

How To Reform a Church And Not Be a Coward

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...R.C. Sproul's and your John MacArthur's. When pastors hear them and start realizing, man, if I preach this in my church, I'm going to get in a whole lot of trouble. Well, here's two extremes. One is cowardice. I've come to believe that being a coward runs in the blood of every man I've ever met including myself. We have to fight being cowards. And we have to fight self-preservation. Christians are supposed to suffer. Pastors are supposed to suffer. It's what we do. And if by taking the truth of the Gospel, we lose our positions, we lose our places, then so be it. At least we've been faithful to Him.

But the other extreme is running into your church loveless, without prayer, like a bull in a china shop, and just destroying everybody in your path. First of all, what do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast? If you've come to understand great truths of the Christian faith that have been forgotten, what separates you from anybody else? It's the grace of God that's done that. Freely you have received it, not based on your own virtue and merit, but the grace of God. Now treat others with grace. (incomplete thought)

When I went to preach in a certain church for a few months, they were very opposite of me. It was a typical, little country church. I didn't go in there and start lambasting everybody. As a matter of fact, what I did is I went in there and started teaching on the family. Why? Because the family is basically a disaster in America. And if you can go into a church and preach the Scriptures to the point where those people's families are being healed, then they'll listen to the other things you have to say.

So if you're going to go into a church and reform it, here's the first thing you need to realize. You need to move slowly. You need to move with love. You need to move on your knees. And then you need to look at the needs of those people and meet those needs with Scripture. And as you're meeting those needs with Scripture like no other man before you has done, then when you start going into these other truths, they're going to look and say, well, you know all that stuff he taught us about the Bible, it really healed our families. It really turned us toward godliness. So, we shouldn't attack him just because we've never heard this before. Let's go on and listen to him for a while because we know the good that his preaching's already done to us. Most men want to just immediately attack the big issues.

Here's another thing that has to be taught to a congregation. And that is not only that the Scriptures are inspired - the Southern Baptists and others won phenomenal victories when they held onto the doctrines that the Scriptures are inspired and infallible. But that's only half the battle. The next question is: are the Scriptures sufficient? Do we need anthropology? Do we need psychology? Do we need 5th Avenue church growth techniques to make Christianity work? Pastor, you have to teach your people how to rely upon the Scriptures alone. The Scriptures are sufficient. Another thing that a pastor needs to realize: you walk into a typical church in America and you can count on a great many people - maybe half, maybe more - are unconverted. And so you try to lead them in spiritual truths, it's like trying to teach a goat how to

be a sheep. The pastor needs to go into that church being loving, being evangelistic, being warm, and trying to win people to Christ. You get a converted congregation, they're quite easy to lead.