

What I would like to leave to Eastway Baptist Church

The last seven years for me at this church have been wonderful and tumultuous. I have had many times when I was beside myself with the joy of the Lord. I have had a few times when I was acutely aware of the roar of the devil who was stalking me in hopes of devouring me. I have known brothers and sisters here who supported me through thick and thin. And I have known a few folks who were ready to charge me with whatever came to their minds. For the most part, you have proven yourselves hungry for the word, and that was so encouraging to yours truly.

But now that this is my last Sunday here, I would like to leave you with a few things to hold on to.

First, “Remember, it’s all about Jesus.”

The Bible, world history, the gospel, the true church, it’s all about Jesus. It isn’t about you and me, it’s about Jesus. It certainly involves us, but it’s all about Jesus. What we preach and what we teach must be focused on the finished work of Christ on the cross. And those little issues you and I have to deal with every day will grow strangely dim, in the light of His marvelous grace.

This is what Paul wrote, *1 Corinthians 2:1* *And when I came to you, brethren, I^a did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you^b the¹ testimony of God.*

² For I determined to know nothing among you except^a Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

³ I was with you in^a weakness and in^b fear and in much trembling,

⁴ and my¹ message and my preaching were^a not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of^b the Spirit and of power,

⁵ so that your faith would not¹ rest on the wisdom of men, but on^a the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5 NAU)

You have just done some kind of sin and you’re kicking yourself for it. Might I suggest to you that you are looking at the wrong person. You are looking at yourself. Why are you looking at yourself? You’re the source of your problem. Why aren’t you looking elsewhere. Not for

punishment but for help and forgiveness. When we sin and look to Jesus, that is faith, my friends.

This is what Paul wrote, ¹⁹ *Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now ^aas good as dead since ^bhe was about a hundred years old, and ^cthe deadness of Sarah's womb;* That was Abraham's reality, physically. He did not deny what was staring him in the face. He was old and so was Sarah. If he had had one of Joel Osteen's books, he would have seen that he could create a new reality just by speaking it. Joel Osteen says that we can grow younger. That, my friends, is not reality. It is lunacy.

But there was another reality that Abraham recognized ²⁰ *yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, ^agiving glory to God, ²¹ and ^abeing fully assured that ^bwhat God had promised, He was able also to perform.* That was the other reality. Abraham was fully assured that God could pull it off, regardless of his physical realities. And we are to be fully assured that God has pulled it off through the finished work of Christ on the cross where in His physical body He bore our sins and punishment that we might never have to. *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
(Rom. 4:19-22:8:1NAU)
"It's all about Jesus."

Second, "Understand what the gospel is."

"Pastor, I know what the gospel is. Don't talk down to me. I've always known what the gospel is." Ok, tell me the gospel. "Well, it's, 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.' It's John 3:16." "And you can show me in Scripture at least one verse that says 'God loves me and has a wonderful plan for my life?'" "Well, no. But I know it's in there somewhere."

Beloved, the gospel necessarily begins with bad news. The lost must know they are lost. Sinners must know they are sinners. To tell someone that God loves them as though that were the whole message of

the gospel sends the message that He loves them just like they are and they're ok with Him. The gospel begins with conviction and ends with conversion.

Here it is from the word of God. **Romans 8:1** *Therefore there is now no ^acondemnation for those who are ^bin ^cChrist Jesus.*

² *For ^athe law of the Spirit of life ¹in ^bChrist Jesus ^chas set you free from the law of sin and of death.*

³ *For ^awhat the Law could not do, ^{1b}weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in ^cthe likeness of ²sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,*

⁴ *so that the ^arequirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who ^bdo not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

⁵ *For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on ^athe things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, ^bthe things of the Spirit.*

⁶ *For the mind set on the flesh is ^bdeath, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,*

⁷ *because the mind set on the flesh is ^ahostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,*

⁸ *and those who are ^ain the flesh cannot please God. (Rom. 8:1-8 NAU)*

The gospel says this. Every human being on the face of God's green earth has sinned and there is nothing whatsoever they can do about it. They cannot be good enough to earn God's favor because they cannot be good enough to earn God's favor. They can try their best to keep the law to the letter, but their flesh gets in the way. So, what we cannot do and could not do, God did for us in and through His Son. ³ *For ^awhat the Law could not do, ^{1b}weak as it was through the flesh, God did.*

Jesus kept the law on our behalf, perfectly. Jesus did the Father's will on our behalf, perfectly. Jesus lived a sinless life on our behalf. And now through the grace of God alone, through faith in Christ alone, God writes down on our heavenly account His righteousness and obedience as though we had done all that ourselves and He declares us to be right with Him. And that is why the gospel is such good news.

I leave the gospel with my beloved at Eastway.

Third, I want you to “Remember to be a Berean.”

Hopefully you remember who the Berean Jews were. They’re the Jews who listened to Paul’s gospel and then went home and searched their Scriptures to see if those things were so. And when they found out they were, many of them came to faith in Christ. ¹⁰ *“The brethren immediately sent ^bPaul and Silas away by night to ^cBerea, ¹and when they arrived, they went into ^dthe synagogue of the Jews.*

¹¹ *Now these were more noble-minded than those in ^aThessalonica, ¹for they received the word with ²great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.*

¹² *Therefore ^amany of them believed, ¹along with a number of ^bprominent Greek ^cwomen and men. (Acts 17:10-12 NAU)*

Our nation is running over with false prophets and false teachers and false pastors and false apostles. The Lord Jesus and the apostles told us they were coming and that we were to watch out for them to keep ourselves from being deceived by them. Jesus and the apostles also told us that these charlatans would be very successful in their so-called “ministries,” regardless of the twisted and perverted and bizarre things they would spout from their platforms. *“Many will follow their pernicious ways, because of whom the way of truth will be spoken against.”*

Two important points here. First, Jesus guarantees His sheep they will in no way follow the voices, the teachings, of false shepherds.

² *“But he who enters by the door is ^aa shepherd of the sheep.*

³ *“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear ^ahis voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and ^bleads them out.*

⁴ *“When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, **and the sheep follow him because they know ^ahis voice.***

⁵ *“A **stranger they simply will not follow**, but will flee from him, because they do not know ^athe voice of strangers.” (Jn. 10:2-5 NAU)*

The words, at least in my version of the Bible, says, ⁵ "***A stranger they simply will not follow.***" "Simply will not" is in the Greek text a double negative, making it emphatic. It means just what it says, "My sheep will not in anyway follow false teachers and false prophets and false apostles and false pastors." Believers may stop and listen to some fool who is perverting the gospel and the word of God, but they will not stay long.

Fourth, "You are justified, declared right with God by God, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for God's glory alone, and our eternal good."

Fifth and finally I leave this with you, "Love one another."

I have friends who are gifted with the Biblical gift of speaking in other tongues. I do not have that gift and I have never had that gift. The problem with many who have this gift is they teach it as the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They say tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without speaking in tongues, one has no such evidence. That is error, my friends. However, there is an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the believers' love for one another. That's it. ³⁴ "A ^a*new commandment I give to you, ^bthat you love one another, ^ceven as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

³⁵ "^a*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (Jn. 13:34-35 NAU) Well-meaning people can fake tongues because they were erroneously taught how to speak in tongues. Pagan religionists speak in unknown tongues. But one cannot fake the God-kind of love that He has poured out into our hearts through the indwelling of the Spirit. *the love of God has been ^bpoured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.* (Rom. 5:5 NAU)

¹⁹ ^a*We love, because He first loved us.*

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²⁰ *^aIf someone says, "I love God," and ^bhates his brother, he is a ^cliar; for ^dthe one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, ^ecannot love God whom he has not seen.*

²¹ *And ^athis commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God ^bshould love his brother also. (1 Jn. 4:19-21 NAU)*

And that's what I wish to leave you with, my dearly beloved.
"Love one another and so fulfill the law of God."
I love you, beloved of God.