

Q & A Service for November

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. During this time, Pastor Gardner answers various questions.

Alright, thank you very much. I think there ought to be a question here for us to start with tonight. This is our Q&A, and so if you have any questions, you're always welcome to put them in. I understand there's 14 of them tonight.

In Philippians chapter number 2 and verse number 1, what does consolation in Christ mean? Alright, turn your Bibles to Philippians chapter 2, verse 1.

You know, that's one of my favorite chapters in all the Bible. And consolation is a pretty simple word, really. It's consoled, isn't it? And it says, if there be therefore any consolation.

So the question here is not about whether or not he is consoling me. It is like, yep, there is consolation in Christ. And you know that, and so I'm putting a condition here.

[1 : 03] If you guys know that God comforts you and God consoles you through Christ, and you have all of that, then you're going to step into verse chapter 2 and further down.

But let's go over what the consolation is. I deserve to go to hell. I deserve to go to hell. How many of you deserve to go to hell? We deserve to go to hell. We are sinners.

We're filthy. And we know there's no reason we ought to be loved. And then God says, I'm going to send Jesus. And I'm going to have him pay the price. And he's going to pay for your sin.

And he's going to give you eternal life. And he's going to give you, that's life forever. And that's what God's going to do in your life. And so that's the consolation. I'm consoled because I know I'm loved.

You know what Ed preached just a minute ago, that's the consolation. He's with me. What's the consolation? I'm going to heaven. What's the consolation? I believe Brother Frick prayed it a few minutes ago.

[2 : 00] And he said, hey, death lost its sting. And we're going to heaven when we die. And so all of those truths are the consolation. That's what ought to thrill our hearts.

We ought to be excited. I am serving God. I'm his. I belong to him. He paid the price. I'm going to heaven. I'm a new creature. Old things have passed away. Hey, all my mess ups are under the blood.

All the junk that's against me has been nailed to the cross. The father, I loved it this morning. You didn't catch it. And I never have enough time to settle. Did you notice Jesus isn't going to accuse even the Pharisees? Did you notice that?

He said, I'm not the one that accuses you. Moses does. And so I want you to know that when he took away the ordinances written against us in Colossians chapter 2, he took them and he nailed them to the cross.

But I think since you asked me that, I would like to show you. Here's the point. He knew everybody in the church knew this. I can only imagine tears running down their eyes when he said this. How many of you feel different because he saved you?

[2 : 59] How many of you have a peace because your sins have been forgiven? How many of you know that you're loved now? How many of you thought you were nothing or nobody until Jesus came along? He said, if that's the truth, if there's any comfort of love, if God's given us some comfort, if there's any fellowship of the spirit, if there's any bowels or a heart full of mercy.

Now go to chapter 2, verse 2. Look what he says. Chapter 2. Philippians 2, 2. Fulfill ye my joy. So really, now go back to verse 1 and I'm through because of the 14 questions.

You know what he said in verse 1? He said, all these things are great stuff and you know it. You guys know that in Jesus and salvation and God, we have grace and things are wonderful.

And if that's the case, then here I've got an instruction book. We don't do anything to get the consolation. This is an important notice here.

We don't do anything to get the consolation. He says, if there is. How many of you have it? How many of you have experienced it? You got that by grace. Then because you know that's happened, now I want you to take the next step, which will be to live out who Jesus is in you and to become a servant.

[4 : 06] So that's a tremendous chapter about that. Question number two. Is alcoholism hereditary? Yeah.

All sins hereditary. So, yes, it is. Let's see. Go with me to Romans chapter 5. Let me show you something maybe that will help us with that.

That's a good question. Is alcoholism hereditary? And, you know, that's really not a Bible word. This may offend you, but alcoholism is a nice word. We put on it to make it sound like a sickness.

But in the Bible, it's a sin. It's not called alcoholism. It's called drunkenness. Being a drunkard. You say, I don't like that word. I know. You're not supposed to like that word. You know, alcoholism ought to be thought of almost like cancer.

But the beautiful thing about alcoholism, you could avoid it. You know, you can't stop from getting cancer, but you can stop from taking that first drink. Oh, say, man, right there. You know, if you didn't take that first drink, you wouldn't get that disease.

[5 : 07] Let's see. Romans chapter 5. Let's see. Start in verse 12. Let's just use verse 12.

I'll stop there. Go back to verse 12. Watch this. One man sinned, and when he sinned, death entered into the world, and death passed on all men, for all have sinned. And here's the Bible story.

We have built in us a tendency to sin. We are by nature, by race, we're a fallen race. Romans, let me see. Romans chapter 5.

I think I'll just show you something. Look at verse 14. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who's the figure of him that it was to come.

Verse 14, that's two Adams, and I won't have the time to show you both of those. It mentions that in verse 50, chapter 15. But Adam sinned, and so he started a whole race of people. That were sinners.

[6 : 12] Verse 15, but not as the offense, so is the free gift. If through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ has abounded unto many.

Not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift for the judgment was by one to condemnation, the free gift of many offenses unto justification. So watch this real quick, and I'll leave that one.

Adam sinned, and when Adam sinned, everybody in his family was like him. Adam's a sinner. His wife's a sinner. They fail. And then everyone, their children were like them. They came out with their nature, like father, like son.

And everybody born to Adam's like Adam. And all of us were born to Adam. So we're sinners. We're sinners not only by nature. We're not only sinners by nature. We're sinners by choice. You can't blame it all on Adam because when you got a chance to make a decision, you made a decision to do wrong.

You chose to disobey God. So the question was, is alcoholism hereditary? I'm going to say to you, I'm going to say to you that all sin, all sin is hereditary.

[7 : 17] I'm going to say to you that what my daddy did affects me greatly. My father, my father was a sinner, and therefore I'm a sinner. Now then, if you want to talk, is alcoholism a sin, is that sin specifically hereditary?

You know, my dad was an alcoholic, a falling down drunk by the time he was 26 when he married my mother. And when he married my mother, he was drunk.

And he told me there was hardly a day he wasn't drunk. And then one day he showed up at a church and somebody opened a Bible, preached the gospel. And then one day he quit being a drunk and became a saint.

And he never had another drink at the other day of his life. God completely transformed him. And so he didn't pass down to me that gene. Although when I was a boy, when I was a boy and there was any chance to drink, I was terrified of it because my daddy hated it.

My brother didn't. My brother did get into drinking, but the Lord worked in his life, saved him, redeemed him, and changed that. So I'm going to say, yes, it is hereditary, but probably not the way you thought I was going to say it.

[8 : 24] Next question. According to 2 Kings 15, 1 through 4, what were the high places, and why did some kings stop short at removing them as they purged the land?

Let's go back to Genesis chapter 11, and maybe that will be a good enough answer for that. Let's go to Genesis chapter 11. And by the way, most everything that's wrong you can find in Genesis, because Genesis is the beginning of all of our mess-ups.

It's also the beginning of God's goodness. It's the book of beginnings. And, you know, if you make a stop through Romans, you can get cleaned up, and then you get to Revelation. You can find out everything ends.

You can either go to heaven or to hell. But I would say to you, look at Genesis chapter 11 and verse 4. It says, and they said, go to, let us build us a city whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.

And so they were building a city and a tower whose top might reach to heaven. Now, there are people that argue about what that amounts to. Was that a place, an observatory? Observatory, or what it was.

[9 : 27] But here's the whole point. These high places were where lost people. You see, our God has never been worshipped with idols. It is against his nature, his being, his person to want to be described by any kind of image.

He wants nothing ever made. Don't make an image in his name. Well, everybody else has to always have an image. They got to have something they can look at and touch and feel. And if you'll go with me to South America, every city I'll take you to has images, has worship places on the tops of the hills.

And so the false religions of the world like to get high places. I always tell people the devil only has a handful of tricks.

He's not real smart. He's not like God who knows everything. And so everywhere you go, just like in the Old Testament, the high places, the high places where the lost people worship. And if you go there, you'll find that same thing.

And so what that, now go back to the question. But what happens in the question is that they don't want to take a strike right at the heart of the disease.

[10:37] They don't want to strike right at it and remove those. They don't want to make everybody mad. Because if you want to make people mad, mess with their gods. By the way, that's why you don't like messages on money.

That's why you don't like messages on giving your children to serve God. That's why you don't like messages on anything that might say to you, humble yourself and know that he is God. And if you want to make a people mad, you talk to them about their gods.

It will always make them mad. And so these guys said, we're not going to go up there and remove these worship places at the top of the mountains. Sometimes there should be no, there's no special, you know, I do not have to be at the top of a mountain.

Maybe I could give you one more verse that just comes to my mind. Go with me to Psalms 139. Psalm 139. And let me just show you this. It doesn't matter where you are. Did you know if you're on a high place or a low place, he knows about that.

And he can meet you there and he hears that. And your very thoughts are words he hears and knows about. Let's see. Let's see.

[11:42] Go down to verse. Let's go to verse 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, you're there. And if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me. Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. So here's what the basic truth is.

You don't need a high place. It doesn't matter where you are. God is there. God hears and answers prayer. We don't have to go to high places. I'm not against.

I'm not against any of the things. Like people love to do Easter sunrise services. Sometimes they like to go on the top of a mountain. And that's all fine. I like the mountains. I like to look at things. But you have to be there for God to deal with you.

You can be anywhere. And so they were worshiping a false God at the top of those mountains. Next question. This question comes from one of the kids in Children's Church. Has Jesus ever smiled?

[12:39] And if he has, where does it say it in the Bible? I even know which kid. He told me. He said, you've had it. You're answering my question tonight. So I've been thinking about this one.

Where is he? I'm looking for him. There he is. Right back there. A little troublemaker. All right. So you shouldn't have asked that question. You're going to listen. All right. Let's go to. Let's go first to John 1135.

Then we're going to Isaiah 53. Then we're going to Proverbs 1. And I'll be finished with this question. I don't know. He asked me. And I told him. I said, well, sure. I think he probably did.

He said, you can't show me a verse. And he said, you say we have to know it from the Bible. So let me show you what I do know from the Bible. In John 1135, Jesus wept. I do know he cried.

I really believe that story. That's the story of where Lazarus dies. And when Lazarus dies, Jesus weeps. I don't really believe he wept because Lazarus died. If you read the story, he wept because they didn't believe him.

[13 : 34] They didn't trust him. He didn't have to weep because Lazarus died because he knew where Lazarus would go. And the facts are, if you truly, if we truly understood what happens when our loved ones that are saved die, there would be no weeping on our part.

We'd be weeping out of jealousy. We'd be like, good night. He got to go to heaven and it's a wonderful place. But we look at everything from an earthly perspective. Isaiah chapter 53 about verse 3.

I think it's what we're going to look for. Isaiah 53 about verse 3. Look at this. This is what it says about him. It's talking about Jesus. The whole chapter is about Jesus. It's a prophecy. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

We hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. So I will tell you that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And there probably was a pretty strong heaviness about him. Chase, it was probably a pretty strong heaviness. There was probably these people are going to hell. My father loves them.

[14 : 38] I'm here to die. I came to die. I came to seek and save that which is lost. In Romans chapter 9, the apostle, I believe it's 9, the first three or four verses, Paul said there was a heaviness about him and there probably was.

And so I want you to know that the Jesus that we serve came here knowing he was going to die. He lived in the shadow of a cross every day of his life. He came as a man, as God.

He knew he would overcome, but he was in the shape of a man also, in the form of a man. And he is going to die on a cross. And he is going to pay the ultimate price for our sin. And all of the consequences of our sin would be put on him.

And that had to be horrible. I'm going to give you one verse where I think he may laugh. Proverbs chapter 1, and this is not a good verse. Proverbs chapter 1, if you will.

And let's go to verse, let's start in verse 24, 23. Proverbs 1, 23.

[15 : 42] Now this is wisdom talking here, but wisdom is almost like Jesus personified it. The word tends to indicate who he was. I'm not positive this is about Jesus. So if you wanted to argue with me about that, I wouldn't argue with me, argue with you.

I would just say, okay, but look at what it says. Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you, and I will make known my words. If you'll turn when you're spoken to, if you'll turn when he calls your attention.

Verse 24. Because I have called, and you refused. I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Verse 25. But you have said at naught all my counsel and with none of my reproof.

I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer.

They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For they that hated, they, for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my reproof. They would none of my counsel.

[16 : 51] They despise all of my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own devices and be filled with their own, the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. Let me tell you what I think goes on.

I guess I'll take you to one more place. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. I want you to know we live in a day of grace. Today, Jesus stands ready to save.

And today you can accept Christ as your personal Savior. Today you can have your sins forgiven. Today he offers the free gift of salvation. But that day ends. And when you die, there will be no other chance.

When you're dead, it's over. The judgment will be there. And you will not get another chance. And in Proverbs, it uses the word wisdom. But it would appear to me that that word wisdom may be talking about Jesus.

And he has held out his hands. He has offered for you to come. He has invited you to accept him. He's invited you to trust him. He's invited you to come to him. And you refuse to come to him. And the day will come when he says, so you chose to disobey me.

[17 : 52] So you chose not to follow me. So you rejected me. You would not. Just like it said in John chapter 5 today. He said, I wanted them to come, but they would not come.

And so he said he would laugh. You say, I just don't think how that could apply. Let me take you to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. And I'll show it to you in the New Testament. I think it might apply. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

And we'll start in verse 9. He said, Those are some of the most horrible, horrific, terrible verses in the scripture.

Here's what it amounts to. And I believe it's referring to the rapture. I believe that people are given an opportunity to accept Christ. And today you're given that opportunity. Today you're called on to realize you're a sinner.

Today you're called on to humble yourself. Today you're called on to trust Jesus. And you say, no, I'm not going to do that. And he sticks out his hand and you refuse to accept him. He gives his reproof and you refuse.

[19 : 23] In fact, some of you almost have this thought. But if there was a rapture, if it really happened, I'd get saved. I don't think you will. I think if that rapture happened, you would not get saved. Instead, you would get a strong delusion.

He would send a thing to make you not believe because you refuse to believe in the day of grace. You can't play with God. He's God. He is God.

Totally, completely God. And look, if you would, I want to show it to you again so you can go with it this time. Verse 10, he says, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish because they receive not the love of the truth.

John 1 11, he came to his own and his own received him not. They receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause that they receive not the love of the truth, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

And they that they all might be damned to believe not the truth, but had pleasure and unrighteousness. And Proverbs is talking about pleasure and unrighteousness. And 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, it's all about that man of sin, that man of iniquity, and he'll be revealed.

[20 : 29] So did Jesus smile? I don't know. I think maybe he laughed. I know that he's a man of sorrows. I know that he's a man acquainted with grief. I know that he hurts. And I know he wants everybody to be saved.

Next question. I could get a half amen out of that last one. It wouldn't hurt. What is the difference between kindness and loving kindness in Psalms 89 49?

Just put it up there real quick. But I'll just say real simple. It's kind and loving kind. So let me see Psalm 89.

Now, Lord, where are thy former loving kindness, which thou swearest unto David and thy truth? I don't see them both in that verse.

Are they in there? I would just say to you that kindness is God's tender mercies and grace extended toward us. And that's loving. And they like to use superlatives like we do.

[21 : 26] And they like to brag on how good our God is. And by the way, I would say to all of you, I wish I could somehow get across. I say this on my blog. If any of you are subscribed to that, don't you dare fall into the trap of believing that the God of the Old Testament was a mean God.

He was a sweet, kind, generous, loving, merciful, gracious God from day one. He never changes. He's always been and always been just like he is. And by the way, everything you know about Jesus applies to God the Father.

You say Jesus is wonderful. Well, God's wonderful because Jesus and God are the same person. You say, no, they're not. They're two different ones. I know, but they're still the same one. And so in the Old Testament, our God's a sweet and wonderful God.

And Lord, where are thy former loving kindness? God, where are all the great blessings you were putting on us before? Next question. Why do we have the men come to the front to pray?

Because I like it. Why do we have the men come to the front to pray? Well, first off, I saw it at Johnny Hunt's church, the First Baptist Church of Woodstock, one time. And I visited there probably six years ago.

[22 : 24] And I said, man, that is neat. Except in their church, they probably had 700 men go forward. In our church, we might have seven men go forward. But, you know, to me, let me just say this to you.

Christianity and the church ought to be manly. We have wives that are our helpmeets, but it ought to be manly. Our pastors are to be men. Our deacons are to be men.

Men are to have the positions of authority. That's a biblical position. And so I like it for two reasons. One, there's nothing to it. Let me just say this. If y'all decide you don't like it, we won't do it. But I like it because I like to see the men get on their knees.

I like it because I like it when all the men come up here and they pray for their wife sitting in the seat. I like it because everybody in the church says, goodnight, there's a lot of men there. I like it.

So you say, why do we do it? Because I like it. That's it. No other reason. Not a good reason. I just like it. And we started doing it before you got here. So I like it. But we used to do that.

[23 : 24] And there wasn't hardly anybody came up. But it's a neat thing. I saw. I'm looking for him. I saw a man and his son. Where is he? Right there. I saw a man and his son right there praying together.

I liked it. I'll just be honest with you. He stood up and he had his arms on his boy's shoulder. And he started back. I was just like, well, I like that. So I didn't know that question was coming. But I'll tell you why we have the men come to the front to pray.

Because I like it. Next question. What was the significance of Hananiah's death in Jeremiah? Oh, Lord, help me, Jesus. We'll sing a song in a minute and I'll read that chapter.

Next question. I don't know. I don't remember Hananiah that good. But I'll have that one for you next month. Put that down and remind me to look that chapter up. Verse 14 of them.

We got some more to go. Who is starting pastoring the new church? Not me. How many of you came and heard Brother Jessup at least on Thursday night?

[24 : 24] Raise your hand. How many of you heard it? Okay. If we start more churches here in Atlanta, first off, we'll reach lost people.

You've got to get out to get to people if you're going to start a church. And so we'll reach lost people. And right now I'm praying and Brother Trent and I at least I know are praying over Roswell.

That's the place that we're the most interested in. And we'll see more people raised up to go to the mission field. We'll see more people raised up to give money to support missions. And we'll see the cause of Christ go forward.

And we won't be a church that's not got that many like it. When I went to Arequipa a long time ago, I started in one church and I never knew what God would do.

But over the next 18 years in Arequipa, God allowed us to see many, many, many, many, many churches started. I don't know. Now, I didn't start them at all. It was our church and our guys, but probably 60, 70, 80 churches were started and churches were starting churches.

[25 : 27] Sometimes I'd meet a guy and he'd say, I started a church out of so-and-so's church and I didn't even know it. And so I want to see us start churches. I would love, I've said since we got here, I want to start 100 churches in Atlanta. Brother Jessup was the kickstart I needed when he came.

Now, who's going to start and pastor the new church? I hope you will. I hope you'll go down and knock on doors with us. I hope that you'll pass out literature with us. I hope you'll pray with us. I hope you'll give with us and I hope it'll be the whole church.

I tried to start a church in downtown Atlanta and some of the students went with me and we flopped. It was poor planning on my part and poor leadership on my part and the Cabbage Town work did not go.

But I think it would have gone if you'd have been with me. And I think if the church had been involved, it would have gone. Roswell is close enough that anybody and everybody here that wanted to could go there and help. Who will be the pastor?

There is a young man that I have in mind. But I don't know what God has in mind. And so we have eight months. And so we won't pull anybody off the mission field and we won't tell anybody what to do.

[26 : 28] That's not how I do things. I don't call men. I don't send men. I don't tell men. But God does and we'll recognize it. And so before it happens, I hope I'll be able to present a man to you and you'll say, yes, it's obvious he ought to be the man and he'll be able to do that.

And we will have a sister church. I would love to have 100 churches around this area where somebody stood up and said, we're going to see Jesus as God. We're going to go straight to the Bible.

No hobby horses. No beating up on people. Loving people. Loving people. Caring about people. Sending missionaries. \$100,000 a year for six years.

We've given that. We've given over \$100,000 for six years now. \$600,000. What if another church did that? So I'm not sure who the guy will be. But between now and then, I wish you'd pray.

I wish you'd beg God. Show us who it ought to be. Call him out. Get him. Maybe somebody new will come. And I'll tell you this. I'm asking God for an African-American too. The 44% of Fulton County is African-American.

[27 : 31] I had a guy tell me this week. He said, I work with African-Americans. I said, I'd be glad to have you do that. Come on and we'll do that. But, you know, I'd love to have some just solid, solid. I'd like to have about half.

I'd just love to have a whole bunch of African-Americans in this church and every church. So it's not that I want to do that separately. But I do believe that there's Indians down there. There are Koreans down there. There are African-Americans.

There are yuppies and dumpies too. There's just a little bit of everything. And I'd just like to see God raise up somebody of every kind to help us reach every group. I will be flying out tomorrow morning. I'll be back Saturday night at my house somewhere around 2 o'clock probably.

But I'll be preaching in Long Beach, California. And that church is one of my favorite churches in the world. And they have, I don't know how many nationalities, but they have probably 50 or 60 nationalities.

They have churches. They have a church in Spanish that runs 12 or 1300. A great pastor named Luis Ramos. Luis Parada, excuse me. Luis Parada is the pastor of that church.

[28 : 36] If he saw that on that video, he'd hang me. Pastor Wilkerson is the pastor of the English church. They have a church in Korean and Cambodian. And I have no idea what else.

Their song leader is the Filipino. It's just a wonderful church. And I would like to see God do something big in downtown Atlanta. Next question. According to Lamentations 319, what does Wormwood and Gol mean?

I think some children's church people are searching for stuff to stump the preacher. All right. Let's go to Lamentations. Lamentations. Lamentaciones.

I'm fixing to lamentar. You know what Lamentations means, don't you? It means to cry. And I'm about to do that. Lamentations 319. Remembering my affliction, my misery, the wormwood, and the gall.

Bitterness. Bitterness. Pain. Suffering. Words that go with that.

[29 : 39] One of the beautiful things about it would be if you look in the verse, those are all going to be basically synonyms. And God is just saying over and over the same thing.

He's saying, remind affliction, my misery, the wormwood, and the gall. And I'm trying to think of what the wormwood is in Spanish to remember that word. But the whole point is he is lamenting.

He is crying. He is hurting. He says in verse 20, my soul hath them still and remembers and is humbled in me. He is hurting. Verse 16, he has broken his teeth with gravel stones.

Everything in his life is falling apart. And so those are words that simply refer to how much he's hurting. You know, this is the weeping prophet. This is the guy whose heart is broken because of the wickedness of God's people.

And those are words that are being used to tell about his hurt. Next question. 14 minutes of children's church kids shooting at me.

[30 : 39] How do you witness the opposite sex as a testimony and not cross any lines? Don't. Don't. Don't. You know, I think you can witness to anybody, anywhere you are, if you've got your wife with you or your husband with you.

I think you can witness to anybody if you have people helping you. I would be very careful. I am going to tell you from the bottom of my heart, I will not, I will not have a friendship with anyone of the opposite sex.

More than a very cordial, very distant relationship. I have several women that I love very much. My mother, my mother-in-law, my wife, my two daughters, my two daughter-in-laws, and my three granddaughters, four granddaughters.

And so that's all the girls that are legal for me. And I would say to you that you as the, if you're a man and you're the pastor of your family, I would say to you, you should have your wife share the gospel.

When you talk to somebody about something like salvation, there, there is, you know, that the person that leads you to Christ, at least with a lot of us, there's almost a special love for that person.

[32 : 02] I will never forget Carlton Flowers, though. I never had a personal relationship with him. I was seven years old. He was my pastor. I have no idea how old he was, approximately my dad's age. So 25 or 27 years older than me.

I was seven. He was probably in his mid thirties, but he showed me the gospel. I accepted Jesus. I Googled him quite regularly trying to find him. He's probably dead, but you know, he's somebody very special.

He told me about Jesus and I got saved. I liked that. I just liked the idea of old Carlton Flowers. And so I'm going to tell you that give a gospel track, invite them to church, take your wife to see them.

But don't develop friendships with the opposite sex. Don't text them. Don't get a cup of coffee with them. Don't sit and talk with them. It's a matter of appearances that people could think something.

It's also a matter of they could think the wrong thing because you help them. Don't let them cry on your shoulder. Just be careful.

[33 : 01] You say, well, I think that's just ridiculous. Well, it probably is. But I would rather keep 38 years of marriage and there not be any doubt about me and another woman as to have any question ever raised.

Next question. According to Jeremiah 51, 44, God will punish Baal, the God of Babylon. How can God punish a God that was an idol? Was Baal an actual person?

I would meet a second Corinthians chapter 10, I think. Okay. Wait a minute.

This might be 1 Corinthians 10. I'm dumb as a rock sometimes. 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Let's go there. First off, Baal, the God of Babylon, was an idol, but he was worshipped by these people.

And I want you to know this. Are you ready for this? All the false gods are demons. And we don't like to talk about that.

[34 : 08] And we don't like to think about that. And we don't like to. And you'd say, well, you see a demon behind everything. I never saw an image in Peru. I didn't know there was a demon behind that image.

And you say, I don't really believe that. I'm going to read you the verse that I would use to say that. Again, I wouldn't fight with you about this. But God's going to punish all of those who would try to take worship.

In Isaiah chapter 14, in Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28, verses that most of us that say the Bible believe refer to Satan and Lucifer and how he lifted himself up and how he rebelled against God.

And how he said he walked in Eden and all of these things. And he was proud of his looks. And he said, I will like seven times ascend. And I will be God.

And I'll be worshipped. And I'll be like the Most High. Which was saying, I'll be like Jesus. The Mormons actually believed Jesus and Lucifer were brothers. To show you how ridiculous people can get.

[35 : 06] And so God will punish a false God. Before I read the verse in the book of Revelation, you're going to find an Antichrist and an image. And there will be a spirit behind that image.

That image will do wild and crazy things. And different things are going to happen. And it's Satan at work. And God will punish Satan, all of his demons, and everybody else.

And put an end to that. So it's in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 18.

The Bible says, Behold, Israel after the flesh. Are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar? What say I then? That the idol is anything? Or that which is offered and sacrificed to idols is anything?

But I say. He said, am I telling you that an idol is anything? No. It's just an idol. But look at verse 20. But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, demons, devils, and not to God.

[36 : 09] I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. So I believe that anything that would lift itself up in any way to be God, there are demons around that.

I believe that he blinds eyes and deafens ears. I believe that he deceives the heart of men. And I believe that that idol right there would be demonic power associated with it.

But I'll tell you that in Arequipa, when it did not rain for a couple of years, right before Betty and I arrived in Arequipa, it didn't rain.

And the Catholic Church flew a helicopter. The military flew a helicopter out to Chapi where the image, which is like the Virgin of Guadalupe, which is Mexico. But in our town, they have them everywhere.

It was the Virgin, the Virgin of Chapi, the Virgin of Chapi. They flew out and picked up her image, flew it around the city of Arequipa one or two times it rained the next day. You say, do you really believe that had anything to do with it?

[37 : 06] I have no idea. But I'll tell you this. I know dozens, if not hundreds, of Peruvians that would tell you they prayed to an image and their prayers got answered. So they sacrificed to devils, not to God.

And I don't want to have fellowship with devils. Next question. Boy, that one shocked you, didn't it? What can we do now to help with the church plant? I bet Trent Cornwell put that one in there. That's a planted question.

That smile on his face says it is. I knew that. Okay, Trent, let me tell you what they can do. First off, Brother John will be leading us and taking an offer.

And we'd like to see God give between \$10,000 and \$20,000 through you between now and Christmas to help us start another church. Second, you can be praying. First, you pray. Second, you give.

You can be praying. Next thing you can do is you can be inviting everybody you know. You ought to be bringing people to our church. There are several families that bring visitors. And everybody ought to be reaching out to everybody you know and trying to get them to Christ and get them here.

[38 : 10] If you have any friends in that area, you ought to get in touch with them and tell them we're going to start a church. And then we're going to ask you to help us prepare material, pass out the material, and get involved from the ground up so that that church, just like we started this church, a handful of us met in John Pearson's basement.

Just before, just in the month of December of 19, 19, 2005, December of 2005, we met in the basement of the Pearson home. And we prayed and we preached and we talked and we thought about starting a church.

And you enjoy that today. You enjoy that blessing. Well, what would happen if we could do this again? And you can get involved on that from the ground floor. Next question. Can you explain the letter written to Shemaiah and Jeremiah 29?

No, but I will next time. Next question. Is this the one where he tears the Bible up and cuts the Bible up? That's not that, is it? I don't know. Go ahead. I'll do that one next time. I'll be ready.

This is the last question. What is Christmas on the north side? I'm willing to bet Trent put that one in there too. Okay. On, I think, December the 11th.

[39 : 18] Is that correct? December the 11th. We're going to have Christmas on the north side. And what we're going to do, it's a way for you to invite your friends to come and hear the gospel. So we'll have church at the regular time.

We did this several years ago. Brother Chuck reminded me that it was well more than two years ago. But probably, I think Brother John said in 2007. And so what will happen is we'll have a regular church service.

And we want you to invite your friends to church to participate with you and to enjoy Christmas on the north side. And what we'll do is after church, we'll have special singing going on outside.

We'll all go outside the church. And we will have a couple of, I don't know how many bonfires we'll be going. And they can roast marshmallows, cook some hot dogs or whatever like that.

Our plan is to have a horse and wagon or buggy kind of thing that we'll ride to the end of the road. And there will be a snow machine. And there will be everything else that we can do to have people come here and just enjoy some time together for Christmas.

[40 : 26] We did this in 2007 and got quite a few visitors to come. It's a good chance to preach the gospel. They come in the service. After the service, we go out and we enjoy that time together.

Horseback riding. Was anybody here when that happened? If you were here, raise your hand. Okay, some of you were here. So we'll be doing some horseback riding. Not horseback, wagon riding. I don't remember all that we did. And Trent will put it all together.

But here's what your job is. Your job obviously is to help with it. But bigger than that is this. Your friends may not want to come to regular church. And they might say to you, they're just going to preach the Bible and I'm not interested in that.

So what we want you to do is say, man, we're going to have a special time at our church. December the 11th at night. You don't tell them after church. Just say, we're going to have a special time. It's going to be Christmas on the north side. We're going to sing carols and have candy apples and marshmallows and horse wagon ride and lot-dee-dot-dee and all the different things that we're going to do.

Would you come to church for me that night? Then you bring them in the church. You introduce them to all of your friends. You make sure they get a gospel track. You make sure we get their name and address. And then you pray that I will preach, Lord willing, with power from the Bible and teach them straight about Jesus and how to be saved.

[41 : 38] And then we'll give an invitation. Then we'll go outside and we'll just spend an hour or two together with our friends. We need to be intentional about reaching people with the gospel. We need to be intentional about reaching people with the gospel.

We ought to be able to do it without special days. But special days are a big help for all of us. It's a lot easier to say, man, our church is doing something really wild on December the 11th.

We're going to go outside and just have a good time. And so they come and they get to meet people. They get to know you. They get to find out we don't have two heads. I used to tell them in Peru. In Peru, if you walk into an evangelical church, by that, that means a non-Catholic church.

A lot of them think they will really go to hell. I mean, it's like scary to them. When we first started our church in Arequipa, the priest put out the word that I was selling organs.

And people that came to church, I would kidnap them and cut out their organs and send them back to the United States. And then I sold babies because we had children that went to church.

[42 : 39] And, of course, after you've been there 18 years, everybody figures out somebody's telling the story. But they think we have two heads. They think we're going to say a lot of things.

There are a lot of misconceptions, a lot of bad information, a lot of bad press about a church that preaches the gospel and tells them that they're going to go to hell when they die. And so it's your night to help bring people in to hear the gospel.

It's just one of those times we'll do that. By the way, we'll have Thanksgiving, a week from Tuesday night. I think it is. Is that correct? No. Would you make a? Yeah. Okay.

A week from Tuesday night, we'll be having Thanksgiving here. And we'll set up over there and we'll eat. But they'll be preaching that night. You know, if you brought a friend to have Thanksgiving supper with you on Tuesday night, which will be our midweek service, maybe they would come in here just to have a special Thanksgiving with you and hear the gospel and make it a real Thanksgiving because they'll be able to thank God for salvation.

So I'm looking for every way I can. And Brother Trent is the creative one of us. But we're looking for every way possible to get people to come and hear the gospel and be saved. And so, you know, people think crazy things.

[43 : 47] They think that if they come to our church, we're going to load them down with a bunch of rules. And we're going to tell them all these morality things and we're going to fuss at them. They think that you are going to be critical and pharisaical and judgmental.

They think that about you. They do think that about you. They think that about church people. But what if they came in here and found out how it really is here? New people tell me about you. New people say stuff like, man, folks at Vision, they just love you.

And there's not any of that judging. There's none of that stuff that goes on. And if they could just find out what it's like to be around God's people. A lot of God's people have given God's people a bad name.

And so we want them to know that there's a church that will love them. You say, well, if they come and they have problems, what are we going to do? We're going to love them. Well, if they come and they don't dress like us, talk like us, or walk like us, we're going to love them.

And so Christmas on the Northside is one of those times that you can use that. You could use Thanksgiving. If you do, just make sure you bring extra. Because Miss Sandy is already worried about how many people will be here. So if you bring 10 extra, make sure you bring 10 plates extra so you can help make sure we feed everybody.

[45 : 01] Miss Sandy was just back there. She had a seizure and fell on the floor because she said, man, there'll be 250. And now we really got to cook. I just want you to bring people. Don't you want people to know Jesus?

You know, the gospel is good news. And people ought to come to church and say, man, the gospel is good news. It's a wonderful thing. To know that I'm a sinner.

You know, it is a wonderful thing. It's like when you find out you're a sinner, you can get saved. When you find out you're sick, you can get well. And so that's what we want to have happen on December the 11th.

And at Christmas on the Northside. So if you have ideas, you can talk to Trent and say, hey, I got an idea. We can make that better. Well, we'd like to make it better. But we have to keep our budgets pretty slim. And so we will keep it down.

It's something that we can pay. But we want to get the gospel to as many people as we possibly can. We're going to take the offering here in just a second. But just let me throw in one other thing.

[45 : 58] You know, we're not here as a church. We're not here as a church just to send missionaries by any stretch.

And we're not here as a church just for you to grow and know more about the Bible. We're here, number one, to glorify God. But when you glorify God, you know what you do? You tell people about Jesus.

You know what brings glory to God in a major way? It's when we walk up to somebody and say, I know him. He is wonderful. When we make Jesus look good.

And by the way, all you got to do is talk about it to make him look good. If you tell the truth about him, he looks good. Is that true or not? I mean, you can't make him better than he is. You can't say nicer things about him than there are because it's the facts.

But, you know, church ought to center around what a wonderfully good God we have. So, thank you very much for the questions tonight. And I will get the answers by the next time. And I will make sure I've read those chapters and be ready for those.

[47 : 01] And we'll have a question and answer in a few weeks. Let's have a word of prayer to take up this offering. Father, bless the offering. Magnify your name. Thank you for your wonderful people. Glorify yourself.

Work in our midst. God, send the gospel around the world. And we will give you great honor and great glory and great praise for all that you do. And all you have done in Jesus' precious 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. Thank you.