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Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. Occasionally like to invite a guest on to our podcast, and that's going to be the case today. Joining us today is Rosaria Butterfield. She's the author, speaker and I allow her to do the introduction of herself because she's got an amazing testimony. And she, her life experiences leads her to be able to speak powerfully on several issues that are really confronting us in the culture that we live in today. And also joining me is Athalia, one of the editors here at Got Questions ministry. So Rosaria for our audience who may not know you very well, tell us a little bit of your story, your background, what God's done in your life. And why that enables you to be so passionate about the issues that you love to write about.

Rosaria Butterfield

Right, right, right. Great question. Well, I came to Christ in my mid 30s and I came to Christ under the ministry of a Christian neighbor and pastor who reached out to me after I had published an article that got, you know, full page coverage in the Syracuse Post standard. The article's title was promise keepers message is a danger to democracy. I was a lesbian activist and tenured professor of English women's studies and queer theory at Syracuse University. And I was embarking on a new book project. And the book project was very simple, why do people like you hate the person I used to be? It was just that simple. I'm not very sentimental. I you know, I'm old enough to be everybody's grandma here I think in the room. So I don't. I I'm. I'm 61 years old. And so I don't come from a generation that where I was told that feelings were the most important thing. So I I don't know. I was just really curious. I I I personally believe that where everybody thinks the same, nobody thinks very much. So I just wanted to hear it. And so I did. And I heard it in the form of the gospel. And I heard it in the form of probably 500 meals at my Christian neighbors house. I heard it in the form of a love that tells the truth, and I heard it in the form of genuine Christian help. And so I, you know, I'm an English professor. So in order to answer the questions I was asking in the book. I actually needed to read the Bible. And I needed to read the Bible a lot because I had a lot of questions.

Rosaria Butterfield

And after two years of pretty intense Bible study along with life study with Ken and Floyd Smith and their church community, I realized something I actually I realized a lot of some things. One of the some things I realized is that Jesus is true, that his resurrection is true, that he's real, that he's alive, and that that would be true whether I believed it or not. That train had left the station. I didn't need to be on it. But God loved me enough to send me Christian neighbors. And these Christian neighbors were genuine Christians. You know? They they didn't pretend I was their friend. I was not their friend. No enemy of Christ is their friend. They knew I was their enemy and they loved me. They loved me as an enemy. And how did that that manifest itself? Well, in a number of ways, my first meeting with Ken and Floyd, they said I can accept you. We can accept you, but we don't approve. Now that might push push some real buttons today. And you know one of the frames that we might want to give to this is it really pushes against the whole love is love movement. And that's because the Bible pushes against the whole love is love movement. Is God, love, or are my feelings love? You know, it's it's it's. It can't be both. I don't think. So anyway, they were really clear on that. I was fine with it for a host of reasons. But one is this

was 1997, this is before the Obergefell decision. This is before a clause in a Supreme Court, you know, decision called the dignitary harm clause had taught a whole generation of people, including Christians, that love equals affirmation. No, Ken and Floyd Smith believed that love was what the gospel said was true. That we're all sinners and we're dead in our sin, and God gave his only begotten son as a ransom for those who would repent and believe. And that the sin of homosexuality I'm, I don't think I mean, it's a hard sin because sexual sin is a hard sin, but it's a sin of the flesh. And you know the the the flesh is, you know, we are to to we are how do we put it we are to to rally against it to fight against it in Christ. It is condemned, the sin of homosexuality is condemned and the law and the gospel. But it's also overcome in the savior. And so I believe those things. And I wasn't sure how it was going to work with me because at that point in my life, I was an old enough person that my lesbian feelings were pretty persistent. But the Lord has seen me through. I am a mother. I'm a grandmother. I'm married to a godly husband who's also a pastor. And it's almost like I just woke up to realize that the issues that have been dividing our our country, our issues that have been the eye of my hurricane for about 3 decades. And and so it was a little bit shocking for me to realize, you know. I've been married to my husband, who's a pastor for almost as long as I've been a Christian, and I'm not gay. I was gay, but I'm not. I was an atheist, but I'm not. The Lord, He truly did change me. And he gave me victory over my sin. And he gave me deliverance. Now, have I forgotten? Hardly. I haven't been lobotomized. My sin is about as my former sin can be as close as the underside of my eyelids depending upon what's going on. I can still wake up in the middle of the night with a with a remembrance of a sin that I need to still repent of, that I had forgotten of. Why I don't know. Was I too drunk? Was I too simple? I don't know. But you know that's part of the Christian life. Indwelling sin is hard, but it doesn't have to plague you for life. It's not meant to plague you for life.

Rosaria Butterfield

And so the world we live in now is a world that can't major on the majors. As as the Christian world, because we can't agree about what the majors are. Part of why, why we can't agree about them is we've allowed a false understanding of what it means to be human creep into the church. And so I had said to everybody after the gospel comes with a house key. That was my last book was 2018. I was done. I don't like writing. I'm I'm a reader, not a writer. I'm a teacher. I don't have time for this. I always feel like I'm stealing from my family when I'm writing. But a number of women were writing to my website saying, why is the church divided on an issue that seems so clear? And why are the stakes so high? And why am I all of a sudden the bigot? And what do you mean there are 78 gender pronouns? And why did that French teacher in Virginia lose his job for not using false pronouns? If Christ isn't divided, why are we? And so that's a basic faith and reason question. It's a great question to ask a professor because I feel much more comfortable in those that that terrain than the feelings, terrain.

Rosaria Butterfield

And so I came out with three reasons why the church is divided, that has unleashed 5 lies that the world has always believed, at least for the last three decades. But now the church does. And I don't know that I'm a I don't know that I'm what we would call an English studies a reliable narrator because the book starts with my repentance. I believed all of these lies. I believe them fully as a gay rights activist and a lesbian. But I believed a lot of them, even as a Christian. So I know that lies can be really deceptive. But I also know this about lies, it's not just a sin to tell a lie, it's also a sin to believe one. And so if the church wants to see victory, victory in the lives of our prodigal children, victory in our school board meetings

and other things. If we want to actually be, I don't know players in a community for the good and the hope and the virtue of Christ then we need to stop believing these lies.

Athalia Bufano

That's part of what makes your books so powerful is that you're coming from a place where you have repented, where you have allowed truth to shape what you think and what you feel, and you very much hold on to this is who I was. This is what I struggled with. This is what I thought. This is what I felt. It's very real, but what am I going to allow to shape that? What voices am I gonna allow to speak truth into my life? And so in your book, you attack 5 lies that you have found an increasingly more anti Christian age are becoming those major issues. And so it's homosexuality is normal. Being spiritual is kinder than being a biblical Christian. Feminism is good for the world and the church. Transgenderism is normal. Modesty is an outdated burden that serves male dominance and holds women back. What made you pick these five things?

Rosaria Butterfield

Well, all of these lies come from, emerge out of an attack against the created order. So all of these lies say that the very thing and that's Genesis 1:27 and 28, what it means to be made in the image of God as male and female for the purpose of of of, of, of marriage and procreation. And all of those lies say what God called good is actually not really good. Or it's or maybe it's good for some people, but it's not good for everybody. So it's not really good. So in a pluralist society we we really can't call it good. And you know it it's interesting cause some people ask me well, why don't you, you know, I mean I'm I have a I'm a professor of critical theory. Why didn't I talk about like critical race theory or these other things? I think those are really serious issues, I don't think not. But there's a difference between having a broken heart, a broken arm, and having a fatal heart attack. And so I would say the critical race theory issues that was your broken arm. You know that that's that's a discussion of the way Marxism would affect the way that we deal with the the social orders. But if you attack the creation ordinance. You're you're giving yourself a heart attack and it might just be fatal. And so that's, that's what organizes all three of those things. So not only do do they do, they rebel against the created order, they imply things about the created order that are not true.

Rosaria Butterfield

So take take feminism, for example, one of the things that feminism offers is the the distinction between sex and gender. And the problem is the Bible doesn't make that distinction. So from a feminist perspective, sex must be distinguished from gender because a woman should not be saddled with the burdens of her biological sex. What if she has callings to be an astronaut? What if you know, what if that pregnancy gets in the way of these callings to be an astronaut? So so the the, the sex gender distinction is done in part so that progeny and patriarchy, you know, babies and men could be managed according to my gifts and callings. And one of the things that implies, is that God is some mad crazy engineer who creates a pattern without a purpose and without a good purpose. And and I I you know now I was a feminist for years and years. I was raised by a feminist. I used to believe this, but now I see that to create a to create a distinction between sex and gender so that you can focus your identity on gender, right, all the callings, well that finds its logical conclusion in transgenderism. And what has transgenderism done in part? Well it has shown that feminism really can't really control patriarchy to the degree it thought it could, because if you don't like biblical patriarchy, how do you feel about transgender patriarchy? You

see, feminism is, is, for the most part, dead in the world. It died when Title 9 allowed biological men to join in women's sports. But it's quite alive in the Evangelical Church, and so that's confusing. I mean, I think that's confusing to most of us.

Rosaria Butterfield

A really good explanation of it is that the church has really tried to be a soft presence in the world and has said things like hey, if it's not a gospel issue, if your salvation isn't hanging on it, I'm not gonna take, I'm not gonna take a position on it. And yet what we've seen in the relationship between feminism and transgenderism and that sex gender distinction is that any any antagonism against the Creation Ordinance is really a gospel issue because it's a personhood issue. It it, it's it's going to attack that question of biblical anthropology or biblical personhood. And I know this might sound like, oh boy, she really is a professor and she's had a cup of coffee and oh no we're going to land the plane here. I mean, one way to land this plane is to say, as I had to say to myself, how do I fight a sin that feels like who I am? In a world that tells me this is who I am. If it's not really who I am, and if the church can't help me with it. So if if the world says that homosexuality is a well, I would say today after a burger fell we we I mean I think LGBTQ plus movement is an idol and we are all expected to defer to it. To put our rainbow stickers on our Facebook page. To use whatever pronouns work with 78 gender profiles. And and you know, and the list goes on. But in 1997, when I was when I was first struggling with all of this, it certainly wasn't a an idol insofar as it didn't have federal rights, civil rights protection attached to it, but it was still a really hard sin to fight. And so it took a while. I mean, it really did take a while for me to learn how to hate my sin without hating myself. But in order to do that, I had to really understand who I was as an image bearer of God and not who I was as a lesbian. And then I need to, I needed to understand lesbianism as although it was very much how I felt to be part of the flesh, not part of image bearing. And so I would say it has everything to do with our our growth in Christ, who am I, and how do I deal with these sins that are now inside of me? And how difficult if the whole world says all I need is a rainbow flag and a sticker? And how dangerous if we're now talking about transiting children. And I I speak at school boards, I speak to the legislature on these, some of these issues. So I've talked with people, I've I've had them over for dinner. I I know people who believe that the 14th Amendment means that their 14 year old son should be castrated. And we're Christians. We don't throw people away. We don't throw those people away. But here's what we know. They need the gospel sooner rather than later. But if they hear it later, rather than sooner, there's still hope, because in the New Jerusalem, God cannot be mocked. And that that son, who has been tragically harmed by a dangerous ideology will know that in the New Jerusalem his body will be resurrected in perfection. He will be the man he was meant to be. So I say all of that because these might sound like very ethereal ideas, but at least the way I live, the boots are on the ground and the time is now to get this right.

Athalia Bufano

And what we believe impacts what we do. So that Creation ordinance is so important because I wonder how different life would be if we saw our identity and who we are not what we do, not what we feel, not who we associate with, not we who we sleep with, but in who God says we are. And so you do a great job in bringing that the importance and bringing it all back to, well, what did God say? You know, because in the garden the devil does the same thing with Adam and Eve. Well, did God really say?

Rosaria Butterfield

Right. And can we trust God? Is the Bible true? I mean, those are some of the things I had to really work out in my early years as a Christian. But I'll tell you every time the Bible crosses me, I have to work it out. Every time the Bible tells me something about myself that I don't like to hear, which should be every day if I were a more sanctified person. I still have to work it out. And so it is it, you know, the Christian life is a rigorous life. But when we repent of sin that that should not be something that causes pain to the Christian, that that's a very beautiful thing. Repentance is our, it's our threshold to God. And so when we repent, we we basically are just saying, you know, God was right all along. And my the imputation of Adam sin nature on my heart and mind is true. And I will be struggling with this until I'm glorified. But I will struggle with that sword of the spirit in my hand knowing that the Bible knows me better than I know myself. And so when it crosses me, I I I can trust it.

Athalia Bufano

It's sharper than any two edged sword, and it divides between the heart and the soul, discerns our thoughts. And along with the creation mandate, you focus a lot on how biblical authority and integrity is vital to understanding these issues and bringing truth to them. How can we see the Bible as knowing God's heart and for our good, instead of it being some oppressive thing that just tries to control us?

Rosaria Butterfield

Right? Absolutely. And that's really key. I I would say that's probably the most, that's the that's one of the the, the, the, the, the most important things that we need to do. And so in the back of the book there's an appendix on what the Bible is and what it says. So often Christians focus on what it says and you know what it can say all kinds of things, but if it doesn't have authority over me that means nothing. And certainly not when I'm at my deepest, darkest moments. And so so the the doctrine that we're talking about is the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. And it it's a doctrine that I think Christians need to study and think about. I mean, I don't have, and I don't want to have authority over your conscience. But I want you to spend some time genuinely thinking about if the Bible isn't true, then how can you trust it on any part? Really, because the first moment it crosses you, that's the part that's going to go. So I think it is helpful for Christians to settle into some of these more theological discussions and think to myself, is the Bible true? Is it true in every word? Is Jesus Christ the manifestation of the word of God? Are there contradictions? Are there problems? Who says that and how are the what are the answers to it?

Rosaria Butterfield

One of the ways that I wrestled through that was to become a student of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It is in fact an old confession that that you know and and a confession is anything that starts with, I believe. So the creeds are all confessions so. And it, and it was ecumenical, it combined a wide variety of pastors, theologians from a wide, you know, swath of the true biblical faith to basically ask and then answer really hard questions. And so that was very helpful because and another way of understanding that is it's a systematic theology. So I would say find a systematic theology, become a student of it, argue with it, work it out, think it through. And and and it's interesting too, because the Westminster Confession of Faith is this really, you know, it's kind of a big tome. And after it was written, many pastors with, you know, boots on the ground said now look, somebody needs to write a summary of it. And so so there is a little book called the sum of saving knowledge. It's maybe 45 pages, but here's what you need to know about that book. That was the book on the lips of so many of the Covenanter martyrs.

Rosaria Butterfeild

Now we all write books. I see. You know, Shea's got so many books behind him on the bookshelf there. I'll bet. Well, I don't want to say I don't. I'm not. I shouldn't bet about this. But I'll tell you this. All the blurbs on those books really matter. They matter to the people who wrote the books. They matter to the people who wrote the blurbs, and they matter to the people who will read the book. But what kind of a blurb would this be if somebody at their dying moment as they're dying as a martyr says read this book. And that's indeed, what, 10 of the of the Christian martyrs did about the sum of saving knowledge. And the sum of saving knowledge is a summary of the Westminster standards. So you know, when we talk about, you know, just what it means to be in a great cloud of witnesses, those are our great cloud of witnesses. It's kind of cool to read what they read. And and all they say, it's a very simple book. It's a book that simply breaks down the gospel. Christ has risen. He rose by his own authority. He died for the ransom of many. If you repent and believe you are given the power of Christ's resurrected authority to go to battle against your sin and to grow in sanctification which the Bible records as God's will for your life. Sometimes we ask what's God's will for my life. Well, it's First Thessalonians 5. God's will for your life is to grow in sanctification.

Rosaira Butterfield

And so it's hard. Is it hard? Yes. Is there a lot of blood, sweat and tears? Yes. Is there victory? Yes. But again we work and we live in a world that says. No. No, no, no, no sexual orientation it's a morally neutral category of personhood. It says true about a person is whether they have left hand, you know, left-handed, or whether they have freckles. And that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says homosexuality is a sin of the flesh. You're to fight it the way you fight any other sin of the flesh. And in Christ there's victory. But you know what is that old? What is the proverb? I think it's 23,:7 even in the King James. It goes like this, as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. And as I was struggling in the early years against my own homosexuality. At some point I realized I was doing a lot of think a thing in my heart that wasn't very helpful. In other words, I needed to actually see myself as God sees me. That's as a woman. Creation ordinance. Go figure. But in order to really believe those things, you need to believe yourself that the Bible is true. And we are to be like the Bereans, go work it out. It's work out able. It's not. These are not esoteric, unanswerable questions. Like anything else, get a good trail guide. My trail guide was Westminster Confession of Faith. I'm sure you guys could come up with some others. Get a good trail guide, work it out. That's part of how we really work out our salvation.

Shea Houdmann

Rosaria, well said. The authority of Scripture is so vitally important, and you see such a vast gulf between people who have submit themselves to the authority scripture and those who either are ignorant of it or in rebellion against in terms of how we view everything from the really big questions to the quote on quote smaller questions in life. But really appreciated your your focus on that and I the Westminster Confession of Faith has always been something I appreciated the statements. I'm not actually not familiar with the the condensed version you mentioned. So I will definitely have to check that out. But in your writings.

Rosaria Butterfield

Yeah. I can give you, I can I can pull it off my shelf here and show it to you if you want.

Shea Houdmann

That'd be great. Another thing you really focus on and your writing is on the significance of being created in God's image. How understanding that you're an image bearer should impact both how we live, how we relate to one another. Why do you think a proper understanding of being God's image bearers is so important and speaks to the issues our culture is currently struggling with?

Rosaria Butterfield

Right, well, that's because the seeds of the gospel are in the garden. No, Adam. No Christ. So people who say, well, I'm a New Testament Christian. I'm just going with those red letters. You cannot possibly understand how the gospel anchors its authority. The Gospel anchors its authority in the Old Testament. And and, and I think one of the classic examples is if you, if you don't like the no Adam, no Christ one, I think that's a pretty powerful one. That comes actually with a really powerful word picture from the Puritan Thomas Goodwin, who says that each person is born in Adam. And so he pictures, he says, Picture a giant. His name is Adam and you are chained to Adam. And there is nothing you can do. His sin is your sin. And the Bible says you're responsible for his sin, because you've owned it. You, you love it. You are, we are all born loving something that God hates. We can't remember choosing that. It seems to have chosen us in that imputation of Adam sin. But in Christ, once justified in that holy courtroom by God in Christ, Christ himself takes those chains. And he unhooks them and he hooks them to himself. And so praise be to God, you can't also undo that chain. So it is true that once saved, always saved. But it's also true that if you're not growing in your sanctification, you can lose everything else. And that's a very sad thing. And so. So no, Adam, no Christ.

Rosaria Butterfield

But also take something like Paul and Romans 7. Why do I do what I don't want to do? It is the law of sin in me. You can hear the anguish. You can hear the frustration that we all feel with our own sin. Where does? Where does Paul anchor that particular question? Why do I do what I don't want to do? And then later, why? Why do I want these things? Well, he roots it in Exodus 20. In the 10th Commandment, in the problem of coveting and there, we realize that coveting is a sin. So it's not just a sin to act on your feelings. It's some feelings are sin and, they need to be rooted out. And in Christ what you need to do is repent of your sinful feelings. And in Christ cultivate the better ones, the good ones. But what I just said, very nice, Rosaria, how how very theoretical of you. If we put this in the context of homosexuality, you know, we're all going to get thrown off YouTube because what I just said. I said what the Bible is implying is that you are to repent of the sins of the flesh of homosexuality, and actually cultivate the desires that God calls good, which are the creational desires which is heterosexuality. And if those aren't fighting words in the Evangelical Church today, I don't know what what words might be. But I have lived those words. I believe them to be true. But I also know some of the things the Evangelical Church today is saying is just false, and we see it's false in the Creation Ordinance. So when I read, you know, and I hear a well known Christian speaker, say, I'd like you to meet my my trans friend. You know, they is the strongest Christian I've ever met. And there's they at the Revoice conference wearing a, you know, a rainbow flag, a pastel rainbow flag with the with the words amago day superimposed on it. And this guy is supposed to be a theologian and quite frankly, he can't even work out the problem with that? See the problem with that is really basic. That is a human being. That is not a they. That is a actually a in this case a woman, a woman made in the image of God, whose Christian friends should help her work that out. Is it hard? Absolutely. Could there be abuse issues connected to that? Absolutely. Could there be real, you

know, other other dangerous situations that really do need to be dealt with as a body? Certainly. But what we know is that transgenderism is the sin of envy. It is the sin of violating the 10th Commandment. And God says envy is rottenness to the bones.

Rosaria Butterfield

And we have seen this now we've seen it again and again in transgenderism right as we're we're recording this on the day after a detransitioner has leveled a suit against the American Academy of Pediatrics. That's a very big deal. She was 14 years old at the time that she was told to go from a social transition, that's, you know, my pronouns are he and they. To a hormonal transition, 15 years of hormones of of of cross sex hormones, which would be testosterone. To a medical transition, which was the removal of her ovaries and and a double mastectomy. And she started this process at 14 because the American Academy of Pediatrics told her to.

Rosaria Butterfield

Now this is a really big deal and the church needs to know better. Transgenderism and homosexuality come from the world, the flesh, and the devil. You cannot be made in the image of God as a gay person. You cannot be made in the image of God as a trans person. You can be made in the image of God as a man or as a woman. And you can be a struggling man. You can be a a struggling woman. And and please church, come up alongside our strugglers, pick them up. Carry the, carry the burdens. But don't lie to them. Tell them the truth. And when the Evangelical Church just wants to be a soft presence in the face of what is bald faced child abuse, you're barbaric. You're you're sacrificing children to Molick. This is Achin in the camp at at, you know, times a million, you need to stop. Stop pretending your enemies are your friends. Love your enemies. Love them well. But don't think you can be a soft presence here in Sodom and have it work out any better than it did for Lot because when

Athalia Bufano

You bring up a a really good point because our beliefs shape and have consequences that are physical, that are long lasting, that affect our mental state, that affect our relationships with others, and so knowing the truth and holding the truth is important. And so is presenting it in love. Doing it in community, I mean, you've had the example of those who spoke into your life and poured over you over reading the Bible and singing songs and answering your questions and over meals. And so what would be your recommendation then to the church to come alongside people who are believing these lies? What is the right and kind thing to do?

Rosaria Butterfield

Right.

Athalia Bufano

Good and loving thing to do.

Rosaria Butterfield

The first thing the church needs to do is drive the wolves out of dodge. Ok, the church needs to protect the people who come into the church from the wolves that are that, that are offering rank heresy. And and I can name names. If you'd like, I mean I I've gotten into some trouble in this book. Somebody said,

why do you name names? I said I'm an English professor. It's called citing my sources. So if you'd like me to cite my sources, I can. If you'd like to just keep it, keep it right here and you all can read the book and see that my sources, that's fine. But here's what I would say. It isn't just that these lies are, you know, they're just kind of out there in the ether. They are central to the doctrinal work of many of the parachurch ministries that too many churches are relying on. Church be the church. And I say this because these are hard days and I'm married to a pastor.

Rosaria Butterfield

I'm married to a pastor who took ordination vows. And I remember sitting there listening to those vows. And when he assented to vow number six, thinking our life will never be the same. Vow number six in our denomination is will you die for the doctrine that is in the Bible? Will you follow the martyrs and die? And when Kent my husband's name is Kent with a T. When Kent affirmed that with a strong yes, I knew that I needed to affirm that too. Now there is no leader of the parachurch ministry that is willing to die for the doctrine because their job is to make money to proliferate themselves, themselves. The church is the pure the, the, the bride of Christ, not the parachurch. So the first thing, is make sure you aren't providing people with a muddled theology. And I think about this doctrine matters. If I had walked into a church in 2023, being the Rosaria that was in 1997, what would I meet today? Would I meet an invitation to go to a revoice conference? Would I learn about this new seminar that Preston Sprinkles doing that that humanizes the trans experience? Would I be asked to just maybe start a gay bowling league so that other lesbians from the university could come and hang out? You see if that's the case, I wouldn't be talking to you because I wouldn't need that kind of gospel. I wouldn't need it at all. So the first is church be the church and cut yourself loose from these parachurches because they are not helping you. And I do name names in the books. If you want to know what I'm talking about more in more detail you can read the book.

Rosaria Butterfield

The 2nd is live as the family of God and don't presume that everybody is fine. In fact, why don't you do this? Presume they're not fine. Presume that everybody needs a safe place to land. Presume that it's going to be especially difficult for your singles, or maybe your older couples to to live in Christian joy. So make room at the table. And make room that isn't by invitation only. It's just because we're the family of God that there's room, and, oh, I understand it. I've been there before. People walk through the door and there's laundry on the dining room table that needs to be folded. Well, I will tell you two things that can happen if these are members of your church. They can either fold it. Or they can shove it back in the dryer. Which is, you know. Which is what we do a lot in this house. I mean don't, the focus is on community and the community of the church bearing one another's burdens every day in forgiveness and in joy. And and not on whether you there's, you know, cat hair in the mac and cheese. I tell people if you find animal hair in your food, that's nice and you can just say thank you very much because we've got a lot of pets around here.

Rosaria Butterfield

And the other is remember that the gospel has called you to forgive. So, so, so the way that church communities get really divided, they get really torqued, is when people feel like they need to bring all of their all of their concerns for one another to bear. You know, some things you need to talk about, some things you don't need to talk about. Some things you need to talk about in privacy other thing. In fact,

most things you need to talk about in privacy. So don't platform other peoples sins in the church. If you need to go to your brother privately do, and don't forget about joy. You know last last Lord's Day we ended up in a very impromptu way having twice as many people here as I had thought we would. And so. And you know why? Because people were in trouble. There was a crisis. There is a there is a mom in the hospital, there were, you know, there were all, there were all kinds of displaced kids and by kids, I mean of the teenage variety that can eat a whole crockpot by themselves. There was a lot of weeping and praying earlier in the day, but by, you know, 7:00 PM, there was a lot of psalms singing and laughter. And you know what happened is, you know the the the toddlers were all off the trampoline. So all the teenagers were on it and we could hear them joking and laughing. And it was a hard day. But we ended in joy. And we ended it together. And so and by together I mean together, not because we all agree on things, but because we share the blood of Christ.

Rosaria Butterfield

And so what I would say is that in that, in that building of Community, that's what that's what my heart is. And even when I go and speak before the school board, I invite people home. But I will. And and you know that that can sound crazy, but I spend no time on social media, so I really don't. I spar with real dragons. I don't spar with fake ones. And that means that I know at the end of the day, how to break bread together. So be careful about your social media intake. What it does is it creates. It creates false fears and sometimes false agendas. Value privacy. Value what happens when you have people in your home and the door is closed. And don't tweet about it. And don't blog about it. Just let the Lord have his perfect way in the lives of the very broken people that we are. But if your words, if your relationship is really strong, your words can also be really strong and nobody is going to like have a fit about that. But if your relationship is really weak and your words are super strong, people are like, whoa, whoa, who are you? What right do you have? Have some rights with one another. Build in that time so that you can build in those kinds of conversations.

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But it is ultimately the power of the Holy Spirit. And I think that part of why God is not blessing the church right now, and I don't think God is blessing the church. I think I think any a, a world that is growing in its homosexuality and transgenderism, says Romans one is a world under judgment. Well, I think Aikens in the camp and I think a lot of you know, people like myself who spend too much time in front of one of these, a microphone or too much time at a desk writing things. I think we all have things we need to repent of. And it's not enough if you're a, if you're a public person, it's not enough to just course correct. I think if you're a private person, if it's not a sin, you just course correct. But if you're a public person and you have said things that are not true, let's say you've let's say you've stopped saying them. You haven't said them in 10 years, but you said it in a book and it that book sold over 100,000 copies. Well, you need to get out ahead of that and let people know, no, I I believed that then because I saw through a glass darkly, as I'm doing right now. But I see it's a sin. And really Christians, I mean, the Christian world should not meet public repentance with shock and awe. That's that's absurd. What right do we have to call other, you know, unbelievers to repentance if we're not repenting ourselves? I mean, so I just don't understand that. But I will say this, the mirror that we hold up to ourselves is the Bible, not social media. And if we do that, I think we can have humility and clarity and grace. But you can't bypass repentance to get to grace. And so when the whole church is repenting, it makes it a lot safer for people to do that.

Shea Houdmann

Rosaria powerful stuff, I mean, I can hear the the passion in your voice and both speaking to stuff that's going on in our culture, but also with the care for people who are being lied to. So listeners, I would strongly encourage you to get the Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age. It's well worth the read and they will open your eyes to both the agenda that's out there, but also what it's going to result in if we, the church, don't stand against it. So Rosaria thank you for coming on the Got Questions podcast, sharing your heart, sharing your passion. And we'll include links to where her book and her other books can be purchased in the show notes on podcast.GotQuestions.org and also YouTube description when this video goes live. But this in conclusion Rosario what would be a closing encouragement? I mean sort of, here's your chance to give a a sales pitch, so to speak a why should someone be interested in acquiring your book?

Rosaria Butterfield

Oh, goodness no, I won't give you a sales pitch for that. I can't. I can't not tell you why. Because I think that most everything that I write as soon as I finish writing it, I'm just like because so I cause I should have said it differently, but I'll give you a sales pitch for the church. Can I do that? May I do that? And hopefully if if anything, what I want my all of my books to do, but certainly this last one especially so is to help build the church. Because the Lord Jesus Christ told us to abide in the truth. And it's the truth that will set you free. And so you cannot run your Christian life in parallel with lies. You have to know the truth, you have to know the lies are lies, and you will live with the freedom that comes with the kind company of the Lord Jesus Christ who tells us that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Rosaria Butterfield

But it will also, I hope, give you a sense of if you will a cause and a team. Because right now these lies have lodged into the the the federal governments laws of the land. And you know, I'm Presbyterian. So we we have these, we have you know we we have our claws out sometimes, right. The reformed presbyterians. I believe this is a good time for the Church to develop healthy doctrine of civil disobedience. I believe this is a really good time for the church to understand the doctrine of the mediatorial kingship of Christ. These are things you might learn in this book if you haven't heard them before. I don't think the evangelical church knows how to proclaim the gospel to a hostile world without becoming hostile. But this is not this, this is not the neutral world that it was before Obergefell's. Christians need to know what time it is in order to be effective as Christians in this world. I understand that God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And that God is not constrained by time and weather but you are. If there's a snowstorm in Colorado, you probably dress a little differently than you do if it's a 90° day. And likewise, although I live in a more temperate part of the nation, I I would have to do the same thing too.

Rosaria Butterfield

So Christian, I my prayer for you is that this book would help you know what time it is and make you effective in the lives of your prodigals, teach you, encourage you to stay connected to your prodigals without becoming indoctrinated by the things they believe. The Lord Jesus Christ is clear, those who hang millstones around the necks of children are no friends of his. Then why have your favorite evangelical parachurch ministries all of a sudden started getting on the bandwagon of wanting to

humanize the transgender experience? No. You need to rescue people. We need to rescue people. We need to be the grown-ups in the room. Sin infantilizes people and sanctification matures you. So it's hard to be a voice crying in the wilderness, and that's what every Christian feels like today. But I hope that my book will help you see that you're never singing a solo. At the very least, you're singing a duet with the Lord Jesus Christ. But the entire you know, invisible Church of made-up of believers over all walks of life and through every season and generation, they sing for the truth. And that's the only safe place to be. May God bless you and give you great courage and joy in these days ahead. God loved us well enough to entrust us with this mess, so we need to be the grown-ups who help clean it up.

Shea Houdmann

Amen. Thank you for that encouragement. As I do have one closing question for you. As an English professor, I'm sure you can handle this one. How exactly do you spell Gazonks?

Rosaria Butterfield

Well, I I'm Shea, I'm so glad you asked that question. In the Oxford English Dictionary, which is my favorite dictionary, the OED. OK, truth be told, this microphone is sitting on one of the volumes, and the computer that you're seeing me on is sitting on one of the volumes. It's a beautiful thing. I don't think it's in the OED. So I think you are you are going to have to ask Mr. Google for that. So that if we spell it phonetically, it would be Gaz double onks, but I don't know if we're spelling it phonetically.

Shea Houdmann

Rosaria, thank you for coming on the Got Questions Podcast today. Love your book. Love more than that, just your passion for speaking truth into a culture that's spreading, believing and living out lives. And Athalia, thank you for joining me as well. It's been a very encouraging, enlightening and important conversation today. So this has been the Got Questions podcast with Rosaria Butterfield. Got questions? The Bible has answers and we'll help you find them.