

How to ask questions of the Bible

What is the number one rule of the internet? Answer: don't read the comments. This week I ventured into rule breaking territory—I made a comment on a social media post, and have been in a fairly respectful conversation since. The conversation centres around a particular author—Rob Bell—and how his penchant for asking questions was now becoming, at best, unhelpful and, at worst, veering into heterodoxy (at odds with the orthodox, biblical position).

My conversation partner raised a good point—that Bell was asking deep questions that everyone else was afraid to ask. That's a fair point. Bell is very good at that. The problem is where Bell ends up with his answers—usually not giving one, and usually in a way which fundamentally detracts from the gospel.

The conversation itself raised some good points of reflection, chief among which was how we should be asking questions of the Bible. There's something to learn from Bell—both positively and negatively.

First, be encouraged to remember that God invites and welcomes hard questions to be asked. The prophets often do this, and Job as well demonstrate for us the types of questions that God welcomes. He welcomes them because he is in an authentic relationship with his people.

Second, while God welcomes questions there is a manner in which we are to ask them. When Job finally meets God he repents—not of asking his questions (since God himself says that Job has spoken rightly of him—cf Job 42:7), but of the manner in which he asked those questions. Job's questions verged on accusing God of injustice and questioning his character. Our questions need to be raised with a great deal of humility and reverence towards God.

Third, and this point is learned from the negative example of Bell, when we ask our questions we need to be open to the answer. Bell has a consistent habit of asking hard questions, but not looking to what the Bible, the gospel, or how the traditional orthodox position actually responds. Don't close yourself off from the start of your question.

Fourth, when we ask our questions we need to be careful not require a standard of proof beyond what is reasonable. Particularly when we have questions of faith that rise from doubts, we need to be open and engage with the answers that scripture and other books give us. If we expect a level of evidence beyond what can be reasonably produced then we set up the bible, and ourselves, for failure.

Let's ask questions, yes, and do so with humility, in faith, and together as a community encouraging each other.

giving: financial stewardship update

Last Week:	\$7,313.15
Weekly Required (for 2018):	\$5,528.00
Shortfall (for 2018):	\$1,243.00

electronic fund transfer

A/C Name:	SLE Church
Bank:	National Australia Bank
BSB:	084-424
A/C No:	396558544
Description:	Offering

11 March 2018

welcome to sle church

We are delighted to have you join us today! It is our prayer that you will enjoy all aspects of our gathering this morning.

about

The 'SL' in 'SLE' means St Lucia. The suburb our church is located in. The 'E' stands for English. We are a church family made of many migrant families from across South-East Asia, and we are English speaking. The 'E' also stands for Evangelical. We are a church family committed to following Jesus Christ as Lord. We do this by getting to know him through his living Word, the Bible, which is why the sermon is the key part of our Sunday services.

get connected

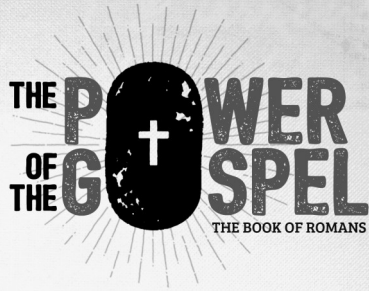
Please join us for refreshments and a chat after the service. We look forward to getting to know you. If you are new to SLE Church, have a prayer request, family news, or change of contact details please email: info@slechurch.org.au or call 3371 7589.

Connect with us online: slechurch.org.au or 'like' us for further updates at facebook.com/slechurch

service times

9:00am (North Hall)
11:30am (South Hall)





serving grace

	Today	Next Week
Chair	Bryan	Randy
Preach	Ps Ben	Ps Steven
Bible Read	Simeon <i>Alice</i>	Boon Cheng <i>Marilyn</i>
M.Tea	Daniel Muriel	Georgie Boon
Wash Up	YF Friday	SaLT
Welcome	Ken Steph Dan <i>Wei-En</i> <i>Benedict</i>	Ken Steph Dan <i>Wei-En</i> <i>Benedict</i>
Stewards	Alvin Sunny <i>DT</i> <i>Jordan</i> <i>Josiah</i>	Alvin Sunny <i>DT</i> <i>Jordan</i> <i>Josiah</i>

current sermons

- Last Week: The Righteousness of God Revealed
[Romans 3:21—4:25]
- This Week: Justification Joys
[Romans 5]
- Next Week: Life In Christ
[Romans 6]

prayer points

- Praise God that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone! Praise God that our performance or 'goodness' does not count, but that right standing with God is achieved by trusting His promises and His word. Praise God that Abraham achieved right standing with God this way, and we are His children—heirs of the promises given to Him—through faith as well.
- Praise God for the assurance of our faith that we are given in Romans 5—that Jesus' death presently saves us, and will save us in the future at the coming of His judgement. Praise God that we can live with this assurance and confidence of our salvation.
- Ask God to be mightily at work in us to keep reaching out to newcomers and friends and family who have yet to hear and trust the saving news of Jesus. Pray that God would be pleased to work through our actions and gospel proclamation to draw people into His kingdom.
- Pray for those among us struggling with health—physically and mentally. Pray for God's gracious healing, and that those struggling would be surrounded by loving friends and family to support them in this time.

community news

1. Bloom "Titus 2 Time" Event, Sat 17th March, 1:30pm-4pm, North Hall

To kick off our Bloom Women's Ministry this year, we invite all ladies (from uni age and upwards) to join us for a "Titus 2 Time" afternoon tea. It's a great chance to chat and build relationships with women across different age groups in our church. There will be time for sharing and getting to know each other in small groups. Grab an invite, and RSVP at the rego table during morning tea or online at www.slechurch.org.au/bloom-rsvp

2. Primary and Preschool Sunday School Easter Program

The years 1-6 children will be having 2 weeks of Easter program:

March 11 9am-10:30am

March 18 9am—12noon (includes an Easter egg hunt and picnic at St Lucia Playground Park)

Visitors are welcome. Please talk to Grace Phon or email her at grace.phon@gmail.com to RSVP.

March 18 11am-12noon, Preschool Sunday School children will join with Primary Sunday School children for picnic and Easter egg hunt at St Lucia Playground Park. As such, there won't be morning tea provided for the Preschool Sunday School classes on that day.

3. Reminder re Parking Around Church on Sundays

Please be mindful of the following when parking around church on Sundays, so that by our action, we can serve and love our neighbours, both in and out of church:

- By not stopping along the no parking zone on the white striped lines along the front of the church premise
- By using the 2 carpark spaces in front of church as drop off zones on Sunday mornings
- By not parking along the yellow lines
- By not parking so as to obstruct driveways
- By leaving Ryans Road street parking for the elderly and the Armadale Street parking for parents with Sunday School children

church contacts

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Justification Joys [Romans 5]

ii. Of salvation

1. Introduction

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. (Author unknown)

2. Having been justified by faith...

a. We have peace with God (1-4)

c. We are a new humanity (12-21)

b. We have assurance (5-11)

i. of God's love

3. Conclusion

Grace will take us farther than we can ever imagine we'd go, keep us longer than we can ever imagine we'd stay, and gifts us more than we can every imagine without pay. (Ho, 2018)