

# Q&A; For April

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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, I'm going to answer our first question.

Let me ask you to open your Bible to John. This question came to me in email. It was a great question. And I said, I'll answer it for you right now. But I would like to share that with the church.

So I want to share this question with you. This question says, last Sunday, I think you said something like, sorry for the fair phrase. Or please correct me if I misunderstood. Here's what he says I said.

And he was correct. The opportunity to get saved is not forever. The opportunity to get saved is not forever. Did you mean that in the sense of, number one, when a person dies and it's too late to get saved.

Or the opportunity to get saved could run out even if a person is still alive. If you meant the latter, can you explain more? And I'm just, two things I want to say.

[ 1 : 06 ] Number one, I wish everybody would listen like that. That is a good question. And I wish you would feel free to ask the questions so that I can help you to understand what I was trying to say.

Because sometimes I say things that are wrong. And so you might catch me and straighten me out. And also, you might find something you can learn. So open your Bible to John 12. And let me show you where that came from.

And let me tell you that I believe the latter. I definitely believe that you run out of salvation opportunities when you die. And my brother who wrote this letter would agree with that 100% and believes that.

But then his second question was, if the opportunity to get saved could run out even if a person is still alive. Do I believe that? And I want to tell you that I do. And it's in the passage here, I think.

And I'm going to show you that. And I want you to think about it. And then we ought to be urgent about getting the gospel out. Go to John 12, 37. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.

[ 2 : 08 ] So in verse 37, and before this, men are getting saved and could get saved. And then something really wild happens in verse 40. In verse 40, the Bible said, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

That's a wild thought. Now look at this. Wait a second. I'm going to give you a brief answer to it. But with a little detail. Here they were seeing all the opportunities, seeing the miracles, getting the chance to be saved.

And they refused to get saved. And then he hardened their heart and blinded their eyes, and they didn't get saved. And by the way, that happens in the Bible in more than one instance. Can I remind you from this morning about Judas?

Judas walked with Jesus, saw all the miracles, had tons of opportunities to place his faith and trust in Christ, to believe in Jesus. He had the opportunity. He refused to do that.

Now you're going to go real quick to me, and you're going to say, but he was the son of perdition. It was prophesied. It was never prophesied that it was Judas, the individual. It was prophesied that somebody was going to betray. And so old Judas rejected or injected and rejected, went out and made a pact with them, with the Pharisees about taking Jesus.

[ 3 : 22 ] Comes back, the devil enters his heart, and he fulfills it. There was a guy named Pharaoh in the Old Testament. Now, you have to understand when you read the Bible that you're looking at everything's in two different views.

Watch this. Everything's in two views. One is the view from God's point of view. Did you know that tomorrow is already yesterday for God? Do you know that tomorrow is already yesterday?

Do you know that God has no limit on time? Do you know that God sits above time? And the fact is, he made all kind of little comparisons for us to help us understand that no matter how you run your watch, no matter how you calculate time, he is so far above that.

He said, one day with me is like a thousand years for you people. One day with me is like a thousand years with you people. Now, he wasn't saying that's a literal comparison.

It was a comparison to show me, show us what life was like. And so he's saying, hey, you guys, let me tell you, your whole fact is, if you're kind of a Bible student, the world's going to exist approximately 7,000 years.

[ 4 : 27 ] For those of us who really believe the creation is a literal creation, I do. And those of us who believe that the earth has a short age, I do. For those of us who don't believe in an evolutionary theory, which I don't, we believe the world's going to live or be in existence about 7,000 years approximately.

That's like a week. That's like 168 hours. And it's over if you were using that thousand day comparison. He said, let me tell you what your life is like so you'll know when he compares life so we'll understand.

He said, it's kind of like the flower that blooms in the morning is dead by the afternoon. He said, your life is fragile. So God said, over and over, I'm big. So when he looks down, he knows that Judas will betray him.

And he knew exactly who it was. He knew who would betray him. But that doesn't mean he made Judas betray him. He knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart. And he says, before Moses goes down, Pharaoh's going to harden his heart.

And the Bible says, God standing up here says, Pharaoh will harden his heart. On the earth, the other view, Pharaoh hardened his own heart about two or three times. And then it says, God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

[ 5 : 33 ] So let me just sum up the answer to that question. We live, number one, we live in a day of grace right now. We live in an opportunity for every man everywhere to be saved. I believe that Jesus died for every person on the planet and wants them all to be saved.

I think I can show you enough verses that I have done that repeatedly over the years. He wants all to be saved. It's not his will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son.

Hebrews chapter 2, verse 9, he takes the death for every man. First John chapter 2, verse 2, he is a propitiation for our sins and not our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. However, on Moses' point of view, God knows Pharaoh's going to harden his heart.

Pharaoh hardens his own heart. Pharaoh hardens his heart. Pharaoh hardens his heart. And then God hardens his heart. So let me explain something to you. Don't take lightly this message of grace.

Don't take lightly the preaching of the gospel. Don't take lightly what we do. I think sometimes you forget that every time we meet in this church building is an extremely important meeting.

[ 6 : 43 ] I think you forget that every time souls hang in the balance. I think you forget that people need to hear the gospel message and it becomes like routine that we come to church. I tell the guys on the church staff, we don't get sick.

We don't miss. It's game day. It's game day, buddy. It's game on. It's get the gospel out. It's preach the gospel. And it's far more important that you be in church than it is that a pitcher be there for the Atlanta Braves.

It's far more important that you be in your place doing your part of ministry than it is a quarterback being a ball game. I mean, this is important stuff. We're doing God's work. And so I would just challenge you to know, yes, I believe that time runs out.

One more illustration of time running out. But Jesus said, go into that city and witness to them. If they don't hear you and they don't receive you, shake the dust off your feet.

Move on. So just let me say, nobody's guaranteed the opportunity of hearing the gospel a million times till they die. It's not, I don't think that there's a biblical promise in the Bible.

[ 7 : 45 ] You can get saved anytime you want. Hey, how do you like that? You see, you must respond when the Holy Spirit of God deals with your heart. Don't take it lightly.

Don't take it flippantly. This is real business. God is real. The word is real. And so we, that, that's, that is what I meant. I meant that you could get saved, but you could send away your day of grace.

You could send so much that God would say, that's it. No more invitations for you. That's it. No more invitations for you. The same sun that melts ice hardens clay.

And sometimes when the Holy Spirit of God comes and moves in our hearts, try and he is working in us. Some of us accept, some of us reject, but don't live with the idea.

Well, I'll get saved tomorrow. Number one, you don't know if you have a tomorrow. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. It's also a fool who boasts and thinks he has a day of tomorrow.

[ 8 : 45 ] You don't know that you do. First, I'd like to say to you, you don't have to be afraid to ask me any question you want to ask me. And I want you to know that you're welcome to ask any question you want to ask.

I don't want you to ever feel like there's a question that's off limits. And so you can question what we're trying or what my personal goals are. I can only speak for the church as the church votes and decides to do things.

But I want you to know that I am not the only anointed in this room. I hope you'll listen to what I'm about to say. You may be used to the idea that the pastor is the anointed and everybody else should bow down and act like he's the big cheese.

But the facts are, if you're born again, the Holy Spirit lives in you, you're anointed too. God's got a plan for you and he's working in your life. And I fully respect that I serve you. I work for you.

And I want that to always be our heart. So you don't have to feel strange about asking me questions. And you can do it through email or personally or on my phone.

[ 9 : 46 ] And if you don't have my cell phone number, literally, I give it out all the time. And you're welcome to call me. You're welcome to that. I answer all of my own email. If I don't answer you, if you've ever written me an answer, you spam got you.

Try again. And because I actually check my spam almost every day to make sure I haven't missed a call. But the question was asked, do you not think we ought to focus on finishing our current church before we put all the time, effort, and energy into starting a new church?

And so I'd like to answer that question for you. And I'd like you to... I guess that you don't need to go to the book of Acts. I'll just try to tell you the story of the book of Acts.

Let me tell you that Betty and I married on the 18th of August in 1973. And when we married, we were literally so poor that I don't know if very many of you would understand that unless you're from our generation.

I know the young people in our church tend to have a lot more than Betty and I had. And, of course, I was dumb. I got married at 18, three days before I turned 19.

[ 10 : 51 ] My father-in-law, who was a very wealthy man, asked me how I was going to take care of Betty. And I said, you don't have to worry about a thing. I got it under control. Well, what 18-year-old has it under control?

I'm 57 and I still ain't got it under control. Now I know it. Then I didn't know it. But anyway, you know when you have children, if you wait to have enough money to have children, you'll probably wait till you're 102.

And then you may not have them. When do you have enough money to have children? And here's the deal about starting another church. And I'm going to answer all your questions. It's all here. And I'm not sure who asked the question.

But I do want you to understand my heart. And so let me explain to you. In the book of Acts, in the book of Acts, there was the first church that was started is the Jewish church in Jerusalem.

And it started that way because that's how Jesus started the church. I believe Jesus was the first pastor. I believe Judas was the first treasurer. I believe that that church was already in existence before the day of Pentecost.

[ 11 : 53 ] It was empowered on that day. And somebody in the room might not agree with me on that. But that's okay. You can be wrong and we can agree to disagree. And I'll still love you. But anyway, you might not be wrong and I could be wrong and I wouldn't fight about that.

However, what happened was Jesus had told the Jewish people, he had said, only go to Jews. Only go to the house of Israel. Do not enter into the house of the Samaritans.

Do not enter into the house of the Gentiles. Stay away from them. And he sent them specifically only to Jewish people. And then he died and was buried and rose again.

And he spent 40 years. And when you get to Luke chapter, what is it, 24, the last chapter, he tells them, now you're going to be a witness to everybody. And in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, he says, and after that you have received, after that the Holy Ghost is coming on you, you shall receive power.

And you shall be a witness unto me, both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. And he told them they were to go everywhere. Now listen to me real quickly. The Jewish church didn't understand that.

[ 12 : 56 ] And they focused mainly on themselves. There are only two or three exceptions. And their church quickly died because it didn't have the spiritual strength to follow through what God told them to do.

In Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, they're told that. In Acts chapter 1 and 2, the Holy Spirit comes in great power. By Acts chapter 3 and 4, I mean things are going crazy. 3,000 people are getting saved and baptized.

Other 5,000 people are getting saved and baptized. By Acts chapter 6, there may have been as many, as few as 25,000 members, as many as 50,000 members attending the churches in the city of Jerusalem.

And they needed deacons. They had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. They had filled Jerusalem everywhere on every corner. Everybody knew about Jesus and what he had done.

But if Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, it's on the screen for you, if you read that, their goal was not Jerusalem. Their goal was Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. And there's a very strong key word in that verse.

[ 14 : 05 ] And I wish you'd circle it in your Bible. And that word is both. Look at your Bible. Look right there with, right behind me. He said, In other words, I want you to do both at the same time.

Both is, all of this is supposed to happen at one time. Let me give you some uses of the word both in the New Testament. They both went down into the water. Now, how many of them went down in the water?

That was Philip and the eunuch. How many of them went down in the water? Talk to me. One or two? One at a time or both together? They went together. Both went down in the water. Jesus is both Lord and Christ, the Bible says in the book of Acts.

He is both Lord and Christ. Not one for a while and the other for a while, but both at the same time. They both applaud him. It's the exact same English word. And by the way, it is the exact same Greek word.

Both. So when Jesus started his church, he said, I want you guys, I want you guys to get out of here and go into Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth. Could I just quickly say to you that in the whole New Testament, we never find any church with a building.

[ 15 : 20 ] We don't find any churches with a building. What did they use for buildings? Well, they probably didn't use warehouses with black paint. They probably used somebody's courtyard.

They may have used somebody's house. They may have used, they may have met out in the field. They may have met in other large buildings. They may have met in the catacombs.

They met in all sorts of places and got people together everywhere. And they were, they were meeting. And so a goal wasn't how many, a church in Bible days wasn't how big your building is or how pretty your building is.

Watch this. I'm not trying to be ugly or disrespectful to you or anybody else. But the American church has become focused on how pretty the building is. The American church has become focused on buildings and institution.

And we have forgotten our purpose. So our church is foolish in many ways. And you may question some of that. We've given away well over \$600,000 now.

[ 16 : 23 ] And I can tell you about people that we have supported as a church that still don't support missionaries. They started, we helped them. They don't still support missionaries or they recently started in some very small amount.

And yet we've given away enough money to already have gone a long ways. But I thought we were under command. Both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth.

Both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. That early church in Jerusalem grew like wildfire. Everybody was getting saved. They were baptizing constantly.

The church was growing like crazy. Very few other efforts were made. And then we find Acts chapter 8. We find Philip leaving. He was picked as a deacon in Acts chapter 6.

Or what I believe was a deacon. At least an office that kind of represents a deacon. He was picked as a deacon. And he was working in something like that office. Taking care of the widows in the church. And in Acts chapter 8.

[ 17 : 24 ] He took off and he went into Samaria. And he started preaching and leading people to Christ. And he was having a big revival. So it was Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. So he was already into Samaria.

And then the Lord sent a eunuch through. Which would have come from the uttermost part of the earth. From Ethiopia. That eunuch was driving through town. He'd been in Jerusalem. And God told Philip. He said, you leave those Samaritans where everybody's getting saved.

And you run over here and you talk to this eunuch. And he got saved. And in Acts chapter 10. Peter was at his house. And he was, man, I mean, you're talking about a pastor, buddy.

Peter and James and John and all the apostles were just out there going crazy. Fact is, they stayed in Jerusalem. In Acts chapter 8 and verse 1. There was this tremendous persecution that came on the church in Jerusalem.

It was headed up by a guy named Saul. Who was later going to be called Paul. And was going to write half the New Testament. Now this is really interesting. They were supposed to carry the gospel. They didn't carry the gospel.

[ 18 : 22 ] So God sent persecution. And they all spread out like crazy carrying the gospel. So what he said to happen did happen. Peter was on his rooftop. And he still hadn't gone out and reached anybody else.

And the Lord came down and spoke to him. And he sent a sheet down. And it was full of unclean animals. And Peter, being a very good Jew. And not realizing that he had been saved now.

And that he was a new creature. And he wasn't under Old Testament rules. That would have defined what he could eat and what he couldn't eat. That sheet was let down. And it had unclean animals in it. It probably had a pig in it.

It might have had some shrimp in it. It might have had several animals that he was not allowed to eat. Because of his Jewish culture. And it was let down. And the angel said, rise and kill and eat.

And Peter said, oh no. I will not do that. I do not let unclean food touch my lips. I keep the rules like a good boy. And so he took the sheet back up.

[ 19 : 21 ] Let the sheet back down. Said the same thing. Took the sheet back up. Let the sheet back down. He said the same thing. And about that time, some people came from Cornelius' house. Now he is a big shot soldier in the Roman army.

And they ring the doorbell. And so Peter's servants go down to the door. And when they get the door, Peter's, these people are at the house. You know, Peter's a, he's a pastor. He's been shown a great deal of respect.

And the women are cooking the food. He's up on the roof. And it's hot. And he's, they got flat roofs. They don't have roofs like you do. They got them like they do in other parts of the world. A lot of places. He's up there. Probably under a shade, some shade they put up there.

And he's taking a nap. He's having the dream. They knocked on the door. And they come up and they say, hey, Pastor Peter, they've come to see you. And who is it? Well, it's some guys that have come from Cornelius, a Roman centurion.

And they want to talk to you. And Peter says, that's it. That's why they had the dream. God wants me to realize that I'm supposed to work with all colors, all kinds, all nations, everybody.

[ 20 : 20 ] I'm supposed to work with all of them. And he goes down and the guy said, our master wants you to come to our house. And Peter said, I'll go. And Peter went to the house, but he didn't really want him to get saved. And he definitely didn't want to baptize him.

And he definitely didn't want him to be part of the church. Because he was a Jew and he was stuck on Alpharetta and Vision Baptist Church only. No other Vision Baptist Churches anywhere else, please.

And so when he got there, he was talking to them. And as he got through talking to them, the Holy Spirit came on them like crazy. They started getting saved. And everything was happening. And no one could deny it. Boy, God was there.

And Peter was like, oh, I don't have a choice. All right. Let's baptize them. And so anyway, he gets back home. And when he got home, the deacons met him at the door. And they said, we got to talk. They said, we have heard it was on Facebook that you baptized those guys up there in that other city.

And he said, I did. And they said, what did you do that for? He said, I didn't want to. But God came on them in a way I couldn't get out of it. I was kind of stuck. And they said, all right. Well, if God made us do it, I guess we'll have to do it.

[ 21 : 23 ] And they got in. By Acts chapter 12, the church in Jerusalem is going through hunger pains. There's a famine going on. By the way, after Acts chapter 12, except from getting help, they'll only be mentioned in one argument and fuss in Acts chapter 15.

There'll be a fight there because Paul says, I'm tired of the punks coming from Jerusalem and trying to get all the Gentiles to get circumcised and live under the rules. I'm going to Jerusalem and we're going to talk.

Bless God. And he goes to Jerusalem. In fact, he's in Galatians chapter 1. He said this. I went up there, Galatians 1 and 2. This is chapter 2, actually. He said, I went up there and I saw those guys that are big shots according to some.

But they didn't add a thing to me while I was there. I mean, this guy was a smart aleck, buddy. He must have been an independent Baptist. He had to be. And so they didn't carry the gospel.

And in Acts chapter 12 and 13, a new church has started. It's Antioch. And they immediately start foundations and discipleship and training people. And they send out missionaries.

[ 22 : 30 ] And Paul leaves. And Barnabas leaves. And others are going to leave. And Silas is going to leave. And the world starts carrying the gospel. So let me tell you why I want to see us start another church. If we wait till we have everything we need, we will be past the age of childbearing.

If we wait till we have the building exactly like we want it, we will always need one more thing. When we get an auditorium, we're going to need a fellowship hall.

When we get a fellowship hall, we're going to need a family life center. When we get a family life center, we're going to need a missionary retirement home. When we get a missionary retirement home, we're just going to keep needing. Isn't that how it works with you?

Have you ever met that family that doesn't have any children? And it's not because God didn't give them children. It was because they wanted to get stuff before they got kids. And they've been getting stuff all their lives.

And they never got enough stuff. And so they never... They even write about this in the newspapers. Some people... Some parents or some adults are too selfish to have children. Because kids cost.

[ 23 : 37 ] It is expensive. And so I would challenge you to know that the reason we want to... I want to see us start a church. And I think the men of our church, the majority of them, we want to do that.

It's because we ought to. Both in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and the uttermost part. Could I just tell you... I'm going to answer more of the question and I'll go to others. But just let me tell you this. It is a lot...

It would be a lot more for my personal self-esteem and pride. You know, what pastor didn't enjoy having 236 this morning? And preaching to a full...

I prefer all the faces and not the chair family. You know? Often I preach to the chair family. They're like half the people that attend here.

And so I really like it when it's people in the chairs. Say amen. And let me just tell you, I want an office. I would love to have an office in this church like you wouldn't believe.

[ 24 : 33 ] I really wish I had an office. A place I could work. I just use my house now mostly. Because, I mean, if I'm talking... If I want to talk privately... Well, that's hard.

You should know that if you've ever been here. Somebody... I was talking to a lady in the office that day. And there was nobody else in the room. I said, oh, don't worry. There's people right there. And somebody's going to walk in right there. And she's just sitting over there. And I was over here.

The door was open. Of course, the roof was open. And she asked me a question. And she knew. And so, I mean, anybody just go, hey, how y'all doing in there? I said, fine. How are you over there? And so I'd just like to have an office.

I'd like to have a nicer Sunday school building. I'd like to have our own piece of property. I would like to see us move forward. In fact, as we have plans right now, we're going to be working on a plan that we'll present to you.

About trying to raise the money and go ahead someday as soon as possible to buy a piece of property. If you say, Brother Austin, when would you like to have a piece of property for vision? 2005.

[ 25 : 28 ] If you'd like to know, 2005. You say, Brother Austin, wouldn't you like to have a church that looked like a church building? Oh, yes, I would. I would like one fan-shaped, nice auditorium.

A musician's pit over here. The choir up here. A big old screen there and a big old screen there. And I'd like that one back there. Boy, I'd like, y'all want all that.

But if we wait till we get all we want, I'm already 57, about to be 58. I'll be dead before we get around to start another church. And he told us to do both.

Now, let me go down just a tad further. Then it said, someone told me this has been tried before in another city and didn't work. Well, we did go to Cabbage Town in downtown Atlanta and try to start a church.

That was poor leadership and poor planning all the way around. It was literally all my fault. I will accept all the blame. I paid for it out of my own pocket to the tune of several hundred dollars a month.

[ 26 : 29 ] We had some people going out on Saturdays. We had a poor building choice I made. We met on Saturday night. And yes, we failed.

But let me just say this to you real quickly. If you have a miscarriage, don't mean you give up on kids. If you have a miscarriage, you know what you do?

Try to have another one. Say amen. That's what I do. And so did we mess up? Yes. Is it easy to start a church? No. Did you know that since we started Vision Baptist Church in this area, four other churches started at about the same time we did and all of them are closed?

They're all closed. We started, there were about five churches that all started about the same time, all four closed, one state of life. Thanks to the work of God. But I'm not saying that he didn't work in those places.



But thanks to your hard work and your dedication and your surrender, it kept going. So the question was, didn't you try once and it failed? Yes. Can I just tell you this? In 18 years in Arequipa, I started churches that don't exist today.

[ 27 : 37 ] Can I tell you that the first church I started in Cartersville doesn't exist today? It did for 25 years. But they finally ended up merging it and closing it. And I can't be responsible.

I heard Johnny Hunt, who's a Southern Baptist pastor, the other day. And he said this, don't blame me for everything some Yehu that follows me did to the work I did. And so I don't really hold myself responsible for Liberty closing.

What is to keep that from happening this time? First, I'd have to say, what is to keep it from happening this time? Only God and hard work and I pray to God it doesn't happen. But I'm fully aware that it could, good night at 7 o'clock, it could fail.

Our church needs a lot of work. Sorry about that. My watch is right here. They're going to get me a big clock back there. It's going to be big as a whole wall in our new building. But our new building is going to be 100 yards to the back wall, just so I throw that in.

Our church needs a lot of work. Boy, don't we. We really do need a lot of work. And I think that I'm so glad that you feel that way. And, you know, I think that means we all get in and go to work.

[ 28 : 47 ] This question didn't get asked publicly because they didn't want to insult me or the church. And I think that is such a sweet and kind thing. But I want you to know, before I'm going to say about answering a couple of the questions that you had, I want you to know this.

You're not insulting me. I am not infallible. I can be questioned. I can be challenged. And I can be wrong. And I've been wrong a lot of times. And if you don't think so, ask Betty.

She keeps a list. Amen. How many of you have a wife that keep a list? I'm the only one, Betty. Robert's willing to admit it.

Brother Frick's hand was on his whip before Miss Judy punched him. So just let me say this. Why start another church?

It's definitely not for ego. For ego purposes, all the guys' pictures on the back wall, I wish they'd stay here. And take some sections of the church and get 100 people going and 100 people going.

[ 29 : 45 ] And I can preach to everybody and be the pastor of a gazillion. Boy, I would love that. But I have no idea if you know this. It'll be on the webpage soon. And I'm not sure if Kelly or Robert can answer the question right now.

But I just recently sent an email out and I asked our guys that have gone through our training from our church and our ministry to report back to how many churches and how many that we have in attendance. You don't have that number, do you, Robert?

But there were dozens. We have dozens of churches and hundreds of people attending church around the world. And, you know, can I just say that there are a lot of churches in Georgia.

Somebody the other day said you don't need to start more churches in Georgia. I agree 100%. You don't need to start more like they got. But the truth is very few of them preach the Bible anymore. Very few people take the Bible and go verse by verse and just say what the Bible says.

This church isn't about a pastor's hobby horse. There was one other part of this question. And they didn't print it out for me that I see here. But let me just say this. The question was asked, why don't you see about helping other churches rather than starting another church?

[ 30 : 49 ] Maybe I should tell you that Kyle Shreve no longer attends here on Sunday morning and Sunday night because Kyle Shreve is at another church and has been for months out of our church, supported by our church, helping another church.

He was there this morning. The pastor, I met with the pastor there this week, and he said he has 10 people at least that he's brought to the church that are under his influence. He is helping in another church.

At this very moment, I cannot say publicly what's going on, but at this very moment, we're in the process of maybe doing that with another church. And so I would rather help other churches.

The reason I'd rather help other churches is we don't have to buy a building. Say amen. Amen. I'd much rather not have to buy a building. We can move in their house. That would be really nice and help them. But, you know, most churches aren't willing to just say, you come help us.

It kind of goes against the grain. We've asked over the years. I've asked several. And if you know somebody that would say, man, if y'all could come in here and help us. But I don't want to help them unless they want to do it, excuse me, the right way.

[ 31 : 51 ] And that means sending missionaries, discipling people, and preaching the Bible. If they just want us to help them get a crowd. If they just want us to help them get a crowd, they can yell at.

Not interested. If they want us to help them get people that they can help disciple, I'm interested. So I hope I answered your question. But if I could say from the bottom of my heart what I really want you to know tonight, you didn't insult me with your question.

I will say it stung. But I think it would have stung you too. And I love you. And I thank you. And I want you to know you can question me. To my face.

In an email. In a phone call. And you can tell me your name. And I won't be upset with you. Feel free to talk to me. I am not beyond that. And I won't hold a grudge.

I might punch you. No, I won't. But even if I did, I'd take it back. Let's see if there's one or two questions real quick, Patrick, before they fire me. What will be the next book of the Bible you preach through?

[ 32 : 53 ] Well, since I think the rapture might happen before I get to the end of John, I hadn't even thought about it. How's that? I would be willing to take your suggestions. I do want to stay in the New Testament. You say, why? Because it's easier for me to understand.

Somebody asked me the other day, why don't you preach through Ezekiel? I said, when I understand it, I will. And I think I'm going to do that when I'm 98 and a half. And so y'all come back. You hear? So, but I'll take your suggestions.

I'll take your suggestions about what to preach. I don't think it'll be a gospel. I do think it'll be, well, there's not much left. We've done a gospel. We've done the book of Acts. So we've got epistles left.

We've done Hebrews. We've done Revelation. So it'll be another book in the New Testament. Next question. No, I don't think so.

I do think this. I think there might be needing foundations. Do you think a person unwilling to be baptized is saved? You know, I think if you understood what baptism was, and it's easy for you to maybe think of it as something to do with the church.

[ 34 : 03 ] It's easy for you to maybe not understand what's really going on. But baptism is simply a way of saying, I love Jesus, and I have decided to follow him, and I'm taking that step of obedience.

And so are they unsaved? No, but they probably need to study and learn. Baptism is a very big deal, by the way. Not for salvation. Not for salvation. Not for salvation, but in the steps of obedience.

Another one. How many people were in church today? It looked like a lot. Hey, let's just use that number. It was a lot. I think it was 236.

And it did look like a lot. Can I just say that there were, I think, where's Ben? 158 in the auditorium. My goal is 160 is maxed out in this auditorium, even though there are 200 seats.

People tend to not want to go to church or sit down where there's not enough room for them to sit. And so I said 160. If the Lord were to give us that several Sundays in a row, we'd end up going to two services or something because we want to continue to reach people.

[ 35 : 05 ] But, yes, it was a great day, and I thank God for you and your hard work. Somebody said this morning they prayed, and they said, for all the extra pressure that I was under, I'm going to be honest with you. You know, I didn't feel any extra pressure.

I just thought, man, I felt pressure last week in John 13, and I'm going to feel it this week in John 13. And I'm going to feel it next Sunday in John 13. And I'll finish John 13, Lord willing. We'll go to John 14.

But, man, thank you so much for your hard work and how you pray and everything. Wow, we are getting—what did y'all do?

Put them in order of hardness and get harder as we go so I'd quit quicker? Okay. Do we need to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit, or are we already after salvation? I would say that you don't have to pray to be filled.

I don't think it would hurt to pray. Open your Bibles real quick to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18, and Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. And then I think we'll make this the last question.

[ 36 : 05 ] It is 707. I want you to also look up Colossians, so you'll have both. And you'll be looking up, if you would, Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. Look at the verse, and I think this will tell you how I don't believe you have to pray about being filled with the Spirit.

The Bible said, and be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. Now, I'd have to do a study, I guess, of Greek to figure out if that's a command.

But I'm going to tell you that it seems to be that a don't get drunk and do get filled. And so, I don't think it is as much a matter of asking God to be full of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me just say this to you all real quickly. Being full of the Holy Spirit is not what you see in the majority of churches. When you're full of the Holy Spirit, you witness boldly.

When you're full of the Holy Spirit, you are a brave witness of Jesus Christ, and you're living a holy life. Can I just tell you, a person who's filled with the Holy Spirit is not committing fornication, is not looking at pornography, is not lying and boastful and proud.

[ 37 : 13 ] And any other word we could come up with. Because when you're full of the Holy Spirit, it means you're controlled by Him. In verse 18, it says, be not drunk. Wine controls you. Holy Spirit controls you.

And I think Colossians chapter 3, verse 16 helps us understand a little bit. Now, let me just say this. I do want to be filled. And I do ask God to fill me. I always ask Him. But sometimes we turn that into a real emotional thing.

Could I get you to listen to this? There are a lot of emotions in the Christian life, but nothing is based on emotions. And some of you are too emotional.

And I like emotions. And, you know, I can remember when David was born, our son who sang tonight. I can remember when he was born. And Betty didn't have any pain medicine.

And I was helping her breathe. All that stuff. They used to teach. I don't know if they teach that anymore. And I'm not sure if it was with David or with Joy.

[ 38 : 16 ] She tried to bite me. I mean, like a mad dog. And, man, she almost sweat blood. Or over her forehead. There was red spots around every pore. And when the baby, when David came out, I'm just telling you, I was like on an emotional high.

And I turned and looked at her. I said, wow! You want to do that again? She said, no! So there were a lot of conflicting emotions there. David was crying. I was happy.

And Betty was mad. Amen. But you know what? It comes down to this. Understand what I'm about to tell you. Some of you guys, when you got saved, you cried a lot. You got a lot of emotions.

And so you go to church. And if you don't cry a bunch, you feel like maybe you're not really saved or something's wrong with you. Do you know that when you first get married, you're plum giddy with joy and happiness?

Boy, I mean, it's like every time you touch your wife, there's a 220 charge of electricity that jumps from your finger and jumps into her. And she's like, woo! Woo! She kisses you and your hair stands up and your ears twirl around like Bozo the Clown or something.

[ 39 : 23 ] And after you've been married 10 years or 20 years, you're still in love. But you know, it's probable. I know some of you are going to tell me, it's the same way with me, brother. And I'm not going to believe you.

I'm in love with my wife more than I ever was, but it's a lot less emotional now. It's not as much of a ooey-gooney. It's not near like that.

And so when you get, when you're really right with God, you just need to understand. I read my Bible. If you think that when I read my Bible, I get goosebumps and tears run down my cheeks every time, that's not what happens.

And if you think while I'm preaching, I've got some kind of thing going on up here going, ee-wee-wee all over my, it's not happening. You see, that's not in the Bible. You got that out of Pentecostalism.

You got that out of Pentecostalism. Can I really, can I, you all hear a wild one? Real Christianity has always been very intellectual. It's been study the book. Learn the book.

[ 40 : 22 ] I don't mean by that it was some kind of junk outside the book. But I'm just saying it's really, when I was a kid, the old country preachers, they used to say this, don't you study to preach. You should not have an outline when you go to the pulpit.

You should stand up there and open your mouth and God will fill it. And here's what he fills it with, hot air. And that's why so many preachers stink.

They have nothing to say. You'd be shocked the number of pastors that have said to me, I have run out of anything to preach. And I'm like, boy, you must be fast.

How can you preach 66 books that quick? I know guys that have run out of something to say in 10 years. In 10 years. We're on message number 55, somewhere between 55 and 60 in the book of John.

And we are roughly halfway through. So, man, how do you run out? I don't know. And there's still Matthew, which is longer than John. And Mark, which is shorter.

[ 41 : 24 ] And Luke, which is longer and longer. You get the idea. It's just wild. And so, it's not about emotions. So, look at Colossians 3.16. And this is like a parallel passage to be filled.

Look what it says. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom. Teaching and admonishing one another. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Now, I'm going to read that to you one more time. Then we're going to go back to Ephesians. Then we're going to come back here. Read that with me one more time. Watch. Let the word of Christ. That's the Bible.

Dwell in you richly. In all wisdom. Teaching and admonishing one another. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Ephesians. Brother, I know I'm pushing you on that one. Ephesians 5.18 again. Ephesians 5.18. We're going to read 19 also. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

[ 42 : 20 ] 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. In Ephesians 5. He said, be filled with the Spirit. In Colossians 3.

He said, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let me tell you about being full of the Spirit. Get full of this book. Get full of this book.

And by the way, this is the sword of the Spirit. If you really want him to speak to you, he only speaks Bibleese. That's his language. Bibleese.

That's a language in a whole lot of languages, by the way. He speaks Bibleese in Spanish. He speaks Bibleese in Indonesian. He speaks Bibleese. When God talks, he talks. This is what he talks. And somebody says, somebody said, well, the other night I was dreaming and God told me this.

And it's something that's not in the Bible. I'll just tell you real quick. It wasn't God. So what's being filled with the Spirit? Pray. Yeah, I'd ask God. I say, take control of me. Please. I yield my life to you. But the truth is, you could pray all day long.

[ 43 : 18 ] And if you're a lazy Bible student and a disobedient child, you will not be filled. If I, as a farmer, I sit in that chair and I say, God, I need a crop of corn.

And I am begging you with all of my heart. Oh, God, bring up the corn out there in my field. And I beat on myself. And I speak in tongues. And I baptize myself a thousand times.

And I do anything I want to do. At the end of the year, when I say, God, where's my corn? He's going to say, you never plowed the field. You never planted the corn. You never put down any fertilizer.

You never weeded the corn. You never cultivated the corn. And so here's what, here's about being full. I really want you, you may think I'm making fun. I'm not. Being filled with the Spirit is not coming to church and having a worship band.

Hang on. Having a worship band that whoops up your emotions. Whoops up your emotions. You're going, whoo, whoo, I'm feeling good. They can do that at a rock concert. It's not about that.

[ 44 : 23 ] It's about you coming to church and lifting your heart and saying, I want the Word of God to dwell in me richly. Music has a part of that. It's singing, spiritual hymns, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart.

But it's the Word of God. So here's the deal. Don't miss church. Don't miss foundations. Don't miss Sunday school. If I were you, I'd be in Sunday school. Why? I need more book.

I need more Bible. I need God putting more of His Word in me. Have Bible reading and prayer at your own house. Pray every day before you leave. Read the Bible. And as you do that, God will fill you.

And by the way, it'll happen like this. It'll begin to change the way you think. Change the way your mind works. Change the words that come out of your mouth. God will do great things. But I'll be honest with you. This is far more important than you would ever dream.

I fear that too many Christians today have no idea how important this book is. I strongly challenge you.

[ 45 : 26 ] Man, take time every day. When you come to church, get out your notepad. Go home and check out everything I say. Man, I love getting questions. Did you mean in that message?

You know what I thought when I got that? Man, he was listening. Praise God for that. I think some of us go to sleep. Did you see the cartoon the other day?

That said, or was it Ed Dunlop? Can't remember who said it. You know why they tell the children to be quiet in church, don't you? So they don't wake up the adults. Was that Ed Dunlop? That's Ed Dunlop. Be quiet at church so you don't wake up the adults.

They're all asleep anyway. Hey, man, that ought not be true. And you're not usually like that. And I thank you for it. Well, I love you and I appreciate you. And I appreciate your patience. And by the way, I say one more time, don't be afraid to ask any question.

And do I make mistakes preaching? Yes. Do I say things I shouldn't have said as far as I even make a mistake in a Bible verse? The other day, but he said, you better thank God for the guys in the nerd boat because you kept giving out the wrong verse.

[ 46 : 28 ] And if they hadn't have been smart enough, nobody would have known what you were saying. But while you kept saying the wrong thing, they was putting up the right thing. And I'm like, yeah, praise the Lord for that. That's full of the spirit. Amen. And so I thank you.

Feel free to ask questions and feel free to keep growing and learning. Thank you very much. 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](http://www.visionbaptist.com).

Thank you.