

Open Q&A with Don Green

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The following questions and answers occurred before a live audience.

Don Green: I want to open with one question that was handed to me beforehand on Luke 18:9-14. You remember the tax collector who was praying and he was standing some distance away and was unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Just a couple of weeks ago, we talked in GraceLife about how the tax collectors were such wretched sinners, traitors, hated by all of the Jews.

The question was, did the tax collector leave his profession after he repented, whether it was Zacchaeus who was a real man or the tax collector in the parable?

I would say that the answer was no, he didn't. The Bible makes that clear in the preaching of John the Baptist, they came to him. It says in Luke 3:12:

Some tax collectors also came to be baptized and they said to him: "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them: "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."

So the instruction was not to leave your profession, but to act within the bounds of biblical ethics. So that would be my answer. We're going to see tax collectors in heaven. I can't wait to meet Zacchaeus and look down on him as I greet him and all of that. I think if the modern day lawyers had gone to John the Baptist, he would have told them the same thing. I know lawyers are hated, but you don't have to leave your practice.

Travis Allen: Don, do you miss being a lawyer, since you come from that kind of profession?

I do miss the practice. There is a lot about it that I miss. There was something that I found almost majestic about being a part of the legal system in the United States. It's a magnificent system. It's flawed and people abuse it. I understand that.

But to be able to step up before a U.S. judge or a state court judge and say, "I'm Don Green on behalf of the defendant, Aluminum Company of America," was a thrill that I never got tired of. More than that, what I miss, Travis, is working in an environment where I had day to day interaction with unbelievers and being able to share Christ with them and become a part of their lives. I miss that so much. I could start an evangelistic Bible study at Grace to You, but it probably wouldn't go anywhere. I do miss it along those lines. I miss that interaction with unbelievers in an environment that is apart from where spirituality is expected.

TA: For those who don't know, Don is the managing director of Grace to You. He pretty much takes care of everything that goes on in Grace to You. So, the buck stops with him pretty much. So, what's going on new at Grace to You? What have you been up to? Just kind of fill people in on that. What's going on with your travels, those things?

Just one thing that comes to mind that you will be excited about I think is just this past week on Tuesday, there was a man and his wife in from Hong Kong. They are the people who are publishing the Chinese translation of the MacArthur Study Bible. They are making good progress on it. They have translated Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Jonah, and parts of the New Testament.

That's going to open up that magnificent study Bible to 1.3 billion (with a B) Chinese speaking people. Initially it will be distributed outside of Mainland China to Taiwan and Hong Kong and Vancouver, British Columbia for those of you who know that place. There are a lot of Chinese speakers up there.

But then ultimately, it will be a great blessing to see that start to penetrate into Mainland China where the house churches are. They have no biblical resources at all. They have no pastors with training because they have to do everything so secretly. To get a Study Bible of that quality into their hands in their own language is going to be a great thing. And so we are really excited about that project.

TA: Don, you mentioned in some of your recent sermons, it's really, if I could just describe it maybe as a burden. You are not really satisfied or content with the fruit of your preaching? Maybe baptisms coming out of GraceLife or souls saved through our group? I just like to, if you could, just expand on what you are referring to as the follow-up question as we go along.

I would say a big part of it is just the recognition of a total lack in my own life in that regard. I'm not the evangelist that God would have me to be and it makes me sad that I'm like that. I'm very grateful, very thankful, for all of you for the growth that our group has seen over the past couple of years and all of that is just really wonderful and exciting.

I know that I as the preacher; and I would hope that you as individuals, would not be content until we actually start to see people coming to Christ as a fruit of our lives. I know I feel that way about my preaching. You know I preach to more people than I ever dreamed that I would and that's great. But I'm not content with that; I want to see people converted and to see lives changed as a result of people getting saved.

You know the more I preach, the more that becomes uppermost on my mind. I realize that conversions and the salvation of souls rests ultimately in the hands of God—I understand that quite well. But we should expect to see people coming to Christ as a result of the preaching of the gospel. I've been very challenged in

recent days by Ian Murray's book "The Old Evangelism" if any of you have been reading that or have seen that; it's a wonderful book. I think Spurgeon said it this way: "I can understand a man that preaches and doesn't see salvation of souls as a fruit of his ministry. What I don't understand is a man who is content with that."

You are not content with just preaching and as a young man, looking back in my life and remembering what I can about my heart, I was content even before I came to seminary to be able to teach if I thought I sounded good and I was able to do my thing. Now I'm just realizing how barren and bankrupt that is as an approach to preaching. My desire is to see people get saved. And I think that should be the heart desire of each of you.

I know whenever a pastor starts talking that way, you kind of tense up and think he is about to announce the door-to-door evangelism ministry. That's not where I'm going with this at all.

What I would like to see us develop more, I think, is to develop more of a mindset where we realize that should be the fruit that we want to see coming out of our lives and coming out of our ministry. Not content to just go through life and have God help us with our problems, but to see God use us in that direction.

TA: Just following up on that, what kind of evidence would you be looking for as you look out at us? Are you talking about number of baptisms here coming out of GraceLife or professions of faith? How many people you get to sign a card so to speak?

You know, it's not that at all, Travis, although that would be wonderful to see people coming forward like that and saying, "I received Christ as part of my interaction with people in GraceLife" or something like that—that would be wonderful.

I really think it starts back a step or two before that with the whole mindset we bring to that task and even asking ourselves questions, "Are there unsaved people that I am even praying for?" The Bible says that our mouths speak from that which fills our hearts.

I think what my ears are in tune for are hearing people talking about as David, a man in our group, did not too long ago. He was telling me about a woman who came up to them, a Jehovah's Witness, and they had a chance to share with her for a couple of hours.

You know, just hearing that kind of thing come out of us and in our environment, Travis, when we've got a seminary right in our parking lot, I'm always concerned lest we get so overly academic that we're content with being really precise in how we articulate truth while people go to hell all around us and it doesn't even bother us—that's my concern.

TA: How do you kind of gauge that? What are you looking for as far as the people here in this group? It sounds like you are just saying what shows up in our conversations and shows up in what's the first thing out of our mouth and that kind of thing.

Yeah, it's more an indication of self-examination as the starting point, whether that's important to you or not? Once we established that it is, then that starts to motivate the kind of relationships that we seek out. I don't want to be a guy with a Christian barber, a Christian accountant, a Christian attorney, and a Christian mechanic and all of that. I don't like that approach to Christian living.

I want personally, and for all of us in GraceLife, I want to see us engaged with unbelievers not avoiding them—just like Jesus engaged Zacchaeus in Luke 19 and engaged him and went to be with him rather than isolating ourselves. Because when we isolate ourselves and separate ourselves from unbelievers, we are acting like Pharisees; we are not acting like Jesus.

TA: If we believe the doctrine of hell to be true, what are we doing with it?

That's another point of it. If I have received this mercy that I say that I have, then I can't be satisfied to just have it for myself. I want others who are lost sinners, depraved and without hope, under the wrath of God and under the domination of the devil, I want other people to be set free from that just like I was.

TA: Thank you. I'm going to stop and take the mike over to Jon Stricklin's daughter.

Q (child): Does Jesus love God more than us?

I think that's a great question and I think the answer is yes. I think He does because we love God with a defective love because we're sinful. Our hearts aren't fully engaged with him even though He tells us to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind. Jesus and God the Father have a perfect relationship that goes back before the world even began and they have always known each other perfectly and loved each other perfectly.

TA: Do you think that Jesus loves God more than He loves us?

Well, I think it's a different kind of love. I don't know if there is a direct comparison that can be made to it. Everything that Jesus does is perfect and so His love for the Father is perfect and His love for us is perfect. But they love each other as equals. They love us as creatures.

Q: 1 John 3:19-20 says, "By this, we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before Him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and He knows everything." Is it talking about our heart in an emotional sense, or some other sense as you understand it?

I think the key to answering your question about that particular verse is to look at a little more of the context to the verse. Back up in verse 14, John says, “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Every one who hates his brother is a murderer. We know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. And we know love by this, He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this...

The tangible expression of faith that manifests itself in generosity toward brothers in need is one aspect of assurance. As we see those things coming out of our hearts and coming out of our lives, those things will reassure our hearts that our salvation is genuine rather than someone who simply speaks and says, “I’ve come to know Him” without that kind of supporting evidence in their lives.

Q: In witnessing to people that don’t believe in the Bible, how can you refer to the Bible as being the truth when the person you are talking to does not believe anything about the Bible?

The place I’d take you to is Romans chapter one where it says, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth and unrighteousness because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them.”

The Scriptures teach that, regardless of what people say with their mouths, they have a conscience inside them that knows the reality of the existence of God, even if they don’t understand the whole nature of the saving gospel. The conscience knows the nature of God. So you address their conscience and don’t get tripped up too much on their objections to whether or not they believe the Bible or not.

You proclaim the truth of the Bible; you speak the law of God to them and say, “Whatever you think about that, the truth of the matter is that God is righteous. God has set forth His standard in His word. You know, deep in your heart, what I’m telling you is the truth and you know that you fall short of the glory of God.”

Their conscience is your best friend in trying to witness to them. So you seek to activate their conscience by preaching the law of God to them so that their conscience will overcome their verbal objections against the existence of God or the truthfulness of the Scripture. Once the law of God comes to bear on someone’s conscience, that will be the thing that will break down the defenses. Earthly and rational arguments aren’t going to do any good and really take you away from where the discussion needs to go anyway. So we preach the law of God and trust the Spirit of God to work on the man’s conscience until he has to

have relief from his condemning conscience. Then he comes to the Scriptures with the humbled attitude which is the key to really believing the Scriptures anyway. Is that helpful?

Q: I'm struggling in fully understanding what is meant by "holiness." What is holiness and to what extent can we be holy on this side of heaven?

Great question, Wayne. The word "holy" means to be separated. There are two senses in which believers are separated: first in a positional sense, we are holy. We are sanctified to God positionally. Then secondly we try to work out that holiness in the sense of our daily lives in a practical separation from sin.

So positionally we are sanctified. We are set apart from the world and unto God for His uses. That's one of the things that He does when He saves us. He sets us apart.

But then in our daily lives there is also this sense of pursuing sanctification, seeking to grow in practical righteousness and leaving behind more and more of the sin that we carry over from our former way of life. That happens not just in our outward actions, but in our heart attitudes as well.

That's kind of an introduction to an answer to your question. Maybe you've got a follow-up question that I could make more useful to what you are really asking.

Q: I'm not sure what to ask in terms of the practical side of it because there is an element of sin in almost everything we do. Is holiness an act? Can we do a holy act or be holy on this side of heaven?

In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, we see what a sanctified heart looks like. That's where all of our holiness starts at. It is right in the bottom of our heart—mourning over sin, being people of meekness, being people who hunger and thirst for righteousness. And so it's not that we feel like we have obtained a measure of holiness. The essence of holiness in the Beatitudes is recognition that I lack holiness, but I desire it. Then you follow through with all of those character traits that the beatitudes talk about.

What we are getting ready to go into in chapter 5 is even more practical as it deals with issues of anger and lust and honesty in our conversations and dealing with the retaliatory spirit, loving our neighbors, loving our enemies, things like that. It starts to flesh out more in the rest of chapter 5. You kind of see the positive side of it in the Beatitudes and in the rest of chapter 5, we see the negative side of dealing with sin.

As you study through these things, you realize that the holiness that Jesus demands transcends and goes so much deeper than any individual act that we could look at. It goes beyond everything that we do, beyond everything that we

say, and beyond every attitude of our heart. It goes to every motivation of everything that we ever do.

So when it concludes in Matthew 5:48 by saying, “Therefore, you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” you realize how that you fall completely short. This whole thing condemns me because I lack that kind of pristine purity that you alluded to and everything that I do is all tinged by sin.

One of the things that Sermon on the Mount does is it shows you what the standard is for righteousness. It lets you know that God intends you to live this way and we desire it and we grow in the direction of that kind of perfection. But at the same time, we realize that we fall short and it drives us all the more to Christ because we realize what we really need is His righteousness; not only imputed to my account, but we need Him to manifest His righteousness throughout our every motivation.

When we think about it that way, it should drive us to Christ far more than probably what marks most of us. When we start to realize how desperately far short we fall, then it should create that kind of sense of inner desperation, “I’ve got to have Christ and I’ve got to be closer to Christ so that I can manifest that kind of righteousness which I know is good and which I really desire from the bottom of my heart. I know I fall short of it, but that’s what I want.” So, I hope that helps. And we’ll talk about that more in the weeks to come.

Q: Just really quick; when you are talking with someone that is from the charismatic movement who believes that God is still speaking today, tongues are still active, and things like that, how would you go about quickly explaining to them why we believe that those were for a time and they are not active today?

There are a number of places that you could go. I’m going to restrict it to just one in this discussion. The place that immediately comes to my mind in that is in Hebrews chapter 2 where the writer of Hebrews is talking about the importance of the word of God.

We’ll start in verse 1. “For this reason, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard so that we do not drift away from it. For if the words spoken through angels proved unalterable and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty; how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. After it was at the first, spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, speaking of the apostles; God also testifying with them both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will.”

Those signs were given to authenticate the message of the apostles. They were not a standard that every believer is going to experience throughout time.

According to 2 Peter 1:3, now that we have the word of God, we have in the Scriptures everything that is necessary for life and godliness. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we read, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Everything that I need to live a righteous life to please God, everything that I need to equip me for every possible work that He could have before me, is found in the Scriptures. That tells me that the scriptures are complete and I don’t need this other junk that is just subjective and you could find replicated in other religions throughout the world focusing on their own dreams and visions. What makes Christianity distinct is our reliance and our satisfaction with the revealed word of God.

TA: Don, I just have a question written down. I don’t know if you would like to tell the folks, but Don used to teach a seminary class here in beginning Greek and his students really would testify that it was their favorite class in seminary. Why did you stop? If you had such an influence on so many men coming out of that seminary, what went on in your thinking when you made that decision?

I was tired. (Laughter.)

No, I have a list of about 14 reasons. The main one that’s pertinent for here is that I try to establish what the most important thing is and make sure that the most important thing gets taken care of. You can’t have the most important thing compromised by something of lesser importance.

I co-pastor GraceLife. I work fulltime at Grace to You. I’ve got a family that I love and want to spend time with. I just can’t do everything. I wanted to be sure that I took care of the preaching of the Word of God and have time set aside to be able to do that.

There are other people that can teach Greek to the students. But I am uniquely responsible for my preaching ministry in GraceLife. So I had to be able to focus on that and be able to preach to the glory of God and hopefully to the benefit of those who are here. While I loved teaching Greek, it wasn’t the most important thing at this stage in my life.

TA: You know, that’s one of the things that the guys really loved about your class and I loved in my own relationship with you was watching how you make decisions. Do you have a process you go through making decisions or certain principles that govern your decision-making? If so, what would those be and how do you think through making those really difficult or pretty impactful decisions?

I’ve always been helped by Pastor MacArthur’s message on how to know the will of God. You need to be saved, sanctified, submissive, suffering, saying thanks,

and Spirit-filled. He says at the end of that, if you are doing those things, then you can do whatever you want. And I found that to be very, very helpful.

As I've have gone on a little more in my own Christian experience, I found that I don't always know what I want. You know, there are times when I've got good options before me, in the context of Travis' question, teaching Greek or doing other things. I don't always know what I want.

So one of the things that I've done, Travis, and the place that I've found helpful and kind of advancing on that great foundation that our pastor laid is that I like to keep my mind in the book of Proverbs because Proverbs is such a book of practical wisdom. And so I try to read through the Proverbs four, five, six times a year in addition to other study and things that I'm doing. I always want those principles of wisdom going through my mind in one form or another. At various times as I'm facing the kinds of decisions that you alluded to, various proverbs will come to my mind and influence my direction.

One of the most important ones that have helped me as to the impetuous young man to kind of slow things down a little bit is Proverbs 19:2, "It is not good for a person to be without knowledge; and he who hurries his footsteps errs."

I work on the assumption that a hasty decision is a wrong decision. That has kept me from making a lot of mistakes. I don't have a big systematic thing that I go through and I don't read Friesen's book on decision making and the will of God every time that I decide what tie I'm going to wear. But you know, I have confidence that God has ordered my circumstances and I try to respond to those circumstances with wisdom.

Q (child): If the Bible says that criminals should be punished, then why does it say that you should love your enemies?

When the Bible talks about punishment of criminals, it's doing that in the context of the authority that God gave to government. The Bible teaches us that government is given so that it can punish evildoers and protect those who want to live rightly. God has given that authority to punish criminals to the government and that's a good and righteous thing. If we didn't punish criminals, then our world would be in a much worse mess than it already is. One of the things that punishment does is that it restrains people from committing evil.

But when the Bible talks about loving your enemies, that's going more toward our personal relationships—what I, as an individual, should do to someone who wrongs me. And if someone has wronged me on a personal level, I need to respond to them with the same kind of forgiving spirit that Jesus responded to those who beat Him and spat upon Him and ultimately crucified Him.

So as a Christian living in the world, I am supposed to have the spirit of forgiveness and tolerance for those who wrong me; that's my responsibility before God to do that. The government by contrast has the responsibility before God to punish evil doers who break the laws that government has established. It is one of the ways that God has structured society so that we don't self-destruct into total anarchy. So I hope that's helpful. It's a great question.

Q (child): Does God still punish someone who sins but is saved?

I have to answer that in a couple of different ways. First of all, in an ultimate sense, no, He doesn't, because all of the punishment for my sins He put on the cross when Christ died on the cross. 1 Peter 3:18 says: "Christ died for sins once for all; the just for the unjust." And then back in Isaiah 53, He talks about how He bore our iniquities. And so what that means is that the punishment that our sins deserve, God put on Christ in our place that we wouldn't experience that eternal punishment that our sins deserve. And so we've been reconciled to God. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God doesn't look at us and say: "Guilty, guilty, guilty" every time that we sin.

Now what the Bible would teach us though, is that after we become a child of God through faith in Christ, that when we sin and we persist in that sin, God will discipline us. God will bring pressure to bear on us either on our conscience or in our circumstances in such a way that will cause us to want to repent and to turn away from that sin so we can know His blessing again.

But that's different from the punishment that goes on unbelievers when they die in their sins and go to hell. This is the loving correction of a father. When your parents discipline you, it's not because they hate you and they are just punishing you in raw anger because of what you've done. They are correcting you; even spanking you sometimes to correct you so that you will live rightly. God deals with us in the same way that righteous fathers do with their sons on earth. So I hope that helps.

Q: My question has to do with the Jewish system of atonement. I know with the temple being destroyed they obviously don't have that sacrifice system. But in the back of my mind is this vague thing where there was a rabbi who then said, no more, we didn't have to do it any more. Can you give me more detail on that?

I talked to a Jewish rabbi about that and asked him the same question that you asked. What do you do? The Scriptures call for blood sacrifice. You have no blood sacrifice in your system and you reject the crucified Messiah. Their answer to that is to go to a passage like Psalm 51:17 where it says:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart oh God, you will not despise.

So they say, “I have a repentant heart and it’s on that basis that God forgives me.’

But we know from the Scriptures that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. So it’s an empty repentance that they offer up to God. If there was a true repentance, they would be turning to Christ. But even within the confines of their own Old Testament Scriptures, Leviticus makes it clear that sin is atoned for by holy blood and without that holy blood there is no remission of sin.

They are violating their own Scriptures by saying sacrifices are no longer necessary even though God commanded it.

TA: What books do you think newer Christians should read outside of the Scripture that would really make an impact on their lives and send them in the right direction as their discipleship goes on?

Well, I suppose in some respects, Travis, it depends on exactly what they are looking for. As a fairly young Christian, John MacArthur’s book, “The Gospel According to Jesus” was very formative to my thinking and my understanding of the gospel.

Knowing what I know now, I wouldn’t want to be a Christian very long before I started reading the works of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, especially his books on the Sermon on the Mount and Spiritual Depression.

Ian Murray is another man who has really influenced me over the years. I appreciate his writings. His biography on the life of Jonathan Edwards is a real classic that everyone should read and be familiar with.

Almost rather than specific books, I’d look for specific authors like that and read as much as you can of them.

TA: One that was very impactful for me was “Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God” by J. I. Packer. Just on the evangelism theme; it is an excellent one. Even just thinking throughout the whole issue of how we understand to have a high view of the sovereignty of God.

That is a great book. One of the criticisms made against people who would be of a Calvinistic persuasion is that there is no motivation to evangelism. If it’s all the work of God, then why evangelize the lost?

I’d say two things about that: For some of us, it’s a fair criticism to say we’re not as evangelistic as we should be. But the problem with our lack of evangelism isn’t the sovereignty of God in salvation; it’s with the individual not rightly applying biblical doctrine to his life. If we take the Scriptures and understand the sovereignty of God, we understand that God uses means to accomplish His ends.

God brings the lost to Himself through the means of Spirit-filled, loving Christians who desires the salvation of the lost people around him. Romans 10:14 says, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed; how will they believe in Him who they have not heard; and how will they hear without a preacher?”

God doesn't save apart from our evangelism and our preaching for the most part. The ordinary means that God uses to save us is through the spoken word from people who love Christ. And so that's how the sovereignty of God and salvation and evangelism work together. Those of us who are most committed to the sovereignty of God and salvation should be those who are most committed to evangelism because we realize that there is certainty to the results if God has his elect out there. As we preach, God is going to use that to bring them to Himself in a way that all the glory and power belong to Him.

Q: In Philippians 3:1, it says, “Finally my brothers, rejoice in the Lord; to write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is a safeguard for you.” Could you explain that?

About being a safeguard for you—that part? Paul is writing to them and has told them repeatedly in this epistle to rejoice in the Lord. He has given them reasons why they should rejoice and be unified together as believers in chapter 2. He tells them to: “Make my joy complete by being of the same mind; maintaining the same love; united in the spirit; intent on one purpose.”

The “safeguard” comes as he repeats the same themes to them over and over again. The more he repeats that, the more it is going to settle in their minds and guard their hearts and direct them in the paths in which they should go. So by his consistent, persistent, patient teaching; even teaching the same things over and over again, the more he does that, the more he is safeguarding them and protecting them from straying from the path of the truth and going into error.

Q: Zacchaeus said he would restore to all that he had cheated fourfold. Did that mean that he cheated only occasionally or did he do it all the time? He would be bankrupt if he did that.

Well that's exactly right, Matthew. The pattern of tax collectors in those days were to cheat just about everybody that came across their paths. Not all of the money that Zacchaeus had was the result of fraud because there were legitimate taxes to be levied. It's just that he went beyond that and cheated people above and beyond what they were obligated to pay.

But as you mentioned, he would be about bankrupt if he repaid the cheated people fourfold. That's exactly right. For him to tell Jesus, because he was so convicted of his sin, “I'll give half of it to the poor and then if I have cheated anybody, I'll

pay him back four times as much,” he is bankrupting himself. He is giving it all away for the sake of having Christ instead.

Really what he is expressing there is that his heart would rather have Christ than a single dime from the fruit of his unrighteousness. That’s the essence of true conversion. You abandon everything for the sake of having Christ. If it costs you all that you have, you gladly pay that price and you pay more if you could just so you can have Christ, His righteousness, and the forgiveness of your sins. That transcends any earthly price that you would have to pay in bringing forth the fruit of your repentance. Okay? Great question.

Q: What makes Christianity better than other religions?

I suppose there are a million different ways to answer that, but I would say that it’s the matter of truth. Christianity is true. We measure time by the resurrection of Christ. You know, we live in the year 2006 AD; the year of our Lord. We measure time by the life of Christ.

That’s just one particular earthly evidence of the fact that this is real. The resurrection of Christ is a true reality. It’s not a philosophy. Christianity is a revealed “religion” based on historical fact. God did deliver the nation of Israel. There was a literal king David. There was a person, Jesus of Nazareth, who walked on the earth. He did die. He was resurrected. This is all historical truth and it’s not philosophical speculation. “We do not follow after cleverly devised tales,” the apostle Paul says. What we believe is based on historical fact and is based on revealed truth.

Ultimately I would say it’s better than any other religion because true Christianity will take you to heaven. Jesus Christ will take you to heaven. Every other religion will take you to hell. It’s the matter of truth that we are talking about.

Q: I know you have given up a lot of things to serve the Lord. Sometimes I ask myself, what have I given up to serve God? And I can’t see anything that I have given up. What made it clear to you that God wants you to serve Him full-time?

Eugene, that’s a great question and I would say that anyone who is a true Christian has given up everything to follow Christ, because when you come to saving faith in Christ, you have laid aside your will. You said, “I will follow you no matter what the cost.”

Everybody that is a true Christian has paid the ultimate price because they have abandoned self in order to follow Christ. The way that works out in each of our lives differs. It’s going to be different for you than it is for me. There is nothing special about what I’ve done. You know, it’s awkward for me to even answer the question the way that you phrased it. I left my law practice because I wanted to.

God gave me the desire of my heart. God has blessed me. God has given me things that I don't deserve. I haven't given up anything.

I haven't sacrificed anything. I really haven't. The one who made the sacrifice was Christ. He made the same sacrifice for you and your life isn't over yet, Eugene. God will bring you opportunities to prove out the reality of your faith. You will have to make hard decisions in obedience to Him.

You know, if you haven't felt the impingement of sacrifice in your Christian life, just give it time, it will come. And when it comes, you will rejoice just like the apostle Paul and Silas rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name.

DG: It looks like we're out of time for tonight, so let's pray as we close.

Father, we're grateful for your word and grateful for the fellowship that we enjoy together as believers in Christ. And we do ask you, Father, to work in our own hearts so that we would have the heart that you have to see the lost, Father so that you would save them and that we would see that as a fruit of our lives and our ministry.

But as we think of you, Father, we would close with this thought:

Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.
How unsearchable are your judgments and unfathomable your ways. For
from you and through you and to you are all things, to you be the glory
forever. Amen.

Thank you. Good night. We'll see you tomorrow.

This Q&A session was transcribed by Shari Main.