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'A Theology of Paul and His Letters,' with Dr. Douglas Moo

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

Dr. Douglas Moo, theologian and professor at Wheaton, joins Kevin, Collin, and Justin to talk about his new and substantial contribution, *A Theology of Paul and His Letters*. Weighing in at 784 pages, there is a lot to unpack. Among the topics they cover are: how to balance text and tradition, the biggest change in Pauline theology, Paul's instructions on the family and sex, the work of N.T. Wright, and how substitution makes everything work.

Life and Books and Everything is sponsored by Crossway, publisher of *Good News of Great Joy*, by John Piper, containing twenty-five short devotional readings from John Piper aim to help you keep Christ at the center of the Advent season.

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Books and Everything:

A Theology of Paul and His Letters: The Gift of the New Realm in Christ, by Dr. Douglas Moo

Other books by Dr. Moo

Transcript

[Music] Greetings and salutations to our wonderful life and books and everything listeners. Glad to have you with us again and hope you're having a great day wherever you are listening to this. I am joined with Justin and Colin and I'll introduce our special guest in just a moment, but we're glad to have you with us again and we're glad to be sponsored by Crossway Books and many fine books coming out.

I can't remember which ones I've mentioned before, but as we are now in November and yes, it is now legal to play all the Christmas music that you want. No, Colin says no. Why do you hate Thanksgiving so much, Kevin? I love Thanksgiving.

I hear you. We don't turn it on in our house, but really you only get the chance at the Christmas music once a year. Why not have a few extra weeks? Thanksgiving or as they call it in Michigan, another day the lions lose.

[Laughter] Yes, I'm restraining myself by not turning this whole podcast into just kind of a play-by-play recap of the Michigan/Michigan State game from Saturday. What's that not a great game? I mean, for this part of the game. Bonus episode on that.

Bonus episode. Yeah, where's my agent? Can we get Kenneth Walker the third on here? [Laughter] Talk to him. We may mention likeness, Kevin.

Yeah, that's right. Okay, we'll give him something. All right, I didn't mention the Good News of Great Joy by John Piper.

So this is one of obviously there's lots of Piper books, but a great resource as you come into the Advent season in a few weeks. You may want to look at that. I think we mentioned before the ESV Concise Study Bible, which came out in October and looking forward to using that.

So good to have you all with us and our special guest today is Dr. Douglas J. Mu. That sounds very impressive. Can we call you Doug? Please.

All right, thank you. And Doug has a PhD from the University of St. Andrews, and he is a professor of New Testament at Wheaton. And he has many, many fine books out.

We are here to talk to him about a new book, a theology of Paul and his letters, the gift of the new realm in Christ, which has just come out from Zondervin Academic. It's a very impressive work. And we're going to hear more about this book and what's in it and how he wrote such a big thick book.

And first we want to hear a little bit about you and your life ministry, family, Doug, tell us where are you from and how did you get to be a professor at Wheaton? Yeah, I actually was converted as a senior in college, planning to go to law school at that point. But when I became a Christian, I decided I wanted to figure out what this new faith was all about. So I changed my course and enrolled in seminary instead, Attorney of Angelica Divinity School.

Did my master's of divinity there, had the opportunity while I was there, both to work as associate pastor in a local church and to teach a course at the seminary. I quickly realized that I would be a horrible pastor. I would barricade myself in my office, over-preparing all my sermons and avoiding human contact as much as possible.

Just who I was, my gift set, my personality. So rather than inflicting myself on a poor church, I decided to go on and do a PhD at St. Andrews and God's Grace, I was able to get a position back at the school. I did my work at Trinity Divinity School, taught there for 23 years, and then moved over to Wheaton where I've been for 21 years.

Throughout that time, one of the animating principles of my life and ministry has been a famous quote from Johann Albert Bengel, a great pied to scholar. Apply yourself wholly to the text, apply the text wholly to yourself. I hope I've done decently on both sides of that.

Others will have to judge. But if you ask what animates me, it's just my love of getting into the text and figuring out what's going on there and then finding ways to communicate that text to people, whether speaking, writing, or in other venues. That's great.

I'm just curious. You talked about not going into pastoral ministry at Wheaton, you must have students come up to you all the time. Help me, Dr. Mu.

Should I go into the academy? Should I go into pastoral ministry? How do you help students think through that? Well, yeah. Number one, of course, is just the objective criteria. If a student wants to go on to a PhD, we need to look at, well, have they done it in our coursework here? What are their papers like? Are they have the quality that might

fit them to a PhD work? Unfortunately, a lot of students have a vision of doing a PhD, but maybe don't have all of the required kind of background or something to do the PhD.

Right now, it's a very tough market as well for PhDs to find a teaching spot. Very, very tough. So we're finding more and more of our own PhD grads looking at options, working with a publishing house.

It's terrible as that would be. Justin can talk about that. Our theologian pastor, pastor theologian, wherever you want to put the emphasis there, or work in Christian schools.

And of course, overseas are so great opportunities overseas to serve in the teaching world. Just say a little bit about your family. You married kids? Yeah.

Jenny and I have been married for 48 years. We have five children all married, 13 grandkids. Our children have scattered as far away from us as possible.

So it tells you something about our parenting. The child who's closest to us lives six hours away and we have children in Europe, different parts of the US. But at this point, all the kids are following the Lord.

All their spouses are following the Lord. Jenny and I don't care that much where they live as long as they're living in Christ. Yeah.

That's wonderful. And we were just usually, we start life in books and everything with too many minutes of college football banter or some sort of other sports banter, which is where everyone just keeps hitting the 32nd fast forward on the podcast. What sort of hobbies, what sort of things do you do for fun? I think I have it right.

You're an outdoorsman. Well, to some extent, yeah, Jenny and I do love getting out in the natural world. And we are both photographers.

So we especially enjoy photographing the natural world. Great. Well, let's transition to the book.

And I want to start because this is a good segue from some of your biography to the book itself. Here I am. It's a big, heavy, thick book.

First of all, congratulations. This is a really significant achievement. And I know the three of us all enjoyed spending several hours.

I can't promise that since we got the book a few days ago, we read the whole thing. But we did spend several hours pouring through different things. And it's a great resource.

At the very end, on the conclusion, I'll just read you have a little bit about your biography. Because I entered seminary nine months after my conversion, my seminary days became very influential in forming my theological perspective. The seminary I

attended, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School was deliberately under the wise leadership of Kenneth Konser, a broadly evangelical institution with an attempt to represent various theological traditions.

Nevertheless, the theology I was taught there was broadly reformational with an emphasis on the reform side of this broad movement. At the same time, my involvement with the church I was attending and ultimately serving exposed me to the Baptist small B tradition. I therefore emerged a reformed, reformed Baptist.

Some might say submerged. Yeah, although the reformed part eventually was modified a bit with Lutheran influences. So those are really helpful few sentences to sort of position who you are.

Thinking about this book and just about your teaching and scholarship in general, which is of the highest level, how do you balance, on the one hand, understanding and being transparent about your own theological influences and tradition. And yet I see so many people today who just want to write off any sort of theological or exegetical scholarship as just hide bound to some kind of ism and not really objective. So what's the fine line as a scholar saying, well, here's who I am and where I come from.

And yet as you said earlier, I absolutely want to be as tethered to the text as possible. And we really do believe that, you know, we're not, we're not hardcore postmoderns who think you can't actually know some things objectively. So just talk about your own theological biography and how that influences or doesn't influence what you do in this book.

Yeah, that's a great question and it's an issue. I love us wrestle with, I think, who are involved in the academic world these days. I think there is a general recognition that none of us comes to the text with a blank slate and to pretend that we do is simply to kind of hide the obvious or to attempt to hide the obvious.

We've all been formed in certain ways, whether that's a formation at a very simple way through Sunday school, through parents, through churches we attend, or formed in a more deliberate way as I was because of the teaching I received at Trinity and elsewhere. So yeah, I'm upfront about that. That's I'm a kind of reformational guy.

That's where I come from. That's where I found over the years of resonance between scripture, those I study at least and the various traditions. And again, I would want to emphasize it while reformational.

I hope that I'm not narrowly reformational in looking beyond that tradition. I think I do. But then as you say, there's importance if we're going to do justice to the text, if we're really going to believe the text is authoritative, we have to let the text say, we have to allow it to form our own views.

We have to allow it to change the views we come to the text with. That's where I think a couple of things become important. Number one, obviously, is the ministry, the spirit at that point.

I think one of the purposes God gives the spirit to his people is to, in a sense, take us out of our subjective perspectives and allow us to see a bigger picture as a text has an impact upon us. Second is serious and charitable interaction with other scholars from other traditions. We're reading the same text I am but are reading it from a different perspective.

Often, you will have the moment where you hit, this person is drawing this conclusion in the text, how in the world are they doing that? And then you back up and you realize, oh, here's where they're coming from and here's why they can come to that conclusion. Oh, all right, I can see that now. So I've got to sort of factor that in or at least allow that to influence the way I'm reading the text at this point.

And of course, that remains true not just for current scholarship but for scholars from the past so that on August and on Calvone or Wesley talking about the text in their day and their context and culture have a perspective to bring that we need to recognize as well. One more question for me before I throw it over to Colin in Justin. This is a big book as I said, it's about 650 pages of text and then another 100 pages of different indexes.

And you say at the beginning, I've put a couple of exclamation points in the margin where you said you first signed the contract for this book in 2005. Yes, that's rather embarrassing. Well, Justin is just happy as a publisher that you actually did turn it in after all those years.

What's the process like in writing this book? Did it take all of those years? Are these lecture notes from courses put into print? How did you go about writing such a massive book? In 2005, when I signed the contract, I'd already written a major commentary on Romans. So I had that kind of under my belt and a lot of course, focus on Paul there and his theology. So it wasn't that when I write the throughout the contract is the first moment I began thinking about Paul's theology.

Now that's been something I've been thinking about, teaching about for some time. And since 2005, I've done a number of other things as well. I've written and published two or three other books along the way.

So it's not as if the only thing I've been doing is Paul's theology. I learned a great deal by teaching and hearing students respond to things. That's why I have a long list of schools and churches in my preface where I have taught Paul and Romans and such subjects because I honestly learned so much from all of those students I teach.

So that's been an important influence over the years. As some of you will know, there is

so much being written on Paul's theology these days. My frustration over these years has been for every book on Paul I read, two more were published.

So obviously at that rate, you're never going to catch up. So I tried to do my best to take into account of all the different scholarship that was going on. That was difficult though to get my hands around that.

And then to make sure that at the end of the day, I wasn't being overwhelmed by other scholars, but I was being oriented to the text itself. So that's important. You don't get lost in the scholarship and simply cite X scholar versus Y scholar.

But at the end of the day, very important, obviously to ground everything you're doing in a book like this in your own engagement with a text. I certainly try to do that. Well Doug, it's a good segue into the question that I had planned here of a lot of people maybe confused about just the way scholarship works of what a dynamic process it is and an iterative process it is and how many small changes can take place and then how many dramatic changes also can take place.

And now that you've been teaching Paul and his theology for so long, I'm wondering what you say is the biggest change in Pauline studies from when he started writing this book. We'll just start with this book to when you finished it. But if you think it's more interesting, you could go back to the start of your career.

Well, let me mention two moments. And one was long before I began writing the Pauline theology, but most of us be familiar with what's the so-called new perspective, which really got its beginnings in the late 1970s, early 1980s. So shortly after I first began to teach, that shifted the landscape of Pauline studies in a quite significant way.

So that was certainly one stimulus for thinking about some of these things. In many ways, the new perspective in my view is to be applauded for some of the emphases they brought to the study of Paul that had been neglected over the years. At other points, I fear that the new perspective would tend to undercut certain reformational teaching.

So one of the things I've done in the Romans commentary and in the Pauline theology now is in a sense, I guess I could say restate fundamental reformational theology in dialogue with some new perspective ideas, not rejecting them all. And again, I want to be clear about that. It's not that I'm in the mode of rejection of everything that Jimmy Dunn or Tom Wright have said.

I think I've got a lot of really good things to say that we need to take on board. Nevertheless, again, some things that were to be questioned along the way. One of the things I emphasized my students when we talked, Sarah talked about new perspective that in certain circles, a new perspective can be sort of viewed as the bogeyman.

Oh, that's the negative thing. Well, there's some reason for that. Nevertheless, the new

perspective has moderated over the years.

Tom Wright's views have moderated significantly over the years. He now says that if Calvin had been the only reformer, he would not have had a new perspective at all, for instance, for quite a bold statement, which is probably a right in hyperbole, but nevertheless, you said it. And that if you look at the broader landscape of Pauline studies, since I've been writing the theology column to get back to your question specifically, the so-called Paul within Judaism is a movement that has become very influential, which is much more radical than the new perspective.

So with respect to that movement, Tom Wright and I will agree and want to make some of the same points. Paul within Judaism is a movement basically says Paul himself remained observant to the Torah throughout his life and taught that Jewish Christians should remain observant of Torah also throughout their lives. And in some more radical forms of the movement, even it is argued that salvation for Jews is to be found within that Torah covenant that God gave the Jewish people.

So here I think we have a much more radical challenge to Orthodox Christianity, broadly defined, not just Reformation here, but Orthodox Christianity going back even in the early centuries there. So that's one of the movements certainly that's become popular of late that I think needs response and hopefully I've given some response to that in the book. Justin why don't you go ahead and jump in.

We've heard from our many listeners there's been an outcry. I need more cowbell and I need more JT. We don't want to disappoint the listeners.

So I'll jump in. Doug maybe this is a follow up from the Paul within Judaism but talk to our listeners a little bit about how two different scholars can read the same data, the same text. We have a limited amount of material for Paul, but we're using the same tools to come to the text and yet can come to such radically different conclusions.

So you read Paul and see the Mosaic law as or Torah as the covenant law and that it's not to be directly guiding believers and the Paul within Judaism view takes a radically different view. One that would be more applicable to us as evangelicals. You and Colin and I read the text correctly that baptism is to be restricted to believers and someone like Kevin reads that babies are to be baptized.

How is it that we can come to the same text and have the same tools of analysis and presumably be open to the guidance of the spirit and not wanting to let the tradition guide us where the text doesn't take us and we don't read things the same way. I know that's the perennial question but how would you talk us through that? Sure. What we need of course is a Protestant pope.

I'm happy to run for that office if someone wants to vote me in. Is this the conclave then?

You know again as many of you pointed out that's what someone called the Protestant problem isn't it? We have the lack of that kind of authoritative structure to determine doctrine and so we end up with all these debates, disputes, differences of opinion about various issues. I think it's important to distinguish between those matters that seem to be pretty rooted in the Orthodox Christian tradition and those that aren't.

So I would see that salvation is to be found in Christ alone for instance as pretty fundamentally rooted in the tradition. That should be something that has some guiding influence. It doesn't have determinative influence but it does have I think appropriate guiding influence.

So there I'm going to want to, I'm not going to want to disagree with the Orthodox tradition unless I want to throw that tradition overboard and of course a lot of scholars do that. Then there are these issues where within Orthodox Christianity over the years there have been these different viewpoints. You mentioned baptism for instance.

How do we read the law of Moses? To what extent for instance is the Sabbath command still applicable? Orthodox Christians have disagreed about that. Here I think we have to recognize number one that the effect of our traditions can be significant. Where we're coming from can have an impact on the way we read the text, which text we give priority to.

Then I think there is a great need for charity at that point. For humility on our side to recognize I don't have all the answers. I need to find answers in conversation with other scholars from different traditions and viewpoints and again to disagree in a charitable way so that we don't create unnecessary barriers among us.

I continue to think that's one of Satan's most important strategies in fighting the Orthodox faith is to divide us and to get us squabbling together. Fighting among ourselves rather than fighting some of the big isms out there that Christianity needs to confront in our day. Doug, I think it's a related question and this is something that Colin, Justin and I have talked about a lot and you can feel free to say, "Oh yeah, I see that or I don't." We've reflected before that in broad scope it seems like the last maybe 10 years or so, at least in some of these controversies and maybe intramural squabbles you're talking about, some of which are very important, some less important.

But it seems like there's been a movement away from arguing about the text and exegetical conclusions and the argument has shifted to history or sociology. I have a PhD in history so I believe with all my heart and the importance of history. One of the areas I think you see this most clearly are some of the debates about just to use the terms, complementarianism, egalitarianism, how do we understand Paul's household codes, his instructions in first Timothy.

Whereas even 15, 25 years ago it seemed like there were very intense debates about

authentic or Kefalet or how to understand the syntax and the dynamic. It seems like some of those exegetical debates have been set aside in favor of more meta- sort of historical sociological critiques. So I wonder if you and your position as a bona fide New Testament scholar, since this, what do we do about it? Is it something you've seen, something that's frustrating? Whether you agree with whatever conclusions are not, I just wonder if it's frustrating to see, hey, these are issues that are not unattached to history and all the other disciplines, but they need to be rooted, our conclusions need to be rooted first of all in what the text says.

At least that should be our posture as evangelical Christians. How do you navigate and pull together some of the different ways that these controversial issues are being argued about now versus a generation ago? Yeah, I think you're right about that in your analysis. I read a paper at Dallas, a seminary several years ago, which I entitled "The Strange Silence of the Text in the Evangelical Church," but borrowing the title from a book by a man named John.

Because I agree, it seems like the other kinds of issues have tended to push out the issue of the text. And as you raise the issue of complementaries on egal, tarynism, we have some key text in the pastoral epistles related here that illustrates a couple of things. Number one, I should have mentioned this in response to the question a moment ago, a very fundamental issue is which letters you're going to count as Paul.

If you're writing a Pauline theology, you've got to make that decision because in the academy, seven letters of Paul are accepted as clearly authentic. And very often, theologies then of Paul are built only on those seven epistles with some reference perhaps here and there to the others. So obviously, if you select your database in a certain way, you're going to come up with different conclusions.

So that's a fundamental decision you have to make. So I argue at the beginning of my book that I think Paul is the author in some sense, at least of all 13 of the letters attributed to him, and that our theology of Paul needs to be built squarely on all 13, not picking and choosing one or the other. Because that's how some of these more radical conclusions sometimes emerge.

You pick and choose evidence. You dismiss certain letters as unpal line or deutero-pal line, or you view certain texts as scribal additions to the text that Paul didn't write. And of course, when you follow that procedure, then it's pretty easy to come up with almost any conclusion you want.

Now the problem that I see here is that our exegesis always takes place in the context of these larger background issues. What Paul says about certain issues are naturally going to be affected by the culture to which he's speaking. So when he tells the women in 1 Corinthians 11 to wear the veil or to wear their certain hairstyle, I think all scholars, or most scholars at least, recognize, okay, Paul's addressing a particular cultural

phenomenon of how women wore their hair or did or did not wear the veil in his day.

That has to affect the way we understand the text and the way we apply it. The point then is that our exegesis can never be separate from those broader concerns about background and culture of the time. So the point here is to make sure that as we use that background information, we don't allow it to sort of have ruling power over the text.

And that's where the balance is needed. Yeah, I have to read every text in the light of its context and situation, recognize that all are New Testament texts, all Pauline texts are situationally affected. But I need to come up with also clear evidence from the text itself for the direction it's wanting to take us.

There's a balance there and I agree, good careful exegesis has tended to get shunted aside a little bit in some of the more recent discussions of these kinds of issues. So let me ask you a follow up and then I'll have Colin and Justin jump back in. But I think this is accurate.

You can correct me if you don't want to own any of these labels, Doug. But I would say in many points, you with the highest academic acumen end up landing on for lack of a better term traditional conclusions. So for example, did Paul receive a call or a conversion? You say, well, it was certainly an element of a call, but let's not miss that there were real elements of a conversion on homosexuality.

You're careful to say, well, this isn't the only sin. We shouldn't make it seem like an unforgivable sin. But Paul does say that same sex intimacy is sinful on some of the issues related to men and women.

Again, you with a, I would say a gentle touch are showing the different views and not wanting to be extreme in application. And yet you land in a traditional place, I think, that the household codes still are authoritative and Paul's instructions in First Timothy 2 are not simply rooted in the time they are, but they're anchored in trans-cultural things. Forensic justification, you make a very strong argument for justification as forensic only language.

Even when you talk about is the gospel really code for anti-imperial claims? You say, well, yeah, someone might understand it that way, but there's not a lot of evidence to suggest that that's mainly what's going on. So I agree with all of those and I find them very helpful. I wonder if in your work as I would say a very well respected scholar, do you get pushback coming to these conclusions? I mean, obviously all scholars do, but what is it like as you in many of these controversial areas reach, I would say, traditional conclusions? How are these received? How do students handle them? How do, you know, SBL, other sort of professional organizations, what's it like to be Doug Moo in these worlds? You know, here's where I have to confess that I've probably not engaged with the broader sweep of academic scholarship as well as I could have.

Yes, I attend things like SBL, for instance, where you get a wide range of scholars talking about things. You have debated people like Tom Wright and those kind of scenarios a number of times over the years, but I've not spent a lot of time there. And the fact is I think all of us experience this, we can receive a lot of affirmation as long as we are speaking and teaching to our like-minded friends.

You know, boy, I can think I must be this really guru kind of guy sometimes. I go to certain places where people just, oh, Doug Moo's here, he's teaching us. And the reason for that is because they're coming from the same stream of tradition that I inhabit.

And of course, I can get affirmation from that. The question is again, whether that affirmation comes from the broader world, from the broader perspective of scholarship, from people that differ from us. And that's where I have to, you know, again, admit that perhaps I am overly traditional, perhaps I'm overly influenced by the tradition I was taught in and raised in and still- I'm glad for all of your traditional conclusions.

Well, thank you. You see, again, I can come on a podcast like this. Oh, these guys like me, you know.

Yeah, that's true. Keep doing what you're doing. And I don't make any apology for that on the one hand.

I feel that's been my calling. I'm not this inventive, creative scholar who's developing new ideas and theses and in very interesting ways, I'm kind of a plotter, trying to give exegetical ground to what I think are theological views that have been argued by some good people in the past and shouldn't be thrown overboard just because they're from the past. That's, you know, the chronological snobbery that CS Lewis warns us about, that only the latest view is the right or the important view where there have been certain views argued in the past that are very well by people that we should have a little more respect for maybe than we do.

Yeah, very well. But Justin. Let me jump in here, Doug, with a question more specifically on the family and women in the church.

On chapter 24, you say this line and I think our readers would or not our readers, our listeners would find this suggestive and helpful. You say rather than viewing Paul's advice about the home, women and institutions of the world as unfortunate accommodations to the structures of the world of Paul's day, we may instead view them as a response to an unbalanced appropriation of the all one in Christ principle. Could you unpack that a little bit because I think that will be a new way of looking at the issue for some folks? Yeah, and again, this is where I'm a little controversial, I think.

When I, I'll explain where I'm going with this in a minute, but when I tackle the slavery issue in my writing a commentary in Philemon, I came to realize that there is some truth

to the idea that some have argued about a kind of trajectory that we need to follow in reading the NT on some of these things. I think it's again challenging to us at least, that when Paul addresses Christian slave owners, he doesn't tell them to free their slaves. And if slavery is a moral evil, why doesn't he say that? So I think there is something to this trajectory idea.

And when we think about that in terms of Paul's teaching on women then, moving outside of the specific exegetical evidence to the larger sweep of teaching, I think we can't come up with kind of two main ways of reading Paul. Number one says Paul is setting a trajectory of liberation that we need not to extend in our day even further than the New Testament explicitly does. So there should be, for instance, complete equality in marriage.

Women should not be restricted from any kind of ministry role in the church because that's the direction the text is taking us. The other way to read some of these texts, and I should say then that text that seems to limit that are texts that simply are saying, for now Christians should follow the culture of their day, let women be submissive, let wives be submissive and so forth because that's the culture there. So those texts talking about submission are simply culturally bound restrictions.

So that's one way to read the restrictions. The other way to read them, again, is to see here Paul responding to an overly enthusiastic kind of liberation movement that people taking the great Pauline slogan of one in Christ, which is important and fundamental and we dare not take anything away from what Paul means by that, but taking it to a point where, okay, men and women are fully at the same level in marriage. They have the right to do anything they want to in the church.

And Paul will say, no, I'm wanting to pull you back from that a little bit. There is a new liberating spirit in Christ for men and women equally, but that liberation tendency does not overturn some of the role relationships that God has built into his creation of men and women. So I think again, two fundamental ways you can read those restrictive texts.

I think again that the way Paul grounds his restrictions in scripture in the OT and not just in current culture, tilt me to move one direction on that. Let me ask a related question also comes from chapter 24, which is living in the new realm. And just for our listeners, of course, we encourage you to get this book.

It's laid out really, hopefully the first half goes through all of the Pauline epistles. And I would think for pastors, students, people leading Bible studies, that's going to be a really, really helpful section. Of course, they're shorter than commentaries, but they're longer than in introduction you might get at the beginning of a commentary.

They're nice chapters that walk through the different themes and analyze the different book by book. And then the second half of the book have these chapters all centered on

the new realm. And here on page 631, you say, discussion of marriage leads naturally into some words on sex.

Paul's day, as in ours, sex was an area in which biblical standards clashed especially harshly with contemporary mores. We are not surprised then that he warns his Gentile converts about their conduct in this sphere of life. As I noted above, sex is the area of sinfulness that Paul most often mentions in his vice lists.

The two part question, why was it such an area of conflict in Paul's day? And what are your thoughts metaphysically or otherwise? Why you think it continues to be such an area of controversy in our day? The way we live our lives sexually is one of the clearest demarcations for Paul between living life in Christ or outside of Christ. Why was that? Yeah, here I easily can get into matters that are far over my pay grade. But it does seem to me that sex is a powerful impulse rooted in us and that it is not unexpected, I guess I would say therefore, for the sexual impulse to be very significantly affected by the worldview we hold.

And I think that God has built that sexual impulse into us, but it is so powerful that it easily becomes unrestrained, unrestricted, expressed in all kinds of ways that counter what Scripture talks about as the boundaries we are to observe. So I think that it's not surprising that in Paul's day as in ours and of course in many days in between that has become a particular point of friction for us because it kind of expresses our humanity and where our fallenness comes to expression easily and clearly. So yeah, in Paul's day again that was a fundamental difference between the Jewish Christian perspective on sex and the pagan perspective.

In our post-Christian world we see the same thing where many of the debates we're having right now have to do in one way or another with sex or gender. And again, that's not surprising once the Jewish Christian worldview is left behind. Yeah, so I mean one of the things, Doug, that I love about this book and just for listeners, we're talking again about a theology upon his letters, biblical theology, the New Testament with Doug Mu.

And there were things that should be really obvious but that I somehow hadn't thought about until you pointed them out. And one of the things I wondered, you know, fairly early on the book you asked the question or you observed that Paul doesn't often cite Jesus' teaching or even his life apart from his death and resurrection. What do you conclude of the significance of that from our perspective, perhaps omission? Yeah, it's a good question.

These are the kinds of questions that I hope people don't ask me. You'll think after 15 or 16 years of working on Paul's theology, teach it in various ways that one would have all the answers. And I think the one thing perhaps I've learned more than anything else in writing this book is humility unanswered questions or at least questions that I still don't have as satisfactory an answer to as I would like to have.

And to be honest, that's one of them. Again I think we can offer some explanation. Paul is teaching Christians most of the time who don't have any clear roots in Palestine or in the history of Jesus during his lifetime, obviously in Palestine.

For Paul, the death and resurrection of Christ are so fundamentally earthshaking and transformative that he reads his ethics out of those events more than anywhere else. At the end of the day though I still think it's a little surprising Paul doesn't quote Jesus more often than he does. He just doesn't do that.

One point to be made, I think I make that in the book, is of course that sometimes simply quoting a person is not the best way to reflect them. Sometimes you best sort of reflect people's views by absorbing them yourself into your own viewpoints and teaching them and expressing them in your own words. And so here is I think the most important point that I didn't have time in the book to do this as much as I would have liked to.

You know you get to the end of the book and say here are all the things I didn't do. I wish I had. Then it would have been a 1200 page book of draw clear connections between Jesus teaching and Paul's teaching.

That's the most important point for us I think that ultimately what Paul is doing in his theology is organically connected to the teaching of Jesus. It grows out of Jesus own teaching perspectives. And that's the most fundamental thing here I think and that I think argument could be made very well.

One quick observation on that. As he mentioned he does not quote, Paul does not quote Jesus very often. But the irony here is that one of the times he does quote Jesus, Acts 20:35, it is better to give them to receive.

We don't have anywhere else. That's right. Go ahead Justin.

Doug talks a little bit about NT Wright and his influence because there's a certain set of folks who read Pauline scholarship and someone like Tom Wright's work has broken out beyond just the nerds among us to read Pauline monographs for a living. So I'm thinking here of a pastor who has younger people and they're true to our reading right and what does he get right? That pun is often used and abused. And what does he get wrong? What are the things that his work has shown us that perhaps others haven't and where are some places where you would offer caution to especially the younger Christian who is enamored by his brilliance and his ability to wordsmith and to offer synthesis in a way that feels like nobody else is seeing this or seeing this.

You know Justin I think I'm going to have to decide not to answer that directly. It would be very hard for me here off the top of my head to come up with any kind of a list of things he gets right and things where I would want to quarrel with him. I would say in general that and again I know that not everyone would agree with this so said I'm very

thankful for Tom Wright because I think his ability to present the fundamentals of the gospel in various contexts where people are hearing that gospel through him is a real gift to the church and I appreciate that.

Again as I said before I think I respect him for having moderated some of his views over the years. He's listened to people and I appreciate that about him. Yes there are again points where I disagree with him in terms of where I think he unnecessarily creates issues for traditional reformational theology that he maybe not does doesn't need to do.

My advice to pastors would be don't read Tom Wright in isolation. If you're going to read right on a subject read someone else also on the subject so you kind of get a balanced perspective. Yeah I really appreciate I think you do that really well in the book Doug.

No one can read this and think that you don't appreciate the brilliance and the many fine insights that Nt writes has had and he's written so much and at various levels there's that old joke if somebody calls up Thomas says I'm trying to get a hold of Tom Wright and the secretary says well he's writing a book at the moment. Can you hold for 15 or 20 minutes? Okay he'll come right back he's just cranking out books but for example you talk in chapter 19 about the story of Israel and you say writes Israel still an exile scenario rightly draws attention to a key dynamic in the story of redemption this pattern of sin exile restoration and that's I remember when I was in seminary 20 years ago now reading right and that was a really big insight that we were reading. Ah Israel there's still an exile and there's something to that and yet you helpfully go on and I won't quote the whole thing but you suggest for concerns and one you say he shifts the emphasis from geographic to spiritual other concerns you talk about it in the exile is a much more complex reality and you say Paul's discussion of sin is more universal on the one hand and more individual at the same time so just seeing Israel in exile can make it seem like it's just a national component and this isn't applicable to all of us who need redemption in all of us universally and individually who are sinners and so I commend you for that because you're pointing out and this is what I think Wright has been good to remind some of us hey where does this parable where does this story of Jesus where does this fit don't leave the story of Israel out of this where what is Jesus doing here in Israel's national story and yet I think you're right to draw us back and say that that's helpful and to the degree that we're looking forward to yet unrealized blessings there's something to this exile language and yet we really need to be careful with it which leads me and we'll just have a couple more questions Doug thank you for giving us this time and talking about this book the subtitle is the gift of the new realm in Christ so I don't know if you'd say new realm is is a centering idea that word center you say can mean different things but obviously it's a it's a key concept for you in that the second half of the book all the chapters have to do with the new realm so what do you mean by that and why do you see that is so central to Paul's thought yeah this is again a fundamental kind of methodological issue when you're trying to figure out how can I synthesize the thought of Paul expressed in 13 letters written over probably around 15 years to different

churches on different occasions dealing with different problems you've got this this this this whole mess as it were of Paul all over the place how do you synthesize that and in order to synthesize that I think you need to figure out some kind of framework a framework that hopefully arises to some extent from Paul himself it is not just imposed on him over the years I had I had just become convinced and I taught my new testament theology class along these lines that we can for many years testing out the idea that it's saying to me that this idea of realm transfer was pretty fundamental in the way Paul was expressing his theology of contrast of the old realm of sin death and Satan and the new realm dominated obviously by Christ righteousness new life and so forth and that this gave us a really nice framework end of Romans five is a key place where Paul I think expresses this idea and I would expand from there to Romans five the rate is a whole where I think again we have a key Pauline text using that terminology new realm also hopefully connects with the theme of kingdom from the teaching of Jesus as most identify kingdom as perhaps the most important centering idea in the teaching of Jesus and of course there are a number of Old Testament scholars would argue that kingdom of God is fundamental to Old Testament theology as well so I think realm has the virtue of arising from some things Paul is saying and connects us with Jesus and the OT it all it all it has it's limits of course and so I hope I recognize throughout the book places where we need to move beyond that framework or add a different kind of perspective to that framework in order to do full justice to Paul two final questions one more specifically about the book and then one sort of broader question you you go on and a very helpful section talking about substitution and why looking at the atonement as substitution is a key Pauline idea and one that holds the others together and yet you talk about various objections to substitution I know it's always dangerous to try to try to impute motives but I wonder besides the the the exegetical conceptual critiques to object to substitution which I think you respond to very well do you have a thought on why this seems to be a perennial objection is there something at a deeper level going on why is it it seem like every generation a new group of books or articles needs comes out saying well this whole idea of substitution then and I would that's not really what what Paul's about here and then people like you need to come back and say well actually that's not the only thing he's doing but everything else kind of needs to have substitution to work why do we keep having the same conversation I suspect there a variety of reasons why that that issue comes up let me just name one where here we have another in a sense question that I didn't come up with a neat answer to and that is as you read Paul and people like Michael Gorman in recently years have really emphasized this as you read Paul it's clear that he has a great emphasis on what we might call participation how do we gain the benefits of Christ's work we gain those benefits because we were with him we died with him we were buried with him we are raised with him that participational logic seems to to stand in some contrast to the substitutionary logic and so one reason why people wonder about substitution is because they find in Paul legitimately this really great emphasis on participation that's what Paul is fundamentally trying to teach that's what he is thinking about in terms of the work of Christ on our behalf and again if you pursue

participation in a kind of full and final way there's not much left for forensic substitution so I can understand that and I try to deal with that in the book I ultimately don't come to as neat a conclusion as I would like to and I kind of end up saying both are clearly there in Paul there is the forensic logic of Christ dying in our place and for us on the one hand that's clear I think in Paul there is also very clearly the focus on our dying with Christ to gain the benefits that we have in him both those logic are there in Paul and the question then is how to integrate them and some scholars choose one or the other I am in the mode as my wife would be glad to tell you the wishy washy Charlie Brown type where I want to say yes both and both are there.

Oh good let me finish with this Doug and this comes from a friend of yours a friend of ours Don Carson written several years ago and the gagging of God and he's reflecting on Mark Knoll's book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* which is always it seems to be in people's conversation and Don says he finds much in the book that he finds helpful and he says there's certainly an intellectual shallowness among many populist approaches of some leaders but then Don turns a bit he says I worry less about the anti-intellectualism of the less educated sections of evangelicalism than I do about the biblical and theological illiteracy or astonishing intellectual compromise among its leading intellectuals evangelicalism has many sons and daughters whose primary vocation is the life of the mind writers thinkers scholars academicians researchers and field after field they are not inferior to other thinkers in similar fields but with rare exceptions they have not made the impact they might have because their grasp of biblical and theological truth has rarely extended much beyond Sunday school knowledge in the main they think like secularists and bless their insights with the odd text or biblical cliché they cannot quite be accepted by the secular guilds unless of course they keep their mouths shut completely about their faith and they cannot revolutionize intellectual life in the west because they do not think like consistent Christians who take on the status quo and seek to replace it with something better the a Carson gagging of God also published by Zondervin 1996 page 48384 if someone wants to find it so Don's argument there is yes there is a poverty of intellectual life among many rank and file Christians and many populist leaders but he says his even greater worry are for the evangelical intellectuals that they not lose their biblical moorings and their consistent Christian faith so you can answer it on a broad level or on a personal level what do you see is necessary or what have you done in your own life dug to maintain these high intellectual academic standards while also retaining your personal vibrant walk with the lord and your commitment to biblical truth through and through oh well that's a wide-ranging issue you raised and just off the top of my head I think I've got three responses one while not disagreeing with Don I would want to affirm the reality of many colleagues of mine at Wheaton for instance in various fields of study who are or extremely faithful through their Christian faith and who are working hard to keep up with what's going on in the Christian faith one one faculty member at Wheaton in the sociology area has done two degrees in the graduate school in theology and in exegesis for instance and I've had the

privilege of teaching him on Greek exegesis classes and so forth so I would want to I would want to recognize people like that who are yes intellectuals who are integrating their faith very well two you you mentioned and maybe I should have answered I should have said something about this to an earlier question you ask about certain issues that are not given kind of exegetical focus as much as they should one of the problems here is in the past red it seems to me as we are moving more and more into pastoral training that ignores Greek and Hebrew and careful exegesis many of our graduate programs now training pastors are dropping the languages preach it so pastors go go out with an ability to to lead to be the CEO of the church as it were but they don't have the capacity to really deal with the word in a significant in-depth way and naturally that's not going to figure prominently in their preaching or their perspectives so that's that's that's a problem for myself personally I find that what what helps to keep me on track especially is my wife my family and my church yes my colleagues at Wheaton are great people who encourage me both intellectually and spiritually but for me over the years it's been my wife with her you know faith that encourages and keeps me on track my family my kids I now have a son who is a professor of New Testament and a son-in-law who is a professor of testament so so they they keep me on track both from intellectual and spiritual perspective and then again the life of the church I try to be involved in my church I teach Sunday school regularly in my church and just the faith of what we might call the ordinary believer often is a lesson and even a challenge to some of us who are in the academic area very well said thank you Doug for joining us Colin Justin thank you for asking good questions as well once again the book just come out by his honor of an academic a theology of Paul and his letters the gift of the new realm in Christ by Doug Mu who teaches at Wheaton thank you so much for joining us and for this book which is really helpful and I know all three of us will put it on our shelves and plan to use it and consult it thank you for your commentary on Romans and other fine work as well so thanks for joining us Doug thanks for having me and listeners we will be back Lord willing in another couple of weeks until then or if I God enjoy him forever and read a good book

(buzzing)