

**Sunday Evening Online  
Q & A with Tom (Part 2)  
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Good evening. Welcome to Sunday evening online. Great to see you again. Look forward to the opportunity to spend a little bit of time together thinking about spiritually eternal things, questions that you have from the Scripture. In fact, what we want to do tonight is sort of finish off the Q & A that I began several weeks ago. There were more questions than I could get to and so we want to take a few minutes just to walk through some of those questions that remain—some important questions. So, I am grateful to have Jonathan Anderson with me again. I am going to welcome him. Good to see you, Jonathan.

PASTOR JONATHAN: Thanks Tom. It's good to be with you again tonight.

PASTOR TOM: Look forward to going through some of the other questions that folks sent in and maybe some that have occurred to you as we walk through these last weeks together. What have you got for us tonight?

PASTOR JONATHAN: Yeah, I thought we would start with a follow-up question from the comments that you made on the current issues that you spoke to a couple of weeks ago. You mentioned some of the underlying philosophies, ideologies that are behind the current thinking of our age. I was just wondering if you could speak to that a little bit—those two issues of critical race theory and intersectionality. What are those? Please talk a little about that.

PASTOR TOM: First of all, you have to start by understanding, and I think most people get this, that all of these ideas start in the academic world, and they filter down. By the time they get down to the general population on the street, some of the more ethereal philosophical parts have drifted away but they are still informed by that philosophy. It's important to understand that much of what we are hearing and seeing from some from the extreme statements that are being

made, come from a specific academic theory that has been floating around early since the middle of last century. It came out of the Frankfurt School, I think, probably because of all of the disillusionment that came from World War II and all that had happened in Nazi Germany. Out of that came this theory that was called, initially the Critical Theory. Critical Theory essentially says that there is a reason there is power and authority and it is not a good one.

You need to back up and understand that really all they did—all that Critical Theory does is take a form of Marxism, cultural Marxism, and makes it the standard. It says this: it says that power and authority exist because there was a dominant class, initially it was economic, kind of the anti-capitalism thing. There was a dominant class who held the power of production. They wanted to keep their power. They wanted to make sure that wasn't threatened so they created a system, a kind of a governmental system that would enable them to keep their power and to dominate and subdue those who weren't in power and to use them and abuse them.

Eventually, what started as an economic theory connected to Marxism—really, that is all it is, Marxism in a more cultural form—it began eventually to be connected with the issue of race. So, when the Critical Theory meets the issue of race, you end up with Critical Race theory which is the same basic point, but it says the reason there are people in authority and power is that they are in a place of domination and they want to keep that place in power. So, they dominate, and they intentionally cultivate a system that oppresses the rest of the people under them. It's all about keeping their power. This is the Critical Theory applied to race. Of course, in this case, it would be since many of the structures of American authority have been white, therefore, the Critical Race theory applied to race. The reason that things are the way they are is because there was an intentional desire to keep people oppressed.

Now, I think we have to admit that, of course, there are people in power who abuse that authority and do so to their own selfish ends. Of course, that happens. We will talk more in a moment about why that is dangerous, but I think that is what it teaches. Then when you add to that the concept of intersectionality, all intersectionality says is that if you belong not to just one of those

oppressed groups but several of them now that oppression sort of intersects. There is an intersectionality of the oppression you are experiencing. So, in our culture, Critical Race theory would say, if you are black, then you are by nature of who you are, how God made you, you are an oppressed people and that you are being intentionally oppressed.

Then if you are a black woman, if you are a black woman who is also transgender or lesbian then you are the oppressed on a number of different levels. So, then there is this intersectionality that occurs. That is why often these concepts go together because they are born out of the same theory. They are working to say that you are oppressed—you are part of the oppressed group—you need to free yourself of that oppression and the way to do that is to throw off the oppressors. Get rid of the authorities. Get rid of the government. Get rid of whatever it is that is oppressing you.

Now, again, understand that I when I say this, that every person who is protesting has been directly or indirectly influenced by the Critical Race theory. There were many who were rightly protesting an injustice that was done. But understand that many of those who are in leadership who are pushing some of these ideas they fully embrace what is being sold in the elite academic community—this Critical Theory.

PASTOR JONATHAN: So, as you think of these philosophies and ideologies, what is it about them that makes them so dangerous as they filter into the mindset of our age?

PASTOR TOM: Well, I think the main thing is obviously, first of all, it flies in the face of what the Scripture says about authority. We are studying Romans 13 and yes, there are bad people in authority. But authority itself, and the concept of governmental authority, is not a human construct to keep people oppressed. It is a divine institution, created for the benefit of mankind. We are going to talk about that as we continue in Romans 13.

And so, the first and the most obvious thing is that it is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. But I think beyond that, you have to understand that it is a worldview, and you cannot have a thorough going commitment to the Critical Theory and a thorough going commitment to what the Scripture teaches about our world at the same time. They are two differing world views that collide and conflict. In fact, they are incompatible. And so, when you embrace the one, you by virtue of that, are opposed to the other. I am not saying there can't be elements of truth and at a certain point maybe we can talk about that. I already mentioned one.

But it is a world view, and that world view influences everything. Now everything is oppressed and oppressor, whereas, in the Scriptural sense, everyone is a sinner in need of redemption and the gospel has been created to accomplish that to change us from the inside out. And authority exists for mankind's good. You can see immediately how these are two distinct world views that are in complete collision with each other.

PASTOR JONATHAN: It is fascinating, as you were talking, to think of a world view that holds authority in high regard because it comes from God and one that says there cannot be any such thing as good authority. Those are very much opposed to each other.

You alluded to the fact that like with many worldly philosophies, there are elements of truth that can sometimes make it difficult for Christians to discern all that is going on or maybe to be swept up into something. Obviously, part of that is Satan's means of leading deception in the minds of people. One of the questions that was raised was how Satan does that—creating a world system that is antithetical to the things of the Lord. He is not omniscient or omnipotent. He doesn't influence the same way that the Spirit of God does, so how does Satan work in our world in those ways?

PASTOR TOM: Well, you just mentioned a couple of key ones. I think you have to start with creating opposite ideas to what God has said and stands for. When you think of Satan it begins with he creates and is the one from whom all evil philosophies and concepts come. He is called

“an angel of light.” Obviously, the idea there is he disguises himself in light, that is, in truth. He tries to present himself as presenting the truth. That comes in false religion. It also comes in worldly philosophies. Paul talks about that in Corinthians where there is these ideologies that become the fortresses in which people hide themselves and try to keep themselves from the God who made them and who has the right to tell them what to do.

It starts with false religion. It includes philosophies, the various philosophies, what we are talking about now, it is part of Satan’s system. It is not from God—where did it come from? Men didn’t generate it. Every good, moral idea comes from God, traces back to God. Every bad moral or philosophical idea traces back to Satan. There is no original thought in the universe—they come from one of those two sources. That’s where it begins.

Beyond looking at the reality of looking at religion and philosophy, you look at the world system he has created that caters to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. So, he creates this system that unregenerate people are contributing to—just go on social media, you see plenty of that. Look in the media systems of our world. Everywhere you look you see Satan having created a system that appeals to those things: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. So, that system is what he uses to influence us in a big way.

You have to add to that that he uses circumstances. You can’t read Job and see that God gave Satan permission to use certain circumstances: weather, an attack by a neighboring tribe, various circumstances to accomplish His purpose and to destroy faith. You have to say that there is this world system but there are also clearly circumstances in addition to that.

Then you have to say even the people around us. One of the most troubling things Jesus said was when He said to one of His own apostles, the apostle Peter: “Get behind me Satan!” What was He saying? He was saying, “You are right now being used by Satan to put forward an idea that is contrary to the purposes of God.” He didn’t mean that he was possessed by Satan or any of that. He was a tool and the idea that—it was Peter’s own idea that was fed by his own sin, by his own

lusts and temptations but nevertheless a tool in Satan's hands to try to get Christ to sin. And he does the same with us. He is a master at using people to get us to make sinful and wrong choices. And we have all experienced that in different ways from direct temptation to bad ideas to you name it.

PASTOR JONATHAN: As Christians living in this world system, what would be your counsel to us as far as just how to think and be on the guard in the midst of these things?

PASTOR TOM: I love what we have learned in Romans 12:1-2. I think that the chief thing we can do to guard ourselves is to immerse our minds in the Scripture—to have a transformed mind, transformed by the Scripture because as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, in the Scripture, “we have the mind of Christ.” In the world, we have the mind of Satan. In ourselves, we have our own, often misguided darkened thinking which can ultimately be traced back to Satan who was our father before we were born again. And so, we have to get the mind of God and we get that in the Scripture. Just permeating our minds and hearts with the Scripture, constant intake, we begin to learn to think more like God would have us think about any given circumstances than the way we are prone naturally to do so or the way Satan would have us do so through the influences he surrounded us with.

PASTOR JONATHAN: Let's transition a little bit to a variety of questions that came up and were asked. Let's start with a couple of brief theological questions. One that was asked: are there different levels of hell? If so, is that really just?

PASTOR TOM: First of all, yes. The Bible is clear there are different levels of hell. There are different levels of punishment. Just as there will be different levels of reward in heaven, there are different levels of punishment in hell. You see that in a number of ways. If you look at Revelation chapter 20, you see this description there in Revelation 20 at the Great White Throne in verse 11, it says,

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened [plural]; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books [notice this:], according to their deeds.

There is individualized judgment. And that makes perfect sense. To the second half of your question, is it just? The answer is, if He didn't do that it would be unjust because even the Old Testament law, if you remember, the penalty was to fit the crime, *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It was saying to God's people, don't be unjust like the people around you. Don't be like Hammurabi's Code where you steal something, and your hand gets cut off. Instead, let the punishment fit the crime. And that is exactly what God does. And this concept you see here in Revelation 20 is repeated again and again according to their deeds, according to their deeds. Romans chapter 2, verse 6, "Each one will be judged according to their deeds."

And then when you combine that concept with what Jesus says to the cities where He ministered there in Galilee, you remember, to Chorazin and the other cities? He said, "Woe to you, it will be worse for you in the day of judgment than for Sodom and Gomorrah." Clearly implying that there are going to be degrees of judgment and degrees of punishment that flow out of that judgment.

So, I think the Scripture clearly teaches that reality. It is a sobering truth. But it is just; it is perfectly just, in fact, anything else would not be just.

PASTOR JONATHAN: It's a perfect picture of God's perfect justice that we are supposed to imitate. A second one: will we in the new heavens and the new earth continue to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit? What will the Holy Spirit's role be?

PASTOR TOM: That's two different questions but let me start with the first one: the answer has to be "yes." Because we are now—and we often don't think of it this way—but we are really indwelt in a unique way by the Spirit, but we are also indwelt by Christ Himself and by the Father. Those references in the upper room discourse in John 13 and following make that clear that the Triune God indwells us. But in a unique and special way the Spirit accomplishes His purposes in us and there is no reason at all to see that changing.

Now obviously He will have saved and redeemed us. We will be fully sanctified so the sanctifying work of the Spirit won't be necessary but those are not the only works of the Spirit in our lives. The two big ones that jump out at me, one would be His ongoing work of teaching us. God is infinite and what can be known about God is infinite. We will spend all eternity learning about God and never know all there is to know about God.

How is that going to happen? It has to work, in part, by the Spirit illuminating our understanding just as He does now with the Word of God. In that day, maybe a better understanding of the Word of God and maybe some person-to-person lessons from Christ Himself. It is still going to be the Spirit who enables us to really understand and grasp those things.

In addition, the other big one I see is starting even in the Old Testament it was the Spirit who empowered people to serve. Even making the Tabernacle, they were filled by the Spirit to be able to serve and use the gifts that God had given them. We are going to spend eternity serving God and working and being challenged in the creativity that God has given us but in a perfect world where work won't feel like work. It will be joy and it will be nothing but pleasure. But who is going to enable us to accomplish what God assigns us to do? It is not going to be our own strength ever. It is going to continue to be the Spirit empowering us to use the gifts that God has given us for serving our great God. Those are just—I am sure there are others—those are the ones that jump out at me in terms of the role of the Spirit.



PASTOR JONATHAN: That's very helpful. Thank you. I want to transition to some questions that are maybe more self-reflective, more applicational for Christians. One was raised about discerning our own motives as we seek to serve the Lord. Is there a way to know whether you are doing something with the right motives for the glory of God as opposed to legalistically or for personal gain? How do you discern that and how much should we seek to discern that in our own hearts?

PASTOR TOM: I think the best answer to that is in 1 Corinthians chapter 4. I love this passage. Paul was questioned, his motives were questioned, his ministry was questioned by the people there in Corinth and he writes this, in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 1, he says, we are stewards, we need to be found faithful, trustworthy, verse 2. So how do we know? Well, in verse 3 he says, "But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you"—that is, by the believers in Corinth—"or by any human court"—probably meaning unbelievers in the community—"in fact, I do not examine myself." That doesn't mean that he wasn't ever trying to discern whether he was doing something for the right reason. It means he wasn't the final judge. He wasn't the final arbiter. So, there is nothing wrong with trying to assess your motives and asking God for grace to do things for the right motive. If you find yourself doing it for the wrong motive, confessing that and studying the Scripture and looking to see your mind transformed into serving God for the right reason.

But notice verse 4, he says, "I am conscious of nothing against myself." To me, that implies that he was doing some self-examination. He was considering why he did what he did and in places in his writings, he talks about that. He talks about: "we didn't do it for ulterior motives. It wasn't for any reason but God's glory."

So, I don't think it is wrong, in fact, I would say it is healthy to make sure that you are looking at your motives and assessing them. I think the danger comes when you think that you know that and that you can't be wrong, because Paul goes on to say, "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted." The fact that I think my motives are fine, the fact that I

think everything is good doesn't mean that it is true. I can be wrong. In fact, he says that "the one who examines me is the Lord." The final arbiter of what I have done and why I have done it is the Lord. That's why in verse 5, don't make the final determination about your motives before the time, "but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness." By the way, that means in context, not bad things, but good things: service we weren't even aware of, things we did for the Lord that we didn't even know. And he says, and He will disclose "the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

So, I think to sum it all up, I would say that there is nothing wrong taking an honest look at your motives and asking the Lord to help you discern that and if you see that your motives are wrong, address it, deal with it, strive to do things with the right motive. Paul does that in the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians, he contrasts his motives with the false teachers in Corinth and he says, I am not like them. This is how I am. There is nothing wrong with that but at the same time, don't be so set that you're right, that your evaluation of yourself is right, that you judge everyone else wrong because you could be wrong. Paul says that he is not by this acquitted. I don't believe my motives are wrong but that doesn't mean that I am right and in the end the Lord is the only one who can actually make that determination.

So do the best you can. Ask the Lord for pure motives. When you see that they are not pure when the Scripture reveals that to you, when you see yourself in the mirror of Scripture, deal with it, address it, confess it, seek the right motives. But in the end, we are just going to have to wait until the Lord discloses the motives of our hearts.

I love that Hebrews says, He does discern our motives even through the Scripture. So, as we read the Scripture it becomes a mirror with which we see ourselves including our motives and we can deal with it. But we will never see it perfectly in this life. In the end, the One who ultimately makes those determinations will be the Lord.

PASTOR JONATHAN: Related to that idea of motives and just how focused we are on the Lord, one question that was raised was on practical ways that we can delight ourselves in the Lord. That's an idea that conjures up an emotion but what are the practical ways we cultivate that?

PASTOR TOM: I think the first way is just to understand that that is in the end the pursuit of our lives. God made us to bring Him glory and as the shorter catechism says, "what is the chief end of man?" It's clear: to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. This is why we were created. We were made to find joy in God. That joy comes, then, it begins by knowing Him, having a relationship with Him. John 17:3, "This is eternal life that they may know You the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." There has to be the knowledge of who He is, that is, a relationship with Him through Christ.

But then, it begins to be knowing more about Him. I love the picture that you see of Moses. As Moses gets to know God, he wants to know more. Look at Exodus 33. I have been thinking a lot about this and at some point, I even considered doing a short series on God's self-revelation here this summer, because it is so powerful. In Exodus chapter 33, Moses has had this rare privilege of interacting with God in ways that no human being had, and God describes it that way: "I know Moses not like other people but like a friend, face-to-face." What an amazing reality and yet Moses wasn't satisfied with that and wanted more. He says in verse 17,

The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have favor in My sight and I have known you by name." Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

I want to know more about You. I already delight in You what I have seen. I want to know more. And I think that's the chief way that we delight in the Lord. It begins by knowing Him, knowing Him through Christ, having a relationship with Him through Christ. But then I think it becomes like Moses and David and so many others in the Scripture becoming, if I can use this word in a respectful way, obsessed with knowing what is true about God and responding to Him in light of

that. That is exactly what you see in Exodus 34. God says that He is going to make His goodness pass before you and He proclaims His name to Moses. His glory is His goodness; and His goodness is encapsulated in the revelation of Exodus 34 verses 5 through 7. And Moses' response was to bow down and worship. You see this statement of God appear again and again in the Old Testament because it is where God's people found increasing delight in God, in the truth of who He was.

You want to see a commentary on this passage? Study Psalm 103. I think it is a beautiful commentary on God's self-revelation. The psalmist just couldn't get enough: he wanted to think about that; he wanted to think through the implications of that. I think that is how we delight in God in His character, and I would add, in His works. Psalm 111 talks about the works of the Lord and says, "Great are the works of the LORD; they are studied by all who delight in them."

Focusing on God and His character and then secondly, on His great works, on the work of creation. This week I was thinking about what happened, working through Genesis 1, thinking of what happened on each day of the creation. We so quickly lose that. I want every day of the week, I want to remind myself what God did on this day and just give Him glory for that. So, His work of creation, His work of providence, His work of redemption: the three great works of God—thinking about, meditating on those things.

That is what I would say. I think the chief way of delighting in God is to delight in His Person by learning more about His glory revealed in His Word and delight in His works where He is so beautifully revealed. As we do that, we are increasingly captivated and like Moses we just want more. That is why Luther said the Bible is like drinking saltwater. It is unlike salt water in that it satisfies, but it is like saltwater in that the more you drink the more you want. I think that is where our delight comes from

PASTOR JONATHAN: I think that is a fitting end. Our time is up for this edition of Sunday Evening Online but what a great reminder to us to soak up not simply the truth of God's Word

for the truth's sake although that is important but to know the Lord Himself and to delight in Him. May we all continue to strive to that end.

Thank you, Tom, for your time and answering these questions and thank you for being available both in settings like this but also Sunday after Sunday to interact folks in our church. I know you really enjoy those interactions, and I am grateful for you continuing to direct our hearts to the truth of God's Word and to Him.

Why don't I pray for us and then we will wrap up our time.

PASTOR TOM: Thanks Jonathan.

PASTOR JONATHAN: Our Father, we do thank You for the glory that You have revealed, in the world that You have made, in the Word that You have given to us. We pray that You would give us an insatiable appetite to know You and to not only know the truth about You with our heads but to truly delight in and love You with all of our hearts.

Lord, thank You for the opportunity that You have given us tonight to just discuss some questions that come to mind as we think about life and theology and personal application and thank You that Your Word speaks to these issues. I pray that as individuals and as a church that we would continue to be committed to Your truth and that You would use even the thoughts that we have been directed to tonight to grow us into increasing conformity to Christ. We love You and thank You and trust the rest of our night to You. In Christ's name, amen.