

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

A Critical, Pastoral Examination of Current State of The SBC Selected Passages

Keywords: SBC, Abortion, Sexual Abuse, Church Discipline, Gospel, Role of Women

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: The 2022 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention established some position and trends that many found troubling. In this message the leadership of Missio Dei Fellowship seeks to explain four key areas of concern and its position on each of them. In doing so the desire is to bring clarity to a subject that is rife with opinion and emotion.

I. Introduction.

- A. As a member of the SBC we have the privilege to participate in the direction and development of the convention.
 1. A key way this is done is by sending representatives to the yearly gathering called the Annual Meeting. This year over 8100 messengers descended on Anaheim for the purpose of this meeting.
 2. Key resolutions, decisions and officers are voted upon and affirmed or denied. It is an opportunity for the various arms of the convention to give reports on the past year, much like our yearly state of the church address.
 3. The last few meetings have been quite contentious for various reasons. Primarily centering around a growing presence of apparent liberalism creeping in to various parts of the convention. Issues such as Critical Race Theory, Social Justice, Abortion, Politics, Role of Women in leadership, Plagiarism and such have created opportunities for debate and dissension.
- B. This sermon is an attempt to give you the position of the leadership of Missio Dei Fellowship on some key points that are being pushed through the various media and social media outlets regarding the SBC.
- C. Four points that require clarity and explanation: Women as pastors; how to handle sexual abuse; Abortion; and the Gospel in relation to secondary issues.

II. Four Observations of The SBC.

Preached on September 18, 2022

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- A. First, the place of female pastors.
1. In this day and age a subject that may sound backward or out of line. For many it is such a minor issue when the culture war is raging around us in every conceivable way, why bother?
 2. In the greater Evangelical landscape it is more and more common to see churches hire a couple as their new “pastors.” And in most so-called conservative circles the biggest reaction to the increase of female pastors is a shrug or a shaking of the head.
 3. It is exacerbated by leading pastors in the SBC who create problems for the other churches by being bad examples.
 4. What is the issue? Why is this even being discussed? And where does Missio Dei Fellowship fit into all of this
 - a. For time’s sake the term ‘pastor’ is a synonym for ‘elder’ and ‘overseer/bishop’. They are used interchangeably. Pastor simply means “shepherd.” But because people get lazy with terms and allow culture and preferences reign supreme, words and their meaning become eroded over time
 - b. 1 Timothy 2:11-15.
 - (1) Note how simple and clear these words are. The only thing that most people wonder about is vs 15.
 - (2) Vs 11 is the positive command and vs 12 is the negative. What you are to do and not do.
 - (3) vs 11 is a command/imperative, not a suggestion.
 - (4) vss 12-15: Note that the term “pastor” is not even in view. This is a ‘red-herring’ argument that is very common. Paul gives two distinct, yet related prohibitions:
 - (a) To teach.

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- (b) To exercise authority. Again, separate from teaching.

B. Second, sexual abuse and accusations.

1. The SBC is in the news because of a report that came out via a group called Guideposts. This is an outside organization that was hired to look into allegations.
2. However, actual instances of abuse and illegal/ immoral activity is shown in this study to be far less common than as marketed by those who profit from the misery and sin of others—so it can seem to be common. Far less than 1% of individuals in SBC churches have been convicted of sexual crime/abuse.
3. They passed a provision to open up scrutiny to outside organizations to abuse. And those outside groups are not Christians nor is there accountability on their end.
 - a. Already lawsuits are mounting against the Convention even though the Convention has utterly no authority in any local church.
 - b. Problems:
 - c. Proverbs 18:17.
 - d. In Israel God commanded that a single witness is insufficient for conviction. Only with the testimony of 2-3 witnesses can something be confirmed.
 - e. 1 Corinthians 6.

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4. The scripture gives three simple solutions:
 - a. First, biblical, church discipline.
 - (1) Matthew 18 is the normal standard.

 - (2) Titus 3:10-11 is an abbreviated action for those creating dissension in a church.

 - b. Second, no room given for re-entrance into pastoral/church leadership.
 - (1) 1 Timothy 3:2.

 - c. Third, civil authorities exist when crime has occurred.
 - (1) If it is sin but not a crime then the church handles it. But if it is a crime then they are to give it to the governing authorities to handle.

 - (2) Romans 13:3-4.

 5. Bottom-line, if these three steps are taken by churches then the problem is relegated to the sidelines. And if you were to look at the few hundred cases reported over the last couple of decades you will find that the vast majority of them resulted in convictions.
- C. Third, abortion and how to respond to it.
1. What does the bible say?
 - a. Simple—you are not to commit murder.

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- b. Second, if you commit murder then you forfeit your life. This is found in Genesis 9:6.

- 2. Never does the Scripture treat the baby as less than human in the womb.
- 3. So what of those who have aborted a child? The answer is simple and beautiful, it is found in the gospel. No sin stands outside of the grace of God; for the bible states “*where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*” (Romans 5:20).
- 4. But it is a sin that must be repented of and rejected. To hold onto this act and justify as good or right is sin. As a result Missio Dei Fellowship could not maintain fellowship with a person or church who argues that killing an unborn child is acceptable.

- D. Fourth, the use of keeping the gospel as the main thing as a cover for much evil.
 - 1. This is a point I have made many times over many years with the rise of the so-called “gospel-centered movement.” A good concept that became a marketable concept and lost its way. Frankly, most new concepts that pop-up in the Church today exist to monetize rather than to edify. It just takes a year or so to see it clearly.
 - a. We want to acknowledge that a person can believe the gospel and be a Christian and also believe quite a host of other things. Things related to politics, economics, relational, social and even religious practices.
 - b. But this is not the same thing as believing that all platforms are created equal. Currently it is heresy to believe that a Judeo-Christian culture is superior over any other culture, but it is.
 - c. The gospel is not some little nugget of truth that resides all by itself and does not eventually leaven all other parts of a person or society’s life. But this is what is often rejected when we try to keep the main thing the main thing.
 - 2. 1 Peter 2:16.

III. Conclusion.

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- A. So the question then is where this leaves us as a church and the answer is simple. Nothing changes in any real sense.
 - 1. The SBC cannot tell us what we can or can't do.
 - 2. We can withdraw and go completely on our own. We can choose to join a different association/convention/denomination.
 - 3. We can stay and fight.
 - 4. We can stay and influence.
- B. What we want to do with this simple message today is to have you begin to appreciate what is happening in the SBC and that we are not ignorant of it all.
 - 1. Opinions are cheap and easy. But decisions have consequences and often they are not all apparent until much later.
 - 2. We would say that slow and careful is usually much wiser than fast and forceful.
- C. The reality is that the vast majority of the SBC is made up of small congregations who are biblically faithful but who have not wanted to get involved in the bigger issues.
 - 1. Time will tell whether they will stay silent. We have for many years so I cast little to no stones on that matter.
 - 2. I believe that many simply are so busy minding their own business that they don't see the drift occurring. But also, that the drift is creating quite a gulf between various entities and congregations. The riots of 2020 brought that out for many congregations. More of that sort of thing is only going to emphasize the differences.
 - 3. And as the gulf widens more congregations may arise to do battle.
- D. A passage I think of often is in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, "*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.*"

Benediction

May the God who gave us the Word sanctify us in it so that we might find ourselves strengthened in the truth, humble of heart, able to encourage one another toward love and good deeds, especially as we see the day of our Lord's return drawing nearer. Amen.