

Q and A for July

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. During this time, Pastor Gardner answers various questions.

Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn in Psalms chapter 100. Psalms chapter 100, I want to share a verse of Scripture with you. You say, why are you sitting down? Well, the main reason is so I don't get fussed at.

By some people in this room. How's that? But next week I will not be sitting down, Lord willing. And I appreciate so much your kindness to me. I cannot tell you how blessed I've been by your sweetness and your kindness and your gentleness.

I found it interesting that Will Lanham's mom, I was able to go to the hospital Monday. And there was Monday? Monday?

Yeah? Well, Sunday. Friday. Thank you there, Brother Chuck. Somebody needs to know something around here. And she said, boy, she was impressed with Vision Baptist Church.

[1 : 0 4] And so she was so impressed with the way you've done things and the kindnesses that you've shown. And so I truly appreciate that. I even appreciate getting fussed at a little bit by you. Because you wouldn't fuss at me if you didn't care.

And so I appreciate that. Every one of them. I don't know if you do this. I'm just going to share this with you. I'll be a five-minute preacher tonight. I hope you read your Bible every day.

And I hope you let it stay in your mind during the day. And so if you go to my blog or you subscribe to my blog, which is austergardner.net, you will see that today was Psalm 100.

And I entered the whole Psalm. And I thought about it quite a bit today. Would you look at that Psalm with me? I'm going to show you some things real quickly. And then I'll answer. I know several important questions and whatever else that I don't know that's coming.

I'll answer those too. Look with me. Psalm 100. I'd like to read all five verses. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with a gladness.

[2 : 0 6] Come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord, He is God. It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations.

You know, this is a Psalm. This is one of the songs they sang at temple, at synagogue, when they got together. It's one of the songs they sang in the New Testament.

Because if you go to Ephesians and Colossians, they sang Psalms also. They put music to them and they sang Psalms to them. And I just want you to, I'm going to show you something in just a minute.

But there are two fantastic truths that are told in the passage. Look at verse 3. This is a happy song. This is a I want you to be happy song.

[3 : 0 4] Verse 3 says, You ought to underline this.

Know that we serve the one and only true God. Know that He is God. Know that He is really God. Know that Jehovah, Lord, He is really God.

There are lots of gods, by the way. All the nations have gods. All the ethnic groups have gods. There have been gods for everything from plants and animals and nature and wind and sun and water and stars.

Everything has been a God. But one thing that the Jewish people knew. That God is really God. How many of you know God is God? Say amen. I mean, you came today to His house to worship Him.

He is God. And you can know that. And then look at what it says. It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. That's a fantastic truth. If we were sitting in this room and we were doing an added up and judge its thing.

[4 : 09] And we had all your good in one side and all your bad in one side. There are very few. I really don't believe there would probably be anybody in this room that would be a made person yet. You wouldn't be through.

You would only be hoping that you were one of His people. You would only be hoping that He loved you. You would only be hoping that you'd go to heaven. But these Jews were saying that the Lord is God and He made us.

And He made us. What we are is what He did. And you are saved today because of what He did. You're saved and you are who you are because of what He did. And you know there's some sweetness about you.

But you know who did it, don't you? He did it. And you've prayed for each other. You know who did it? He did it. You know you love souls and you care about people. And you're givers and you're prayers and you're church attenders.

But you know what it is, don't you? He hath made us and not we ourselves. And there's something really sweet about that. Because I have some really bad days. And I have some days I'm not all that excited about God.

[5 : 07] I'm not all that excited about stuff. And I have days when I mess up. I mean it's so bad I'm willing to admit it. And if I wasn't made by Him, I'd really be in trouble. I could be made and unmade and made and unmade.

Saved one day. Lost another day. On my way to heaven one day. On my way to hell another day. But that can't be true about me. Because He made us and not we ourselves. That ought to be a fantastic truth to make you happy.

Can you say amen? Alright, look at this. And then it says, We are His people. The sheep of His pasture. He bought us. We are purchased. Blood bought saints.

He purchased us. He paid a price for us. We belong to Him. We are His people. You are branded. You are His. You are marked.

Many of you may not know this. But in the book of Revelation. There will be a number. 666 assigned to those that belong to the devil. But you might not know that there is also in that same story.

[6 : 07] We will be marked too. And He will mark us so that the death angel. And all the bad angels. And all the other things that are coming through. They will know. Hey, they belong to Him.

Just like in the nation of Israel. They put the blood on the doorpost. The lentil and on the doorpost. And God's people were marked. You are marked today. You belong to Jesus. He bought you.

That ought to be reason to be excited. And to be happy. Can you say amen right there? Alright, watch this. That's the first truth. The first truth is that He is the Lord. And since He's the Lord, He made us.

And not we ourselves. Since He's the Lord, we belong to Him. Look at verse 5. Now, what kind of Lord are we serving? By the way, if you know anything about gods. I mean, they have had.

Throughout history, they've sacrificed their children. In the Old Testament, they used to pass their babies through the fire for Molech. There are places that have fed their children to the crocodiles.

[7 : 00] There are places that have taken the children that were born with handicaps. Or children that were twins. Or any number of excuses.

And they have killed them for their God. But we've never had a God like that. He has never, ever been like that. And look at what the psalmist writes. For the Lord is good.

For the Lord is good. You serve a good God. You serve a good God. He is good. He's good every day. He's good on the day you find out you got cancer.

He's good on the day you don't have cancer. He's good on the day you're having financial problems. And He's good every other day too. He is good. He is good. And His mercy is everlasting.

Now that's got to be fantastic. You see, if I were made by myself, if I were made by myself, if I did something that gained His merit and made Him like me, I could undo it.

[7 : 55] But I was saved by His grace and His mercy. And then He turns around and says, and my mercy is everlasting, by the way. And that means, you say, what does everlasting mean? It's a very complicated word.

It can be divided into two words. Everlasting. That means it lasts forever. That means it's an ever-ready battery. It's always ready. It's a whole lot better than that. It's everlasting.

Never wears out. God's always good in His mercy. It's always good. That ought to make us happy. And then look at this. And His truth endureth to all generations. You hold in your hands a copy of the Word of God.

And it has been true since before the world was founded. It was already in heaven. And then God just simply transmitted it to us. Wrote it down for us. Protected it for us.

And gave it to us. We have everlasting truth. This truth was real meaningful to people in the first century. But it is still meaningful today. 2,000 years later, it is still meaningful.

[8 : 51] It is still relevant. It is still powerful. And guess what that does to us? Guess what that does to us? When we come to church, this ought to be like the happiest place. And I'll tell you, y'all made a video for me.

I love that video. I've already, I've watched it several times. Thank you, Andrew. I know you probably were the main hand behind that. But you know, you know what I've noticed about that? You make too much noise. This is a noisy church.

Man, you were talking. You were laughing. You were cutting up. And I thought to myself, man, that's a happy place. And that's exactly what's going on here in Psalm 100. This is a happy place.

Look, look what he says. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye land. Do you want to underline that? Make a joyful noise. By the way, some of us, when we sing, that's all we do. It's a noise.

But we're happy about it. We're happy because we love Jesus. Make a joyful noise. Thank God he said that. But verse 2, look. Serve the Lord with gladness.

[9 : 48] Man, be happy. You are so happy in that video of anything. I just love the way I heard you laughing and cutting up and people messing around and the joy in the room. That's exactly what he's talking about.

And it's not because of your vision. And it's not because I'm the pastor. And it's not because we're put together. It's because he is the Lord. And he made us, not we ourselves.

And he is good. And he is true. And his mercy endures forever. So we serve him with gladness. You ought to come here with gladness. You ought to leave here with gladness.

You're saved. You know, I don't know what's going to happen in America. The fact is, I'm pretty concerned that the whole country may be going to crash. But you know what? I'm going to serve the Lord with gladness.

If this whole place falls apart, what I got is not falling apart. I'm born again. I might not have some of the stuff I got. But I'll have what's valuable. And that is Jesus Christ and his salvation.

[10 : 45] Look at the verse, if you would. It says, serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing. I won't do it because I've already talked longer than I meant to. But I was going to have Ed come back up and have you sing that song.

He likes singing. Who likes singing? Not Ed. He may like it too. But he likes it. He wrote this. He said, I like singing. I like singing.

When you come before me, come singing. Usually you sing when you're happy. Unless you're a country music star. But you... That was a joke.

I don't know nothing about music. But you sing happy. You sing happy because he's so good to us. He is so good to us. Now look at verse 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving.

And be thankful. Be thankful. Had the Lord taken me the day I found out I had cancer. Had I fought... Had I not gotten off of an operating table. I have only reason to be thankful.

[11 : 45] Man, he's been good to me. Would you think back just a minute about how good he's been to you? I think about the fact that God's let me be married to Betty almost 39 years. Boy, God's been good to me.

I think about the fact that God has allowed me to be pastor of Vision Baptist Church. Boy, God's been good to me. I think about the times in Peru and all the things I saw God do.

And I'm so thankful to him. He's a good God. He's a good God. We ought to come to his gates with thanksgiving. And into his courts with praise. Into his courts with praise.

Everything is... Man, I love you, God. Let me tell you how great you are. Let me brag on you. Let's lift him up. Let's praise him. Let's be thankful unto him. Let's bless his name. I don't know what that does for you.

But see, like that was my reading this morning. I've thought about that several times today. In Sunday school class, it happened to come up. And so what I want to ask you to do is every day you read a little bit of Bible and just find you one little tidbit. I read eight Psalms this morning.

[12 : 42] But that's the one I found. And something to think about. And this ought to be a place of joy. And I'm glad you're happy. Man, I'm glad you make a lot of noise. I want you to make more noise.

I want you to be so happy. Not because of vision. But because of Jesus. Jesus. Not because of the good singing or the good preaching. But because we serve a good God.

And we can depend on him and trust him and be excited in him. Serve him with gladness. How does that sound to you? If you think that's a good text and a good thing to think about, say amen.

Amen. All right. I'm going to answer the first question, which I'm asking myself. And then I'll let you ask the next one. But you may be wondering what's going on with the church plant. That's kind of a common question.

It's asking. I've kind of been out of the loop. Today's the first day I really have been. I told Betty, I said, man, coming to church this morning. It makes me feel like I saw people again. Not to make fun of homeschoolers.

[13 : 38] But you know how they say homeschoolers come out of their house to go, people, people. There are people. And I came to church. Then I was like, people, people. There are people. And sometimes I feel like I've been in prison for three weeks.

And three weeks has seemed like a lot longer than that. But I was so happy to be at church. But I've been out of it on getting the church started. But I want to give you good news that you may perceive as bad news.

But I perceive as very good news. Micah has stepped back. He'll not be the pastor of the new work. He'll not be doing that. You say, how can you see that as good news? Because I want who God wants to do things.

And I know that God moves slower than I move sometimes. And God moves faster than I move sometimes. I wondered why things weren't moving. But I now know that God was preparing for Micah to step down.

I respect Micah. And I respect the way he loves God. And he's characterized. He's a characterized man. And he would come to me and tell me and step back. But that leaves us without a guy to start the church.

[14 : 35] My goal is still September. But I'm not sure what God will do there. I hope you'll pray with me about that. I was talking to a preacher that before I got sick, we were supposed to get together.

And we had actually kind of tentatively set a date to get together. And then I messed up and didn't show up. Well, the meeting wasn't set yet. And I didn't show up to see it.

So I haven't talked to him. He hasn't talked to me since I've been sick. So there's a lot for you to be praying. For you to be praying about. About getting the church started. I have had some people tell me they're excited about coming and helping.

I know that God will work things out in his time. But the church is his. The church is his, not ours. And none of the... All your money's still safe. All your money's fine.

Brother John Pearson guards everything with a machine gun. And so you are safe. But I would like to remind you of a Bible verse. And I hope that you'll respect me enough to know that I am waiting on God's timing.

[15 : 36] And I want to start the church probably more than you do. I wanted to start another one the first year. I wanted to see us start a lot of churches. I still want to see us start a lot of churches.

There is a real well-known pastor, Lou Baldwin. He started a group called COBA, which is the Council on Evangelizing Black America.

And Mark Coffey was just in a meeting with him. And they were discussing starting a church. And he said, I was so frustrated. It took almost nine years before we could start the first church. So if I have to wait as long as he did, that's three years more.

But I pray to God that's not true. But would you please pray that God would open the door, show us where to go, show us what to do, and bring things together for us to start the next church and other churches.

We ought to start dozens of churches across America just like we do around the world. In Peru, things went a lot easier for me in a lot of ways. I think maybe the time was right and the field was ripe.

[16 : 39] And God provided men for me. But they messed up so much. And there were things I now know that I should have been more cautious about. I should have moved a little slower about.

And so we're going to do a little bit better about that this time. So that's my first question. And I would ask you how many of you are white. But since you're all waving at me with white, I mean, how many of you are all cool.

But since you're all waving white papers at me, I think I got an idea. Betty and I went out for lunch today. The first time in three weeks, I guess. And the family sitting right behind us were talking.

And they said, boy, that air conditioner wasn't working at church today, was it? And so Betty said, yes. I was in the only church that was hot today. But anyway, all right. Question number one, Bo.

My co-worker is a Jew. What's the best way to witness to them? What should I know about his beliefs? Well, you know, the truth of the matter is you know more about a Jew's beliefs than he does. If you go to church and you read the Bible, he does not know what his own Bible says.

[17 : 38] And you know that he accepts the first 39 books of your Bible. He accepts the first 39 books of your Bible. And my answer would be, my answer for you would be Isaiah chapter 53.

Why don't you open your Bibles there real quickly? Let's look at Isaiah 53. The main thing I would do is I would love them. You know, Jewish people have been severely mistreated.

They have been severely mistreated. There have been a lot of people that have been severely mistreated. In our country, we severely mistreated the American Indian. I don't think anybody can deny that.

We severely mistreated black people. I don't think anybody can deny that. In fact, as we severely mistreated women in a lot of ways, we sure kept them in their place till about 100 years ago. Made sure they didn't get to vote. Amen.

Punch them if they wanted to. But Jewish people have probably suffered more than anybody. Six million of them killed by Hitler in the Holocaust. And now people are trying to deny that the Holocaust ever took place.

[18 : 37] And so, you know, it would be a wonderful thing for them to know you love them. You love them. You know what's going to touch anybody more than anything else is that you love them.

And if they know that you love them, they're going to be much more impressed. They're going to be much more impressed with what you have to say if they know you love them. They know that you care about them. And they know that they're important to you.

Which means we grew up, many of us grew up making ethnic jokes about different kinds of people, different ethnic groups. And there are plenty of jokes about Jewish people that became a part of our culture and a part of our joking system.

And that probably should be gone as soon as we can get that out. We ought to be sensitive to them about that. But Isaiah 53 is a psalm about the Messiah.

A psalm about the Messiah. And here's where you go with them, just like you do everybody. Everybody has the same problem. Everybody knows they're sinners.

[19 : 41] Everybody knows they're guilty. Everybody knows that something's just not quite right. Jewish people often want to say, but we've suffered enough to pay for it.

If anybody suffered, we've suffered. And they want to say, we're tired of being the chosen people. We wish God would choose somebody else because we've been mistreated long enough.

So you don't need to go at them like you're the chosen people. You just need to love them. But if you get a chance, take them to Isaiah 53. In Isaiah 53, God told about a Messiah who would come and his name would be Jesus.

It's not clear here in Isaiah 53. But it is clear. It is clear that this person would carry the sins of the entire world. And by his stripes, we would be healed.

And there are so many verses about that. So I challenge you to memorize and study this verse. You know, don't be mean.

[20 : 42] So many people have said that the Jews killed Jesus. The Jews didn't kill Jesus. If you're going to nail it down, the Romans killed Jesus. The Jews couldn't kill anybody.

But it wasn't the Romans who killed Jesus. Jesus gave his life. And it's for too long we want to blame somebody. We act like. And by the way, if the Jewish people had have been the ones that killed Jesus, it's not the ones you know.

It's been 2,000 years. I don't think any of them are 2,000 years old yet. And so it's not the Jewish people. Jesus gave his life. In Isaiah chapter 53 verse 5.

He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed. You want to hear something? That was written by a Jew about Jews.

The original context of Isaiah 53 wasn't for the church. It's definitely applicable to the church. But Isaiah wrote a message to Jewish people.

[21 : 42] To Jewish people, how about how Jewish people would be healed? And here's where you go. You love them. Love them. Love them. And by the way, it doesn't matter who they are.

It doesn't matter what kind of sin they have. We want to love people. And then after you love them. And you show respect to them. And you're their friend. And you believe in them. You share truth with them.

And the truth is that they know they're sinners. The Bible says in Romans 2.15, I believe it is. That his word is written in our hearts. In our conscience.

Either excusing us or accusing us. Every person knows in their heart they've sinned. Everybody. I remember when I went to China the first time. I hadn't even met Jake Talby yet.

I was asked by a group if I would go to China. And figure out how we would go about reaching China. And I met with leaders all over China. I met with the Communist Party. And I met with different people.

[22 : 40] And we were discussing how you'd go about reaching China. And I was trying to be so cool. I was trying to be so... Such a missiologist. And so I thought maybe we really need to teach creation.

And let them know that God created the earth. And then I thought maybe we needed to teach them about God and not humanism. And I wrote down some different ideas. What was really wild was when Jacob Talby showed up in China.

He found that what really got them was this. They knew they were sinners. They didn't need a Bible to tell them.

There's a Holy Spirit. They didn't need a Bible. God put it in their hearts. And when Jake told them the truth. That Jesus died to save them. They believed.

And they accepted Christ. So you have the battle won. The Holy Spirit's already at work. And you just got to trust Him. Trust that He wrote it in their heart. Trust that He'll convict them.

[23 : 44] Be patient with them. Be patient. Most people aren't going to get saved in a one minute conversation. There's a young lady in this room. I think she's in this room. I don't see her right now.

But who's been witnessing to her boss. And used my surgery as a way to witness to her boss. And she does it in little sentences. Just a sentence thrown here.

And a sentence thrown there. And a comment made here. And a comment made there. And she can see the Lord working in that person. That's how it works. You're never going to know. You're not cool enough.

There's no cool answers to witness to anybody. There's no slick. No matter how many times people have told you about a slick, surefire way to get people to pray the prayer. Not true. It's the Holy Spirit of God.

Tell truth. Love people. Watch God. He'll do a work. Next question. Why do we believe hell is eternal scripture?

[24 : 43] Oh boy. Commentary. Somebody got a computer program out there. Help me out here. Let's see. How about that? Thank you, Lord Jesus. How about going to...

I love that. Go to Matthew chapter 25, verse 41. How about that one? We'll start there. Matthew chapter 25, verse 41 there.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, you cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Okay? Deep theological question.

Deep grammatical question. What does everlasting mean? It means lasting ever. It means lasting forever.

And he said, depart unto me, depart from me, you cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And so, I believe that hell is eternal because it's an everlasting fire.

[25 : 49] And then he prepared that for them. Now, let me see if I can't find something for you over maybe in Revelation.

Hold on just one second. Somebody else, if you'll quickly give me a verse, I would really appreciate it. I will not be embarrassed that you helped me at all. I appreciate all that help.

Okay. Revelation chapter 20, verse 10. The Bible says that the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Okay. Verse 10 context. If you've got your Bible open in verse 20, underline this.

Lake of fire. Lake of fire. Lake of fire. Lake of brimstone. And the beast and the false prophet and Satan have now been cast there. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

[27 : 00] That's really, those are very hard to understand words. I mean, you have to be extremely intelligent to understand forever and ever. It's actually is real simple, isn't it?

Forever and ever. And then he sees the great white throne. And then he cast us into the same place. And verse 23, not us, them humans and death and hell were delivered up, uh, delivered up the dead, which were in them.

And they were judged every man, according to their works and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Um, then let me just stop. I'll just give you some verses without telling you where they are, because they don't, I don't, they don't come to my mind, uh, where they're found.

The worm dies not, uh, uh, is, uh, is yes, sir. Would you hear that bow? Mark? 9 45.

I don't hear him. Well, what he's nine for Mark 9 45. I got a microphone, but I don't have a hearing aid and I need one. Mark 9 45. Thank you, sir.

[28 : 04] All right. Let's read that verse. Uh, okay. 9 44 where their worm died, not in the fire is not quenched. Let's get 43, 44, 45. Just see what the context is. And if I hand defend that he cut it off, it is better for thee to enter into life maimed and having two hands to go into hell into the fire that shall never be quenched.

43, 44 where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. And there's 45 talking. And if I foot offend thee. So there's the same thing. So those are there. There are all the verses that I know about would talk to you about it being eternal.

You say, do you like that? No, I do not like that. Uh, do I agree with it? Of course I do. Because if it's the truth, I just have to agree with it, whether I like it or not. So I believe that those who reject him will spend eternity forever and ever and ever.

And I would challenge you to do something. Take your Bible and open the, to the new Testament on your own. When you get home, if you have a computer program, or if you have your Bible, a good old concordance, a crudeance concordance, a young concordance, a strong concordance, a strong concordance.

Get any of them and look up hell, look up lake of fire, and you find out what the Bible says. Too long, too long is what we do. We don't like the idea of an eternal hell.

[29 : 19] And so what we do is we try to soften it. But if the Bible says an eternal hell, an everlasting hell, forever and ever hell, then that's the truth. So I accept that. Next question, brother.

You mentioned you have learned and realized many things through your trial with cancer and surgery. Could you share some of those with us? Well, Psalm 100 is one of them.

I think often that I am concerned about church growth and ministry, and I am pretty professional in my mind about I want to figure out what I can do to get a building and to build a church and to see the success that I would like to think of as success.

And while I was laying on a bed, not knowing if I would live or not, I realized God has been so good to me and he is so good to us.

This isn't a building I would choose. These aren't the circumstances I would choose for a lot of things to happen. But God is very, very good. I think the next thing I realized was that I wanted to be ready to die and die the right way.

[30 : 31] Had they not found the cancer the way they found the cancer, I would have simply waited until the cancer got out and got in the rest of my body. The doctors believe they got all of it.

They didn't sign me up for chemo or radiation, which they do often with people who have what I had, but they think they got it all. But I didn't know they would get it all. And I just thought this. If it's time for me to die, if it's time for me to die, I want to die right.

I want Vision Baptist Church and I want Betty and I want my children to know that I am going to show them I love Jesus right up to the end. It's easy for me to say God is good when you're 57, almost 58 years old, and the only thing you've ever had it wrong with you is your tonsils were out.

Got out when you were in seventh grade. It's pretty easy, but it sounds like God is good. And I've had a pretty rough several days in the last three weeks.

But in every one of those days, I've tried to tell him I love him and I thank him and I want to die right. And I know that means I need to get ready to die now. I don't know what day it was this week, yesterday or the day before.

[31 : 39] We are to count our days. Count our days. Not a person in this room knows how long they're going to live. And death always surprises us. Isn't that funny?

How can death surprise you? The longer you've lived, the more you know everybody's dying around you. I mean, how many people are still alive? How many of you have lost loved ones?

Everybody knows everybody's going to die, but not us. My daddy will die, but not me. My mother will die, but not me. My uncle will die, but not me. My grandparents will die, but not me.

We're the funniest people in the world. We never expect it to happen. And so we never get ready. We never get ready. We never ever think about it. And I thought to myself that I had to get ready for dying because you get scared.

And when you get scared, you get selfish. You get selfish. You know what? Dying is... You know, I think one of the biggest problems is about dying is how selfish we are.

[32 : 44] I think I deserve more time. I think my wife deserves more time. I think my children deserve more time. I think I didn't get to do enough ministry. I don't know that you know what you're doing, God.

And I'm a selfish person. And I realize that. I realize that. The second day, after I heard, I told Betty, I said, if I die, sell the house.

You can pay off all your bills and get you something a lot smaller. I give my kidney to Pastor Dan Reed. He's a pastor in Ackworth who is actually on a waiting list for a kidney.

He gets on and gets off the list constantly. His kidneys don't function. And, you know, you fill out these papers. Who's going to take care of your body? And who's going to give away your parts?

Will you let them give away your parts? And if you do, who do you let do that? So I set Betty up. I said, you get to make the decisions. And I put on there, don't give me any kind of heroic methods. So, you know, just if I'm going to die, let me die.

[33 : 47] And then I set Chris up to be second in command. And if his mother couldn't handle it. And then David after that. And then I got, I think it was Mark and Robert. They witnessed the document.

I mean, it just makes you think. And I would say this. We all ought to get ready to die. We all ought to get ready to die. Easily, as a pastor, I have gone to homes where somebody died.

And a car wreck coming home on the interstate. I have, as a pastor, I've watched people that were in the best health in the world. Runners and everything else die of a heart attack.

Watch the guy who's a bum and smokes and drinks every day live forever. And the guy who's healthy and never does wrong dies quick. You explain that one. Here's a guy that weighs 98 pounds.

And we were in Peru. And a guy came to see us. And he was taking pills. And Betty and I asked him what he was taking pills for. And he was like, I mean, he's just like a 98-pound pastor.

[34 : 46] And he's for cholesterol. And I can't remember what all he was taking pills for. And here I am. I weighed over double what he weighed. And he said, well, what are you taking pills for? I said, I don't take pills.

I don't need no pill. Bless God. I'm healthy. And I lost a kidney. And he's still going. So who knows? That's probably what I learned. Next one. You've got to get to one I know people ask.

And I'm going to answer. So we're good. Where is the call for faith in the Old Testament for the Jews? Where is the call for faith in the Old Testament for the Jews? Because in Acts 15, excuse me, in Genesis 14 and 15, and I know this because of Romans chapter 4, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

And where is the call for faith? I'm not sure. I'm not sure that if you're asking me for a verse, I don't think I can give you one. But I think you need to write down Hebrews chapter 11 and you need to go study that tonight.

And in Hebrews chapter 11, it gives you a history of Old Testament people who by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, everything they did, they did by faith. And so they were believing.

- [36 : 02] Where's the call for faith in the Old Testament? First thing that got in my mind right now, and it's not what I think you may be wanting, but I still think it's a good answer. And that is Abel and Cain come to give an offering.

Abel and Cain come to give an offering. Abel comes with a lamb. Abel comes with a blood sacrifice.

Cain comes with produce from the ground. And though it's not written clearly in the scriptures, when Adam and Eve sinned and were cast out of the garden, they covered themselves with fig leaves and Jesus came and covered them with skins.

Or God came, but I believe that was Jesus coming. And he covered them with skins. I believe those skins were probably from a lamb. And that lamb had to die and the blood was shed.

In Genesis, what is it, 3.15? In Genesis 3, verse 15, I believe it says that the seed of the serpent will...

- [37 : 03] There it is right there. I will put enmity between thee and the woman. I'll put enemy. I'll make enemies between you and the woman. Between your seed and her seed. And the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent.

And you will bruise his heel. A head wound is a dead wound. You get a head wound, you die. And you get a heel wound and you live. So Jesus was wounded, but it wasn't a forever dead wound.

He lived and the serpent died. Every time they had to give an offering of an animal, that was a call for faith. Every time they gave an offering of money, that was a time of faith.

Every time they obeyed God, it was a time of faith. Faith shows itself in obedience. So I believe all through the Old Testament, faith is being shown. But I know Hebrews 11 will give you plenty of proof.

And Romans chapter 4 will tell you about Abraham believing. Next question. What did Jesus mean when he said, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

- [38 : 11] And there's another question, I guess, somewhere in the queue there. If God would forsake Jesus, how do I know he wouldn't forsake me? I was warned about that one. So let me answer the question.

If you had your Bible and you went to Matthew chapter 27 and verse 46, you'd find the verse. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.

That is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? That was prophesied by the way that he would say that. But let me explain something to you. Here's what happened.

God placed the sins of the world on Jesus. You say, how do you know that? Isaiah chapter 53, where we were already about that, what I told you to use with witnessing to Jews.

In Isaiah chapter 53, the Bible says, In verse 6, All we like sheep have gone astray.

- [39 : 14] We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. So God reached down and put the iniquity. Now here's the deal. For you to be saved, for you to be saved, somebody had to pay your debt.

And Jesus paid our debt. You owed a debt. You couldn't pay. He didn't know a debt, and he paid your debt. And so the sins of the world are placed on Jesus. I believe in the substitutionary death of Jesus.

He died in our place, carrying our sins. God forsook him and allowed him to pay that debt. Now, maybe there's a little bit of confusion. He never promised he wouldn't leave himself, or he wouldn't leave Jesus, but he did promise he wouldn't leave you.

Hebrews 13.5. In Hebrews 13.5, he says, he will never leave us nor forsake us. And it says that all through the scripture, he's not going to leave us. So watch this. Jesus and God had a plan.

And the Bible tells me that Jesus himself is the author and the finisher of that plan. In Hebrews chapter 12, in verse 2, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and to sit down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[40 : 32] And so God, Jesus, wrote a plan. And he said, I'll take their debt. You can put their punishment on me. God allowed Jesus to pay my debt.

God allowed Jesus to bear my sin. And so he was forsaken in the sense that he carried our sin debt. It was a part of the payment for our sin.

But don't think that means by any stretch that God and Jesus were all of a sudden angry with each other. It was a plan made by our God before it ever happened.

Open your Bible to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. And go with me to verse 18. So he forsook him.

I deserve to be forsaken. Fact is, what happened in the Garden of Eden? What did God tell Adam and Eve? And the day you eat of that fruit, you will surely die. And they did die.

[41 : 33] And they were separated. And then God walked down and killed a lamb and covered them. And they were no longer separated. And God began saving people, didn't he?

And he went to the Jewish nation. He went to Abraham and he called out a people whose job it was to be a blessing to the nations and carry the gospel to the world. To witness to them through them seeing it in their lives.

And also they were to do it. In Psalm chapter 100 that I read to you beginning tonight. He said, sing all ye lands. It wasn't just for the Jews. It's just like today.

It was for all ye lands. And so God had a plan for salvation. And it shows all the way through the Old Testament. So don't get a dichotomy where you got an angry God and a poor beat up Jesus.

Instead look at what it says in 2 Corinthians 5.18. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. God reconciled us by Jesus Christ.

[42 : 35] And God gave us a ministry of reconciliation. Verse 19. To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Not imputing their trespasses. Not putting their trespasses on their account. He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. So when Jesus died, God was in Christ. So God's always loved you.

God paid the price. Jesus paid the price. Jesus had the plan. God forsook him as he showed to us the awfulness of our sin. And that's why holiness ought to be a cry from your heart.

You ought to want to live a holy life. You ought to want to love Jesus and do right because you're a born again Christian. And so he did not forsake him in that way. And is there a question where they ask, Bo?

Okay, well somebody had sent me and said that it was going to be asked. Just let me say this. Will he ever forsake us since he forsook his son? He won't have to. His son already paid the price.

[43 : 35] There will never be a need for him to forsake us. Sorry, but can I take you back to Psalm 100? The Lord, he is God.

And he hath made us and not we ourselves. And his mercy always lasts. His mercy never runs out.

We believe and teach what is called eternal security. Commonly called once saved, always saved.

And I think that is a big misnomer because I think for many of you that means I prayed the prayer when I was a kid. I know I live like the devil, but I'm saved. That's very likely not true. Your mama helped you pray the prayer and you never really meant it.

You never really got saved. And so the odds of you really loving Jesus are probably pretty slim. But we believe in eternal security. I believe that on the darkest day and when you mess up, the Bible clearly teaches that he loves you.

[44 : 35] I love this. If you were here Thursday night, you got to hear it. Before Peter goes in to deny Jesus three times, you remember?

Jesus said, Peter, you're going to deny me three times and a cock will crow and you will know. And Peter said, oh, everybody else may deny you, but I won't.

And Jesus said, yeah, you will. But I love you. And I'm praying for you. If that's not grace and mercy that lasts forever, I don't know what is.

While Jesus is in the judgment hall being beaten, a crown of thorns placed on his head, his back beaten, his beard plucked. Peter is outside denying him and Jesus is loving him and praying for him.

And then 40 days, it's going to be 50 days later, a little over 50 days, 51 or two days later, Peter will walk out and preach and 3,000 people will be saved and baptized in one day.

[45 : 45] And who does he give the privilege to? I'd have given it to one of the other 11. But you serve a good God whose mercy endures forever.

And so when Peter messed up, God was saying, sorry, Peter, you was a mess when I found you. And you'll be a mess till I get you to heaven and fix you totally up. But I love you. So let me just let me tell you something.

There's a bunch of messes in this room. There's probably some people playing with fornication, adultery, lying, cheating, stealing, arrogance, pride, hatred, envy, jealousy.

There's probably a whole lot of junk goes on in our lives. And it's kind of hard for me to deal with. But you know what he does, don't you?

He says, I love you. I saved you. And I made you. And I began a good work in you. And I'll bring it to pass. You will turn out like I want you to turn out.

[46 : 46] And while you're doing wrong, I'll still love you. And I'll still pray for you. And when it's over, I'll hold you up before all of my angels and all the seraphim and the cherubim.

I will hold you up and show my trophies of grace where I brag and say, you see the mess they were? Look how they turned out when a great God went to work in their lives.

That's a great God. You ought to praise Him and love Him for that. Any more questions, brother? Okay, you better hurry because it's late and these people are tired and they're sick. Oh, you got a lot of questions.

Okay, that means we're not going to finish them. All right. About two weeks ago, y'all ran out of questions. All right. Thank y'all so much. Can I just tell you when you go home today, don't go home thinking about what a good church you got.

Although that's good to think too. Go on thinking this. Man, I got a good God. Don't you have a good God? I mean, you serve a good God. How many of you, if you were honest, would have to admit to messing up in the last three months?

[47 : 47] Whether it was attitude or action or in any way you didn't do what a born-again Christian ought to do. How many of you just have to admit it? Did you know He loved you before you did it and loved you after you did it and loved you while he was doing it?

He loves you. What a good God. How can you sin against Him? Where sin abounded, grace is much more bound. Well, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer their end? Father, I love you. Thank you for these wonderful people. I pray your blessings in every one of their lives. And I'll give you praise for all you do.

In Jesus' name, amen. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.