said body, soul and spirit, what immediately enters heaven? Not your body. We're going to visit your body at the funeral home and then we're going to bury your body in the ground, but you have a soul and a spirit, so according to Revelation 6, it talks about the souls, the martyrs that are in this place that we call heaven, that our soul and our spirit is immediately in the presence of the Lord, and then according to 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, at the last trump, at this event that we often call the rapture because it means to be caught up, it says that we receive a new body, the corruptible becomes incorruptible, the mortal becomes immortal. And so I like to use myself as an example, when I breathe my last breath, y'all gonna put in the ground. Now I do have a request for my casket, I want it to be little. I want it to be short. I want it to be my size. Now you say, "Well, why do you want to do that?" Because people have made fun of me about my height my whole life, I figure they might as well laugh at my funeral. So just go get me, you know, kind of a child's casket or whatever it is, put me in it. My body may be in that casket, my body may go in the ground but I'll say according to 2 Corinthians 5 that I just quoted, my soul and spirit are going to be more alive at that moment than they are right now because I'm no longer trapped in a body that's decaying, I'm no longer trapped in a body that every day I get older gets a little slower to move at times. I got a uh-huh on the front row there? Yes.

So we are now in a body that is decaying but here's the thing, my soul is not decaying, my spirit is not decaying. My soul and my spirit are going to be just as alive then as they've ever been and I will one day get a new body. So your soul and your spirit go to be with the Lord, your body goes in the ground.

Now on the other side of the equation, the same is said for those who do not believe in the Lord because when you have what is called the second resurrection in Revelation 20 where they're brought forth and they're judged, they are brought up again and then they are sent back into what the Bible calls the lake of fire, and the Bible doesn't describe them getting a new body because they are in a place the Bible describes as not only eternal but also full of fire. It's not a pleasant thought but eternity, and I've said this before, eternity is too long to be wrong. It's way too long to be wrong. You're either in a place the Bible calls heaven or a place that the Bible calls hell.

Does that help your question at all?

[unintelligible]

The question she's asking for those on the other side of the equation, the soul and the spirit end up in torment before the physical body, the physical body, the Bible never addresses it even being applicable to that scenario. In other words, when you get to Revelation 6, here's what's interesting is you have the souls of the martyrs, okay, and there they are around the throne of God and they're described as wearing robes, they're described as kneeling, they're described as communicating, and one of the things I like to say is we're not a soul-filled body, we're a body-covered soul. Who you really are is your soul, your body is just covering it. So those individuals who unfortunately reject the truth of Jesus are in a place the Bible calls hell. The body is not critical because that's not who you and I really are, we are a soul that is covered with a body.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, so the question is: what is the difference between the spirit and the soul? Now the Bible makes it very clear in Genesis 1 that when you and I as humanity were created, we were created in the image of God, alright, and we know that the Lord is Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet he is one. He is Trinitarian in nature and I believe 1 Thessalonians 5 says we are trinitarian in nature. Here's the problem. There was a very well-known theologian many many many years ago that wrote about a 250 page book describing the Trinity and when he got done with the book, he said, "I can't describe it." So I don't know if I can solve that equation tonight, however, the best way that I can describe is when you go back into Genesis and you see the creation or the formation of Adam, God took the dirt, right, okay, and he took the dirt and he made man. Ladies, that's why we're so dirty and messy, he made us out of dirt, okay? So he takes Adam, by the way, the name Adam means red dirt. That's what we mean by man is red dirt, alright? So he takes the body, then according to the Bible, God breathed into him, okay? So you have the body, you

have the Spirit of God, it says when he breathed into him, he became a living soul. Does that make sense? You got that?

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Sure.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Sure. Fabulous question. In fact, we addressed this somewhat last week when we gathered, is what do you do with infants, what do you do with those that in our terminology might be a little challenged cognitively even as adults and that don't really have that real understanding, so to speak. Well, in Deuteronomy 1 when the Israelites were going into the Promised Land, you know that they rebelled, they didn't trust God and the Lord said those that were not able to discern between good and evil, they were not held accountable for their sin. Then later in the book of Numbers, it says those that were 20 years of age and under were not held accountable. And so the Bible also addresses in 2 Samuel 12 and other places that, I think there's very clear biblical evidence that a child or someone who is of childlike cognitive ability, completely covered by the grace of God. In fact, King David made this statement about his child that was seven days old, he said, "My child will not return to where I am but one day I will be to where he is." Now in Hebrews 11, David is in heaven so we can put those two pieces together.

I would say the difference is you and I as humanity, we are all born bad. I mean, according to 1 Corinthians 15, because of Adam we all die. I mean, we've got a sin problem, right? Now let's go back to Adam, the original Adam. Adam was flesh, God breathed into him and he became a living soul. The moment Adam and Eve sinned, he became a dead soul. Think about that. The second resurrection at that final judgment, he will raise the dead. The Bible says that God will judge the quick or the living and the dead. So before I was saved, I had a body, a dead soul, and the spirit of man or the spirit of disobedience. When I got saved, the Spirit of God infused me and I became a living soul, not living as compared to will cease to exist but living in the sense of having life as I was created to be. So though that child technically and, by the way, I know I'm not a physician, I'm a theologian, okay, technically it has a body, I would say that according to Ephesians 2 has a dead soul, but is covered by the grace of God because has yet to come to that point of understanding of knowing the difference between good and evil, and so therefore we can take those other passages and rest assured all's good.

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Again. Yes, he does.

[unintelligible]

Right.

[unintelligible]

So you're advocating there's only "two parts" until we're born again?

[unintelligible]

Okay, repeat that last statement.

[unintelligible]

Okay. Allow me, go to Ephesians 2 real quick. Now for those of you not regular with us, now you see how one question becomes 14. Ephesians 2 makes this statement. It says beginning in verse 1, it says, "And you hath he quickened," or made alive, "who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

[unintelligible]

No, no, no, no, no, that spirit is the spirit you had before you were saved. So in technical terms, I hate to use technical terms, before you're saved you've got a soon-to-be-dead body, a dead soul, and a disobedient dead spirit. You get saved, you now have the Holy Spirit, the life of God, you now have a living soul but I've still got a dead body. One day I'm going to get a new body and that's going to be wonderful when that occurs, and then that is the whole battle you get in Romans 7 where the Apostle Paul says, "You know, the things I wish I did, I don't do, and the things I don't do, I wish I did." You know, and he goes back and forth because until this body's gone, you know, we're always going to face temptations and struggles because the description that Paul gives of our body is the same description that they used in punishment in the Roman days that if you were convicted of taking somebody's life, one of the ways in the Roman world that they address that situation is at times they would have you take that corpse and you would have to wear the corpse for the rest of your life. Well, what happens when you wear a corpse? As it decomposes, it kills you. And the picture that is given there is, this is a corpse around me now and all it knows is sin and decay and depravity and all it does is want to seep into me. That's why Colossians 2:11 is so important, it says now that Christ has saved me, I'm spiritually circumcised. I've been cut so that my nasty flesh does no longer have the ability to infect my soul because one day I will be absent from the body, present with the Lord, but I'm still carrying it around with me, which is why we fall into temptation. If

you didn't have this nasty thing you're trapped in, you wouldn't have to worry about temptation because James 1 says sin happens when you're enticed and you look upon and you act. You know, when I have a new glorified body and the devil is bound in the lake of fire for eternity, there's no opportunity for temptation because it's not there anymore.

But you're right about Nicodemus because then Jesus says that which is born of flesh is flesh, that which is born of Spirit is Spirit. You must be born again.

I thought I saw another hand over here. Did I miss it? I didn't miss it.

[unintelligible]

Oh, really good. Oh, I got a thumb's up. Okay, I'll take a thumb's up. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The witch of Endor?

[unintelligible]

Oo, the witch of Endor, okay? The witch of Endor is found in 1 Samuel 28 and when you get to the story of the witch of Endor, the situation is Saul, the first monarch or king of Israel, has decided to do what he's been doing for a long time, he's rebelling against the things of God and in doing so he's struggling badly and he goes to a soothsayer, he goes to a necromancer, he goes to one who communicates with the dead. Well, what happens is when he seeks for the person that he is seeking, Samuel, in that story, Samuel actually makes himself present and it scares everybody to death. Now it scared the soothsayer because she was a fraud to begin with, and when she saw that Samuel actually showed up, it scared her to death. It scared Saul because he actually saw one who had actually died come back and speak with him.

Now I believe that the witch of Endor experience with Samuel arising is in the same line of Enoch being translated, Elijah being caught up in the whirlwind, or Lazarus being raised from the dead. They are exceptions to the rule but exceptions do not make the rule. The Bible says we all must die and face the judgment. Lazarus died twice so he was an exception to that rule. Enoch never died at all, okay? Samuel, I mean, once you're dead, you're dead, Samuel was allowed that opportunity to testify to Saul. He was the exception to the rule. He does not make the rule.

Now there are stories like that in Scripture but those stories are numbered less than the fingers on my hand compared to the thousands that fit into the general principles. But you're right, that witch of Endor thing, that was kind of a freaky event.

[unintelligible]

It did not and here's the thing. I don't know if you all have ever heard this term, the golden rule? He whoever has the gold makes the rules? Y'all ever heard that? That's the golden rule. Well, God made the rules and part of, and we like to use this term, the sovereignty of God, is that God can suspend the rules if he desires to suspend the rules, but you never see him suspend the rules in anything or in any way that does not honor or glorify him. He doesn't suspend the rules just for the sake of doing so. For example, when the Israelites are battling and the sun stays up the extra day. That's a suspension of rules but it was so that the people of God could honor God with victory. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, can we all agree that's a suspension of rules, okay? On the fourth day when he was according to Jewish law really dead and his sister said, "He stinketh," okay? That was a suspension of the rules but what did it do? It glorified Jesus because in the next chapter they're trying to kill Lazarus because of his testimony.

So the suspension of the rules are for the purpose of glorification of God, not for any other reason. So when we see those suspensions, let's not focus on the suspension of the rules as much as why would they be suspended in comparison to general concept.

Anybody else on this one, chasing the proverbial rabbit? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Oh, paradise. The thief on the cross. Oh, that's a great question and, you know, by the way, I get asked that question all the time, so much so that I wrote a little book about a year ago called "Ask Jeff: the top 10 questions," and it's in there, okay? I'm going to make you a deal, okay? I'm going to give you a free copy of that book because it goes about 20 pages on paradise. Is that a deal you and I can make? Alright, I've got that deal. I'll get that for you, alright?

Now everybody is going to start saying, "I want one about paradise." What did you say, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

She wants some for the library. Yes, ma'am. I'll take care of that. I've got you covered. But I will, I'm going to answer it because the question she asked about paradise is a long answer as you walk through Scripture, but let me make it real simple: paradise is wherever the presence of the Lord is. Does that make sense? So when he tells the thief on the cross, "Today you'll be with me in paradise," he was with Jesus then, but also that's why the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 when he ascends to the third heaven can say he's in paradise because he's in the presence of the Lord during that time experience.

But I will get you a free copy of that book. No charge. You can read it all day long. Does that sound good to you? It sounds good. Alright.

Anybody else on that one? We're good. Alright, guys, we'll go to your next question.

[unintelligible]

No, my books are not available on Amazon and I apologize for that. They are available in the church office. There they are. I'm just being honest.

And here we go. Oh, boy, guys, thank y'all, appreciate y'all. The next question is: at what point in time during the end times or the rapture is it too late for those who are lost to become saved?

Alright, let's address this question multiple ways. Let's address this question today, let's address this question during a time period the Bible calls the Great Tribulation, and then let's address this question in specific of when is too late, when does the clock run out, okay?

The Bible makes it very clear today, right now, right where you sit or right where you're watching, in Romans 10:13, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. So if you call on the Lord tonight, you'll be saved, alright? So there is no time frame concern or struggle there.

Alright, when you get to Revelation 7, hopefully you have a Bible with you, in Revelation 7 we are transported into a time period known as the Great Tribulation. By the way, that is not a terminology that pastors came up with, that is a terminology that Jesus gave us in Matthew 24. He described this period as a tribulation greater than any other in the history of the world. In Revelation 7, I want you to look at verse 9. This is in the middle of the Great Tribulation. This is the middle of all the seven seals and what we know as the Antichrist and all these famous end time events. It says, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." These are individuals who, to use that same terminology, have a salvation experience in this time period known as the tribulation, okay?

So let's be real clear: today, call on the name of the Lord, be saved; during that time period, there are those who have a salvation experience. The question was at what point or is there a point where it is "too late"? I want to take you to 2 Thessalonians 2 to what I consider the most gut-wrenching, difficult passage in all of the New Testament. So whoever asked the question, guys, thank you, appreciate you, love you. 2 Thessalonians 2 deals with the Antichrist. It deals with this character that the book of Revelation calls the beast, this famous character, and it talks about how he will rise and he will deceive the nations. It talks about the mystery of iniquity and all these horrific things. I want to begin in verse 8, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." So this is the Antichrist. Verse 10, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Now allow me to kind of unpack those verses for a moment. The Bible makes it very clear that between today and that Great Tribulation time period that we discussed, there is an event that we collectively as a culture call the rapture. It just means a catching up, when the Lord calls out his bride or the church. Then we have the famous seven seals and all the things of the book of Revelation. The question that was asked is between now and then, when is too late, is it too late, and what happens? According to what we just read, it's a difficult passage because you can read it two different ways. You can read it that those who are on this side of that rapture event, that if they have not believed and if they hear the truth on the other side, though there is deceivableness and though there is a lie, not many or if any will receive it because they have received a lie. You can also read it on the other side which means that if you've heard the gospel of Jesus Christ today and that event occurs, that because it says all will be damned, that they do not have an opportunity to be saved on the other side of that rapture event in a time period the Bible calls the Great Tribulation. That is a very difficult pill to swallow which tells me this: if you need the Lord, ask him to save you today and don't take a chance with, "Well, maybe I've got a few more days. Maybe I've got a few more weeks." Because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15, he comes in the blinking of an eye. That's one one-millionth of a second. And I've met a lot of people that they say, "You know, one day when the clouds split open, that's when I'll get saved." You don't have time when the clouds split open.

And by the way, that event that we call the rapture event, when he calls out those that are dead and alive in Christ and we get those new bodies that we talk about, at that event it very much pictures when the Lord has done that before. Remember in Acts 9 when who we knew as Saul who became Paul the apostle, remember when the Lord spoke to him? He heard the words of the Lord but those around him heard a loud sound as if thunder. And so the picture is those who are the children of God will hear the calling of God but those who are not will just hear some noise of some kind.

And so again, when you get to 2 Thessalonians 2, it's a difficult passage to read because none of us want to in our flesh, none of us want to say, well, if you've rejected the Lord for 30+ years and this rapture event occurs in your 40 whatever year of life, none of us want to say, "Well, sorry, chance is over. Too bad for you." However you can read that passage in that way. I've struggled with this verse and this passage for years. In fact, some days I'll read it and I'll go, "Well, it must be this way." Then other days I'll read it and go, "Well, it must be that way." It doesn't matter if it's that way or this way, don't mess with it. I'm serious, don't mess with this passage. Don't sit there and go, "Well, I've still got another day." The Bible says today is the day of salvation. Not tomorrow or the next day.

So let me encourage anybody who either they, themselves, or know somebody who does not know Jesus, don't hedge your eternity on the timing of end time events because Jesus says not the angels know, none of them in heaven know of his return. So if they don't

know, I mean he says, "Only my Father knows, nor I or the angels do." So if the angels don't know when this is happening, neither do you. And by the way, these guys on TV that are asking for money because they're telling you when Jesus is coming back, they've been wrong for a long time so don't hedge your bets on what these guys are saying. The Bible says when you think not, it will occur. So I could have told y'all years ago that it wasn't going to happen on December 31, 1999 into 2000. Everybody, "Oh, Jesus is coming back!" The Bible says when you think not, when everybody thinks Jesus is coming back, he's not coming back. So I guarantee you, when you go home and watch "Christian television," I put quotes around it because it's not always Christian, okay? It's sometimes religious television but not Christian television. When somebody gets up there and says, "We've been given and we believe Jesus is coming back that day," I can promise you that's not it because he says when you think not.

So but as far as the question is, when is that timing event? That passage is a hard passage to understand but we do know that those on this side of the event are saved, there are those on the other side that have a salvation experience. I wouldn't take a chance with the time frame in between.

Any follow-up thought? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Well, yeah, that's even a graver issue, no pun intended. Yeah, you're not guaranteed because we don't know when that event will occur. It could occur in five minutes. It could occur in 500 years.

[unintelligible]

It is and he knows it and we don't. That's a great point. And by the way, I know I'm probably, maybe I'm not being strange, I don't know how people who don't know Jesus, I don't know how they sleep at night. That's just my personal opinion. And I know I was a young child but when I was wrestling with the things of God as a child, I didn't sleep at night because I wanted to really know where I was going and why. You know, that's just me.

Anybody else on that one? Alright, guys, back to your questions. The next one is. By the way, I know some of you are thinking, "Well, what about our Revelation Bible study?" These are good questions and they're with us one week. It'll be okay.

Here we go. It says other than praying for our friends and family, what are other methods does the Scripture teach us to use when people are not living scriptural lives and making poor choices?

Okay, go to Matthew 18. So the question is when you know somebody is making poor decisions, when you know that they are living a rebellious life, even a sinful life, you pray for them but what else, what other options do you have? What else is in your

arsenal, so to speak? Well, when you go to Ephesians 6 and it talks about the armor of God, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation, shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon we've got, okay, and it says that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. So that being said, according to Matthew 18, beginning in verse 15, I believe that we have the scriptural answer to this question. It says, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Now fast forward to the book of James 5. James 5 also deals with this subject matter and then hopefully we will make it clear as mud. James 5 in verse 16 after it speaks of praying for those that are sick and asking for healing, it goes from the physical to the spiritual. "Confess your faults one to another," or your sins one to another, "and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Now let me take those two passages and put them together. Matthew 18 says if there is somebody in sin, the very first thing you do when you know about it, is you let everybody know via social media. I mean, you put it out there for everybody. No. What does it say to do? Go to them one-on-one. Let me expand that. When you have a difficulty, when you have a complaint, when you have an issue with somebody whether they're living in sin or you've just got a problem with them, go to them one-on-one. Don't shoot arrows from 300 yards out, if that makes any sense, okay?

Now I'm going to get real personal, real quick, but I'm going to do it because the question begs it. Please, particularly in a church, don't gripe anonymously. I'm going to go ahead and tell some of y'all, every now and then some of you use the prayer cards of our worship guide to voice complaints. If you don't put your name, I throw it away. I throw it away. Some of you are going, "I've been griping about this for months. He hasn't changed it." Because you don't put your name down. I throw it away because it says if you have a problem, you go talk with them. I don't bite. I don't know any of our staff that bites. Now some of our kids do but we don't. The reason that is important is if you have a problem or you know somebody who is in sin, you don't go tell your neighbor first either. You don't call your best friend. The scriptural response is you go to them and you talk with them and you say, "Hey, something's wrong here and it needs to be addressed in your life."

It says if they do not hear you, take two or three. Now notice what it says about the two or three, two or three witnesses. That doesn't mean your best buddies who you know are going to agree with you. It means people who are aware of or in knowledge of the same scenario.

Then it says if they will not hear that, go to the church. Now I know what some of you are thinking, "Okay, Open Mike night. Here we go." No. The church means the assembly, those that are aware or impacted. That's why I went to James 5 that says confess your faults or your sins one to another. Those that it impacts or it affects or it would adversely deal with. Does that make sense?

And so we do have a strategy laid out in Scripture when somebody has a problem or you're bothered by it or they're living in sin, whatever it may be. We go to them one-on-one. That's what we do. Again, forgive me for my gender but I'm a man. We gird our loins up like a man and we have a conversation. It's not a fun conversation at times but we have to deal with those conversations. Here's the thing according to Matthew 18. The person who's having the conversation with the one who has sinned, it's not wanting to call them out, it's not wanting to expose them, but you see they're desiring them to change and that's the difference. It's not, "Hey, I know what you're doing. I want the whole world to know." It's you're not where you need to be in the Lord and I'm going to encourage you and ask you what would it take for you to do so. In fact, you get to 1 Corinthians 5 and there's the story of a man who is living in such sin that the Apostle Paul says not even the Gentiles practice this. I mean, it's really off the charts and he says that the individual needs to be removed from the fellowship because it says the destruction of the flesh will be for the salvation of the soul because it was impacting those and affecting them because they were beginning to justify the sin.

So the reasons for doing this is number 1, for the relationship of that individual with the Lord, and number 2, the impact of that person to other believers and a lost world who sees it happening. And so, yes, we have something other than praying for folks, we have the opportunity to go and talk with them.

Now the Bible talks about being the body of Christ. We have arms, we have legs, we have elbows. It's Wednesday night and we can have a little fun, right? The person who goes and does what Matthew 18 describes, what body part do you think that is? That's the colon. Yeah, somebody said, "What?" What is the purpose of your colon? To eliminate product in your body that if it is not eliminated will cause death. What if sin is not eliminated from your life, what does it produce? Death. If it's not eliminated from a body of believers what does it produce? Death. And so the importance is to see that it is eliminated for the health of the body.

Now let me give you a little insight. If you've just read this passage in Matthew 18 and said, "Oh, boy, I can't wait to confront So-and-so," you misread the whole thing. It's not, "Oh, so I get to," it's, "Oh, by I have to. I'm compelled to." If you have been called by God to address a situation in somebody's life that is of sin or of rebellion, it ought to keep you up at night. It ought to turn your stomach. It ought to be the last thing you want to do but the thing you know you have to do for their sake. Even in my own home there are times, and I know this is going to shock you, but there are times where my children aren't perfect. They're not perfect. I wasn't perfect. I was disciplined as a child and my children get disciplined. Every time a disciplinary action, when we have to address a situation,

when that discipline is finished, whatever it is, I always try to communicate, "I love you too much to let you continue to do this." Matthew 18 is in that spirit, "I love you too much to let you keep going down this road. I love you too much to let this tear up your life. I love you too much to let this tear up our," whatever it may be.

And so that is the spirit of which it is done, that is the means by which it is done, and to the person who asked the question, there is a tool in our arsenal other than just praying. The Lord says go and speak with them and do this and do it properly and biblically. Do not post it on social media and call your neighbor and gossip about it. You go with them one-on-one.

Yes, ma'am and then both of y'all. Go ahead. Ladies.

[unintelligible]

Everything. She asked what is difficult about this. I said everything.

[unintelligible]

No, you can qualify it but not quantify it, you're correct.

[unintelligible]

Well...

[unintelligible]

Right. So the question or the issue she brought up was, well, what if you go to and they say, "Well, you say that about me and here's what I say about you." Well, number 1, you just discovered their heart. It is about quantity to them. But number 2, that's why Matthew 7 is so important. Now this is in the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus makes this statement, he says, "Judge not lest you be judged yourself." Now the world today has taken that verse out of context and said we can't make a judgment about anything. But then Jesus says, "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged as well. Do not take the splinter out of your brother's eye if you've got a log sticking out of your own." Which means if you feel compelled to address sin like this in somebody's life, you'd better make sure that all of your sin has been addressed too. Does that make any sense? In other words, if you're going to go to address someone about subject A and you know you've got subject B in your life, you need to take care of subject B before you. That is why later on Jesus makes this statement, "If you're at the altar and you're praying and you have aught against a brother, go take care of that before you give." In other words, take care of that matter before you take care of the other.

Ma'am?

[unintelligible]

Okay, the question is, boy, this is so much fun to talk about, the question is, okay, so you go to this person and they don't receive it well, how do you quote "select the two or three"? Now it says two or three witnesses. That means in a perfect world people who are aware of the same situation and who have the same concern you do about this situation. Does that make sense?

[unintelligible]

Huh?

[unintelligible]

No, but no, no, no, the question was what you talked about. No, because, you see, sometimes when dirt flies in people's lives, we all know about it, don't we? Does that make sense? Rarely does sin happen in isolation. Does that make sense? So it means those who are aware of without gossiping, those who are aware of that because oftentimes when something occurs or is discovered, it affects a multitude of people. So you don't just go find somebody and go, "Hey, by the way, you want to go hammer somebody with me?" That's not what you do.

[unintelligible]

The question is what if you don't know somebody? In that case, give me a call. I'm being serious. I'm being serious.

Okay, front row, back row. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Oh yes, Yeah. Boy, if we got to judge outside the church, I'll meet y'all at 7 AM in the morning and let's go on a rampage. No, this is within the body of Christ is what this is. And you're not supposed to go on a hunt.

[unintelligible]

No, that is the worst thing. This is if, to be honest, it just falls in your lap and you have to deal with it. And here is my, you know the old rule, I can support you like in golf, you know, you catch the wind, you lick your finger and which way is the wind going? I don't go seek anything but if it falls in my lap, it's like God saying, "You have to address this."

Back row. Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

We all sin, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

I would call gossip a pretty major infraction. James says, man, you can control big ships but you can't control the tongue.

[unintelligible]

That is why that person... Okay, you're right. He says Paul's dealing with a major infraction infecting the whole church. That's why Matthew 1, I think, goes in this step: go to him one-on-one with the desire of hopefully you will win them at that point, if you have to go to the witnesses, not fun, go to the church or the assembly, what you're dealing with there is.... Here is my rule of thumb, that the amount of offense requires the amount of confession, okay? Sometimes your sin is between you, your ears and God alone, and your confession is to God alone. Sometimes your sin is against theoretically it's just me against you. Okay, I've hurt your feelings, I've been ill toward you, then my confession is between you and me and we're good to go. Does that make sense? However, the man in 1 Corinthians 5, his sin was such of a gravity it was impacting the whole church and Paul said, "We've got to deal with this on the level of which it's impacting." Does that make sense?

Give you a case in point. Several years ago, had a young lady who made some poor decisions in your life and she had lied about some things and because she had lied about some things, some people had gone to jail who didn't deserve to go to jail. It was a bad situation all the way around and she was just broken, she was torn up, which is a good problem, by the way, okay? This was after the fact. I mean, I was getting all the residual. And she came to me and she said, "Pastor Jeff, I've read the Bible and I want to come clean before the whole church and tell everybody." And I said, "Young lady, I appreciate your heart but you're about to tell thousands of people who have no clue what you've done what you've done. You're going to air your dirty laundry..." and that's not Matthew

18. Does that make sense? I said, "Who knows?" She said, "My Sunday school class." I said, "Go to them." I said, "Have you impacted them?" She goes, "Oh man, I've made a mess." I said, "Go to them."

Several years ago, I was a part of a service, I was not leading this service. This is an actual true story, cannot make it up. I wouldn't make this kind of story up. This was when I was in college back in those days. The school that I attended had an annual revival, okay? We used to do those on some college campuses and they don't anymore, but they did then. And so we're in the basketball arena and it's in the spring of my freshman year. There's probably 5-6,000 people at this event and they decided to have Open Mike Confession Night. Yeah, that's not gonna go good, is it? Well, they opened up the mike. There was a young man who went forward and he confessed something publicly, not something you want to share with anybody, much less an arena of 6,000 people. I knew this young man and I'm up in the stands and I'm thinking, "Oh, boy," because what they had asked us to do was if somebody comes and confesses, if you know them, come pray with them because that's what... I mean, they're really wanting help here.

Well, this young man confessed and went off to the side. Can you guess how many people went to pray with him? Nobody. So here I am, I'm like, "Okay, I actually do know him. Alright, guy." So I went down, I prayed with this friend of mine, okay? We get through the end of the spring, we get through the summer. Next fall, he doesn't show back up to school. He's from up in the Northeast, kind of the New Jersey area. So I gave him a call. I said, "Hey, man what's going on?" He said, "Ah, I'm not coming back." I said, "What's going on?" He said, "You were there that night, right?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I couldn't go to class, I couldn't walk across campus without people looking at me funny, without making statements about me." He said, "I can't go back there again." He confessed something to a group of people who had no business hearing the confession because we weren't a part of the group that he had violated. Does that make sense? There were a group of people that he probably needed to confess to but it was not us.

So here's the thing, sometimes we can get behind God, sometimes we get too far ahead of him because sometimes it makes us feel better about ourselves but it can do damage to our relationships not only with each other but also with the church at large. Now here's the difference. Here I stand on the platform. A lot of pastors throughout the years unfortunately have made some really bad decisions and you've seen them stand in front of the whole church and confess it. It's because they affected the whole church because they're the pastor. Does that make sense? In other words, what for you and, God forbid this ever occur, what for you might be a confession of three or four of your folks, or maybe for somebody else within a Sunday school class, there are some things that if they occur in my life or any pastor's life because of how it affects the church's life, it has to be addressed in front of the whole congregation. What is the rule for me may not be the rule for you. Does that make any sense?

[unintelligible]

Well, of course. Yeah, the question is doesn't the person that's doing the addressing of and, yes, all that. Now here's the deal. Do not go home tonight and start lighting people up, okay? That is not the purpose, okay? The purpose, now here's the thing, we don't talk about this a lot nowadays and maybe that's why the church is in the position it is, it's called church discipline is what it's called, which basically means addressing sin biblically, alright? Church discipline does not mean kicking people out, it doesn't mean shaming them and making spectacles of them, it just means addressing them so that – here's the point – so that they repent and live a godly life. The purpose isn't shame and the purpose isn't conflict. What you desire or should desire is for them to change and to be who they're supposed to be in the Lord and not what they're currently being in the Lord.

Churches have become lenient. Yes. We love to just sweep it under the rug and pretend, "Well, that never happened." Oh, it did and you have to address it. What happens if you don't address situations in your own personal life, your marriages, your children, your job? You say, "Well, I'm not going to worry." What happens? It always turns out bad. What we do is by doing that we get a short-term gain and a long-term loss, but I think the problem is, and this is just me speaking personally based on Matthew 18, the person who feels compelled to address it, I believe God often if not always calls somebody who does not naturally desire to want to have to address it. Does that make sense? If you wake up in the morning going, "I cannot wait to nail them!" God didn't call you to do it. I promise you.

[unintelligible]

No. Well, it ought to grieve us.

Okay, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

The church at large.

[unintelligible]

Right. Correct.

[unintelligible]

So the question is the church at large, the Jezebellian spirit, as you brought up, which would have been a wonderful transition to our Revelation study if we didn't have like three minutes left, so come back next week, but the Jezebel spirit, by the way, Jezebel, Ahab's wife in 1 Kings who there's a reason we don't name our daughters after her, in fact, her name means, you know, her name literally means "not married," because though she was married to Ahab, she was acting like she wasn't married. To your point, we're claiming to be the bride of Christ but we're really not. Does that make sense? That being said, on a one-on-one basis, if you know somebody, a part of the larger body of Christ,

this goes beyond just what we call the "big three sins," you know what I'm saying? This goes even to their false doctrine, false beliefs, denying of the person of Christ, whatever it may be. On a larger scale, I'm of the opinion and this is where the burden falls on these two shoulders, is whether it's here on Wednesday night or Sunday or whatever we do on this campus, when we stand up as a church and we declare the truth of Scripture, that we do not bow down and/or bend to that which is being propagated that is contrary to or Jezebellian in nature, and call it out not as, I'm making this up, not as, "You know, Church C, they're doing this," it's if you are aware of or anybody who does adopt this belief system understands this is contrary to the word of God.

Now I have no problem openly blatantly calling out these TV preachers because if we could get rid of them, we could have some really good cheap air time, if that makes any sense. But we do have the responsibility not just in personal rebellious sins but also in our beliefs to when it is put forth in our presence, we've got to deal with it. And by the way, we live in an age that is very Jezebellian, to use your terminology....

[unintelligible]

Oh yeah.

[unintelligible]

To proclaim and live the truth. That's why the prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord." Not the latest fad or opinion or idea. So to his point, it's bigger than just you or me theoretically. It's a much bigger concept.

So please hear my heart. Sin must be addressed but it must be addressed biblically, not in the flesh. If you ever desire to hammer somebody, God's probably not called you to address it. If your gut is wrenching going, "I do not want to have this conversation," then he may be calling you to do so.

I'm going to pray first and then we're going to get out of here.

Lord, as we leave this place, Lord, I thank you that you love us enough that you don't want to leave us in our rebellion. You made it very clear in Hebrews 12 that you discipline us and you put boundaries in our lives so that we will guarantee know that we are your children because you love us enough to discipline us. Lord, I thank you for what we've talked about tonight from your word and I pray that you would give us a spirit of discernment that we would go forth, Lord, not seeking anything but just to do what you call us to do, when you call us to do it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Alright, keep that outline for next week. Guys, thank y'all for your questions.