



Greenwood Baptist Church

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Convention(al) Wisdom

Genesis 3:1

We are celebrating our country's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. I've enjoyed reading about some of these lesser-known Founding Fathers, and I came across a guy named William Floyd whom I wanted to tell you about today. His father died when he was a teenager, so he dropped whatever education he might have been pursuing and took over the family farm on Long Island. It's hard to imagine there being a farm on Long Island in New York, but there was one.

He became wealthy, comfortable, and established. His family had worked that same land for generations. Then he was sent to the Continental Congress. In 1776, he became the first man from the New York delegation to sign the Declaration of Independence. The punishment—because that's the thing. If you signed that document and we lost the war, you were confessing to treason. That meant all the signers knew that if we did not win our independence, they would be hanged. That was part of the deal. And yet they put their names on that document.

We go back and look at it, saying, "Oh, cool. They signed it." But signing it was a commitment. They were committing their lives, their fortunes, their family honor, and everything they had to liberty—to the cause of the United States of America. So he signed it, and immediately there were consequences. Washington's forces were defeated at the Battle of Long Island, and the British occupied his entire state. Not only that, they turned his home into cavalry barracks and occupied it for seven years until the end of the war.

He came back after the war ended, but over those seven years, he and his family survived as refugees, moving from house to house among family, while enemy soldiers ate his food and slept in his beds. Even worse, in 1781, before the war was even won, his wife, Hannah, died, never seeing her home again. When he finally returned, the whole place was wrecked. Can you imagine a whole brigade, or however many cavalymen there were? There really wasn't much left. So he rebuilt the estate, remarried, and held it there until he turned seventy.

When he was seventy, he did something unexpected. He sold his estate and claimed some land that was still wild country. It was a wilderness with no one living there. It was at the mouth of the Mohawk River in Upstate New York. He packed up his family, moved to this raw frontier, cleared the land, and built a new homestead from scratch. He lived there until he died in 1821 at the age of eighty-seven. He didn't end his life in a mansion full of relics, but on the edge of the map, still building.

The stories of men like that really amaze me. I can't imagine being seventy, packing everything up, and going off into the wilderness to start over, clearing every tree for pasture and everything else needed. Yet that is exactly what he did. So we should remember that we are not descended from fearful men. We are descended from men and women who risked everything for liberty and for the freedoms we now wake up to every day and enjoy.

It was far from a foregone conclusion when they committed themselves, their lives, their homes, their family names, their reputations, their fortunes, *everything* for America. We should honor them, remember their sacrifices, and remember that liberty must be fought for and maintained. That's all I've got to say about that today.

I'm going to tell you what the message is about. I'm sure you're going to find it quite exciting. Just this past week, the Southern Baptist Convention met, and a motion was made. We're going to talk about that. And there is another convention, PCUSA. They are meeting in a couple of weeks, and they have a motion, too. So my message today is about these two motions. Are you excited?

Have you ever been to a convention and seen a motion? "So moved, second, blah, blah, blah..." But I'm going to tell you why they are important because I know you're like, "Why is he talking about that?" Some of you probably didn't know we are Southern Baptists. We are. You might not have even known that, and that's okay. But we're Southern Baptists by choice.

In our denomination, every church is completely autonomous. We make our own decisions, and no one tells us what to do. No one chooses our pastors or anything else. We own the land, and everything here is ours. It doesn't belong to anyone else. As an autonomous group, we cooperate with others in our convention.

One of the things we do is that Baptists send more missionaries into the world than any other group. We're not new. Baptists go way back. Charles Spurgeon was at a Baptist church. You can trace our lineage all the way back to the early churches. So we're not new—we are as old as you can get, as far as the church goes. People have ideas about Baptists. When I was young, or even a generation before me, we were known for not dancing. Baptists don't dance. "They don't dance! They don't believe in that dancing!"

If you've ever seen Baptists trying to move rhythmically, you'll know it was probably a good decision. But there are still people with questions. I thought it was funny—I was Googling something, and it showed that one of the top Google searches for Baptist churches is "Are women allowed to wear pants to church services?" No! You all know that was a joke, right? Did you all look around when you came in here? Come on! The first service didn't get it either. Maybe the third service. I'm going to hold out hope. It was a joke!

Of course, they wear pants! You're welcome to come however... Well, within reason. But of course! But that's what people sometimes think. Now, here is the motion they voted on. The motion was that we affirm and include in our constitution that—and by the way, both of these motions in these two church matters are very controversial. In the Southern Baptist motion, it

was stated that the office of senior pastor—the person who preaches and leads the church—is biblically mandated to be held by a man.

It's a pretty short motion, and we've dealt with this before. The controversy is—well, we don't really have a problem with that. I mean, there are almost 47,000 Southern Baptist churches, and in our last few years, about forty have been found to have women pastors. Some of them withdrew from the convention on their own. There have been a few—just a handful—that we've said, "Well, they're not cooperating churches." That's what you call them, cooperating churches.

To be a cooperating church, you have to agree to certain biblical standards we uphold—certain biblical rules. Now, there are things that are disputable. We get that. Every church is different. You can go to another Baptist church, and they may do things totally differently. They may have a different leadership style or have a different way of doing it. Whatever. There are all kinds of differences. But we agree on certain things.

The controversy centered on whether we needed to vote on it. Many people thought, "Well, you know what? We don't really need that. It's already in our Baptist Faith and Message—our statement of faith—which clearly says that men are to be senior pastors. So why do we need to vote on this?" Some people didn't think we needed to vote on it; others thought it needed to be in the constitution. That was the controversy.

It did pass—it has to pass by two-thirds in two consecutive conventions, so it will have to come up again next year. Now, that's what we had a motion on, and where the controversy was. The Presbyterian church—and it's one of the oldest churches in the United States. There are Presbyterian churches that were begun here at the turn of the century, just after 1700. So they have been here—you all do the math—over 300 years. So, a long time before we were even a country, they were here.

Their motion, in a couple of weeks, is also about their pastors, but their motion is this: Any pastor, leader, or clergy member in a sexual relationship must maintain a monogamous relationship. That's their motion. And so they have women pastors, homosexual pastors, and apparently, they have a problem with some who claim to be polyamorous—like they've got all different kinds. So that's their motion, and it's very controversial because several advisory councils within their convention, or their group, are against it.

The advisory council for LGBTQIA+ Equity is against it because they feel it would be a burden for people who are homosexual or of other genders to live up to. Then there are others who are against limiting sexual relationships to monogamy. They don't think that's okay. That's their controversy. There are a lot of people who are against simply saying that their clergy, whether men, women, homosexual, or whatever other of the letter words—and I'm not saying that to make light of it—I just don't remember what they all are—should, if they choose to have sex with somebody, do so with just one person at a time.

That's their controversy. And it's controversial. And there is a big difference. If you were to go back a hundred years, there would be only a tiny difference between their convention and ours. But now, there is a huge difference. Here's the deal: I want to make something clear. This is not

about women. This is not by any means saying that women are the problem here. But in the late 1950s, the Presbyterians voted to begin ordaining women pastors. It was a full year before they ordained the first one. Now, in 2026, they have 42,000 women pastors.

"Why is that a big deal?" you might ask. That's what we're going to talk about today. I want to make something really clear: I'm not saying, "Well, they let women in and the whole thing went to pot." That's not what I'm saying at all. But something significant happened there, and it slowly changed their convention so that now they are saying, "Hey, guys, if you're going to have sex with somebody, just do it with one person." That's the standard they are trying to put in front of people.

We're going to start out in Genesis 3:1:

"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day, he asked the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?'"

That little phrase is a death knell to those who listen to it. The phrase is "Did God really say?" First, he questions what God says, then His motives. "Well, God just said that because He knows if you do it, you will be like Him." He casts doubt on the Word of God. Why does this matter about women pastors? The reason it matters is that it is one of those areas that people don't get super excited about because they're like, "Okay, your church wants to have a woman pastor; she wants to preach, cool. She wants to do this, that's fine. What's the problem with that?"

Here's why it matters:

1 Timothy 2:12-14:

"I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly." Now he goes all the way back to Genesis right here: "For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result."

Now, that doesn't paint Adam in a better light. That is not saying that Adam is better. As a matter of fact, Adam knew what he was doing when he ate the fruit. Eve was deceived because she listened to the question, "Did God really say that?" She doubted and bought the deception. Adam was not deceived, but he was also silent. The Bible says he was right there with her: "Adam, who was with her..." So he was there. It doesn't make him any better, but God is going back and showing how His order was important from the very beginning.

"I do not let women teach men or have authority over them." It's about authority and the structure of things, and that is embedded in all of creation. When God created, He created man first. Woman comes from man, and she is to be a helper to him—a helpmate. The Bible tells us she is of equal value. We'll get to that in a minute. God has given her certain gifts. The Bible says He created them in the image of God. "In the image of God, created he them." He says it

twice. "Male and female he created them; male and female created he them." He wanted us to know it is male and female. There are no other genders. That's it. It's just the two.

But He also created them in His image. It's different. That's why the Bible uses marriage—a man and a woman—as an example of Christ as the bridegroom to the church. When we see a man and a woman together, we have a fuller picture of who God is. Now, what does Satan want to do? He wants to distort that picture. He wants to distort the Word of God. He's not going to come in and tell you, "It's all wrong. There is no God." He's not going to say those things. He's going to say subtle things like, "Did God really say this?" And then he does what he does through that.

It's not that big of a jump. This is what happened with another organization. They started out with, "Well, you know what? If God calls a woman, who am I to say no?" I've heard that over the years. "Well, who are you to say that God didn't call her to be a pastor?" I'm not anybody to say it! I wouldn't say that on my own. That's not my job or responsibility to say. But here's the problem: God said He didn't call women to be that, because the Scripture specifically says a woman is not to be a pastor, and the man is the head of the home.

God's creation is ordered. There is always order in God's creation. In a home, there is order. The man is to be the head of the home; the wife is to be submissive to her husband, as the husband submits to Christ. They are supposed to submit to one another. That provides authority and protection.

The thing about it is that once you get out of that order in one area, it reflects on all the others. If a woman can be a pastor and the husband-of-one-wife requirement no longer applies, then why does it have to be a man and a woman at all? Why can't it be a man and a man, or a woman and a woman? Or a man and several women, or a woman and several men? Why does it even have to be one? And so you see how that jump happens. It starts with the gentlest, the easiest one.

I know some very godly women, and I've known them throughout my life. I'll bet you have too. When I first came here, there were godly women here who knew more about the Bible than I did. No doubt, no question. But here's the deal: they knew God didn't call them to pastor a church. God gave them other roles. So it does matter. God has told us specifically.

1 Timothy 3:2:

"So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach."

What you will find is that people go through all kinds of mental gymnastics: "Well, the Greek doesn't originally mean..." They try everything they can to make the language say something it doesn't. But the word "man" is pretty clear. It must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. Do you see any way a woman can meet those qualifications? No. And it has nothing to do with value. It doesn't say that men are better than women. It's because that is the role of man. That role is for men. We're going to get to the roles of women in just a minute.

"He must be faithful to his wife, he must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home." I'm still working on that one. I'm just

being honest with you. You are all welcome to come by. I'm not going to answer the door, but you are all welcome to come by. I'm joking! I've got that Ring thing—I'm gonna see who is out there!

Then it says, "He must be able to teach." So there are qualifications. And that's the deal: not every *man* is qualified to be a pastor. God calls very few who are qualified to become pastors. But God tells us that those roles are limited to men. Within the church, that is virtually the only role that is limited. There are so many roles throughout the church that women can, have, and should be a part of. We have some amazing leaders. We try to honor women.

We have several women on our ministerial staff. Tina Jackson has been here forever. Not only does she do pre-school ministry, but she is also over the Remarkable Special Needs Ministry, The Exceptional Rodeo that just happened, and Night To Shine. She is passionate about those things. Someone came up to me and said, "Hey, thank you all for doing this!" I said, "I appreciate that. Our church is very involved in it, but Tina Jackson is the engine that makes this go." Karissa also helps, and there are other people—a lot of people—who help, but Tina is the one. She's better qualified for it than anybody else here—me included.

If I were doing it, it would be a wreck. She has it together, and she *loves* those participants. She loves the people who come to those events and who come to her class. She just absolutely adores them. God has given her a gift to lead in that area, and we want her to do so. So there are all kinds of roles for women.

Titus 1:9:

"He (it is talking about a pastor again) must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong."

As a man in this role, you've got to be opposed—you've got to stand up against false teaching. There have been times when, as a pastor, I've had to make the decision, "No, they can't teach." That hasn't happened in a while, but it does happen. There have even been people we thought we could allow to teach whom we've had to remove because they were teaching something that did not align with the Word of God.

I'm responsible for everyone who preaches from this pulpit when I'm not here or when I have someone else preaching. You all probably wouldn't realize this, but I get one or two phone calls, letters, or emails every single week from people who want to come and preach here. Some of them are probably good. But my response is, "I don't really know you. No."

I am only going to allow people to get up here and preach if I know them—I know their character, I know their life, I know their theology, and I know they're going to preach the whole counsel of God, and I can put them up here without worrying about what they're going to say. Because part of my job is to make sure that nothing that comes to you with my approval, whether it's in one of the small group Bible studies—we've got people who look over those things who

are doing a great job—we are very careful about who we allow to teach and who we allow to preach, because that's part of our responsibility.

You know what? I'm not saying I'm impervious to it, but one thing women, on the whole, have more of than men is empathy. When I tell somebody "no," I'm not worried about whether I hurt their feelings. I'm going to be honest—I don't care. I'm like, "Okay, this is my job. The answer is no. Move on." There are times I'd say, "You feel like you're called into ministry? I'll sit down and talk to you about what it takes. But it is a slow process. I'll show you and help you learn what it takes if that is really your calling." Never hear from them again.

There are people here in this church who show up one week and want to preach. I'm like, "No... I don't even know your last name, Bro! But I'll help you if you want to come by and talk to me." I understand their motives may be good and that they want to do right, but that's not good enough! You've got to be scripturally qualified to get up here and preach in this pulpit. Period!

So that's what we're called to do, and we have to take a strong stand on that. And here's the deal: there is something in us that wants to do the one thing we can't do. I understand. I do believe there are women who are gifted teachers. That doesn't mean they are called to pastor a church. How do I know that? The Word says they're not! They are not scripturally qualified. These are the qualifications...

I want you to understand that this has nothing to do with value at all. Look, there are moms who have put the Word into their kids, and it will last a lifetime. It was there before they ever heard a pastor preach a sermon. There are grandmothers who have put the Word and the love of Jesus into their grandkids. You know, my favorite picture of my grandmother is of her sitting in a rocking chair, reading the Word of God.

We had a guy from our church come out who wanted to take some pictures of her and gave them to us. He was just an amateur—he was a minister at the church. That's the image I have of my grandmother. Whenever I would go to her house, she would sit over in the corner, in a rocking chair, and she would read the Word of God. And I saw that over and over again, and it mattered to me. There are women in this church who are part of the foundation; they're part of our DNA.

When I got here, Miss Lutie was one of the kindest, sweetest, gentlest, little old Baptist church ladies you could ever meet. At first, she intimidated the fire out of me because I knew pretty quickly that she knew more about the Bible than I did. But she never tried to assert that. Her DNA is in this church. There are women who lead on our staff, and there are women who lead in other ways. Connie Bunn—I'm going to embarrass her, but her encouragement and her friendship through the years have meant a lot to me.

She now has a ministry. She lost a son several years ago, and now she helps others through grief recovery—grief counseling. She does this because she wants to use what happened in her life for good in the lives of others. We are blessed to have people like her. We are blessed to have women leading in this church. This church would not be the same without the godly women who have poured their lives into it. We need them! It is not about how valuable they are, nor is it about their gifts. It's about the roles we're given.

All of us should live in the role we're given. If you think you've been given a role that Scripture says no to, then that is not your role. But there are many other opportunities. Women are lifted up in Scripture. Jesus revolutionized the way women were treated. The church tradition says, and it's in all the gospels, that women were there at the cross at the end.

John 19:25:

"Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene."

Tradition has passed down—though it's not in Scripture—that Mary Magdalene was the last one to leave and the first one to the empty tomb.

Matthew 28:1:

"Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb."

In one of the gospels, it talks about how those women were there, names them, and says that other women who had been following Jesus and had followed Him into Jerusalem came to the cross. There have always been women who were followers who were part of the ministry.

In Acts 18:26, a couple, Priscilla and Aquila, heard Apollos preaching. He was preaching boldly—the guy could speak, and he was preaching about Jesus. But he only knew about the baptism of John the Baptist. So it says that they took him aside:

"When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately."

This church would not be what it is or where it is without a lot of these women—my wife being one of them. She is a co-laborer with me in this church, but I would not call her a pastor or a co-pastor. For one thing, she would be all up on me if I did that because she doesn't believe that. She believes what the Word says. But there have been so many times when we've sat down together and counseled or encouraged people, and she's had wisdom that God gave her that was right in the moment. We did it together.

When we first came here, she held every other position in the church, volunteering and otherwise. We went back to the nursery, and Carrie said, "I wouldn't put my baby in that nursery," so she took it over and ran it. She knows how to fix things and make them better. She has given of her time and her talents. Now she leads our women's ministry, leads our missions, and is about to take another group to Africa this coming Friday. I can't imagine what it would be like if I hadn't had her, if she hadn't been here, and if she hadn't given as she has of her time and her talents, and so many other women who have done the exact same thing.

A lot of our ministers will tell you the same thing—their wives are co-laborers with them. And some of the women who are ministers have husbands who are co-laborers with them. It's an awesome thing to see. There is power in a marriage—a husband and a wife who are serving God together. It is the fullest picture of who God is and what it is meant to be, and how Jesus loves the church. That's part of the whole order thing.

Years and years ago—this was a long time ago. I got a call from—I'm not going to tell you the church, but there was a church in town with a woman pastor. She called me and wanted to ask me some questions. I was like, "Uh oh, I don't know what this is about, but okay." She was really nice, and I was nice to her. Her question was, "You know, I do believe what the Bible says about the husband being the head of the home, and wives being submissive to their husbands. As a pastor, I'm not sure how I model that and live that for my church."

I wanted to encourage her, but I didn't know what to tell her. I didn't have an answer for that because God gave us that order so that all things would fit together. The leadership in the home is reflected in the leadership in the church. All those things are together. The leadership in the church is reflected in the leadership between Jesus and the church. Jesus is the head of every church. All those things together are to give us a picture. We're all equal in the eyes of God. We have equal worth. In heaven, it's all going to be the same.

Galatians 3:26-29:

"For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Now let me tell you something: that was revolutionary teaching in its time. The world in which Paul taught this, and the world in which the church put it into practice, did not see it that way. Women were viewed more as property. Men were the ones who were important. Men saw women, even their wives, not as partners, but as something they owned. This was revolutionary teaching, and Paul had the courage to teach it even when it wasn't culturally acceptable; we have to be willing to do the same today.

Here's why it is such a difficult thing: you start out with that one thing, and it's not that, "Well, you let a woman in..." I'm not saying that at all. What I'm saying is that the moment you choose and put something into practice—which church denominations have done—once you have decided a way or a mechanism to make something the Bible has said to be irrelevant, "Well, we don't think that applies anymore," the problem is this: Now you've put in place a way to do it, and there will always be something else.

Satan doesn't come and destroy people by offering his end purpose at the beginning. Have you ever heard someone say, "You know what? I just got tempted to get addicted to drugs and ruin my life, alienate my whole family, lose everything I had, and end up being broke and homeless on the street, and I said, 'Great! That sounds cool!'" That's not how it happens. It happens this way: "Hey, this isn't going to hurt you. Did God really say drunkenness is a sin? It's not really

drunkenness; that's for drinking. Try this drug. It will make you feel good. It's not going to hurt anything. It just enhances." Then it leads to the next one and the next one.

People who are drug addicts didn't start out that way, and people who end up where this denomination is that I'm talking about didn't get there by... You know, if you had said a hundred years ago, "Why don't we just open up the clergy to all people? Let's let women do it, homosexuals do it, people who want to sleep with a bunch of people do it, let's let all kinds of things..." They would have thrown them out on their heads! But what they did was open the door.

"Well, let's just throw out this one qualification. Let's just throw this one thing out." But that's the beginning—that's the gentle slope. "Well, we're just trying to be loving and include all people. We don't want to be exclusive to anyone. We want everybody to feel like they can do whatever they want to do, whether they are a man who says they want to be a woman, or vice versa. Whatever it is, we just want to love on them and tell them they can be whoever they want to be."

That is not loving, and it opens the door. Once you make that one exception, "Well, that one doesn't really matter," then why does the next one matter? If it doesn't have to be a husband and a wife, why do they have to be faithful? Do you see? That's how Satan works. He comes to you and tries to chip away. He starts with something that doesn't seem like such a big deal. But once you open the door and put in place a method, a methodology, a way of doing something, of overruling the Word of God, he is going to come with more. There is a gentle slope.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15:

"But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end, they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve."

That part about Satan disguising himself as an angel of light is worth noting. If you look at most of the cults and false religions, many of them began by claiming that an angel appeared to them. Now, people say, "Well, that didn't happen." It could have. It very well could have been an angel or Satan disguising himself as an angel of light. Mohammad says that an angel came to him; Joseph Smith, the leader of the Mormon cult, said an angel came to him and said, "Hey, all those other churches? Don't be a part of any of them. They're all wrong. Everything they profess and confess is all wrong. But I'm going to show you the real thing."

That's why, in one place, Paul said, "If even an angel appears to you and preaches to you a different gospel than this one, let him be accursed." That was serious. I've heard people say they're being called by God or told all kinds of things. "Well, God just wants me to be happy, and He told me I'd be happier with this other woman instead of my wife." No—wrong!

That's not God speaking to you, Bro. If God calls you to do something the Bible prohibits, that's not God! That's an agent of Satan trying to convince you, and he starts with, "Did God really say?" He will make you doubt the Word of God, and once you doubt the Word of God and choose to go a different direction, it ends up where that denomination is now.

Hey, Southern Baptists are not perfect. But I will tell you this: over the last five years, we've increased in baptisms every single year as a convention. That's something to celebrate. And we've held fast to the Word of God. I will be a Baptist as long as we do those two things: preach the gospel and see people saved, and hold fast to the Word of God. The minute the majority says they don't want to do that anymore, I'm done. But as long as they do it, I want to be part of sending missionaries all over the world. I want to be part of cooperating, because we can do more together than we can apart.

We have a whole thing set up. They teach them, send them to school, teach them the language, teach them about the culture, set them up with a support system, and send them into a place to minister and preach the gospel. It is an awesome organization. Are they perfect? No. Nobody is. But man, we send a lot of missionaries around the world.

So what do we do? What's the answer? Is it a constitutional amendment? No, that's not ultimately the answer. The ultimate answer is that we hold fast to the Word of God. What do we do about that specific thing?

Ephesians 5:22-26:

"For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word."

So what do we do? We point people to God's order because His order and His structure, wherever there is authority, outline the means of protection. That's what it is. When you were a child in your father's home, his authority was meant to protect you. Now, no father is perfect, no pastor is perfect, and no church is perfect. But here is what I've always believed to be true: when you, as a child, submit to your parents, even if you disagree with them, and maybe even if they tell you wrong. If they want you to go against something that is clear in Scripture, then yes, you may have to stand up.

But otherwise, you do what they tell you. Even if they're wrong, God's protection will be over you because you are under their authority. Ultimately, Scripture says all authority is from God. If you are under your parents' authority, even when they mess up, you are first and foremost under God's authority. When you are in the order God has given us for the home and the church, you're under God's authority, and the protection comes from Him. But to have it, you've got to be under His authority, and His authority is clearly laid out in Scripture—in the home and in the church, and for the church to be under the authority of Christ.

If you want to be in a church where the spiritual authorities over you provide spiritual protection, you need to be in one that is under the authority of Christ and God's Word, that sticks to God's Word and does it. We have a constitution in our church. I think it is two pages, and it's about seventy years old. There is stuff in there that doesn't apply to us anymore, but here is our

constitution. This is what we follow. If you want to know what we follow and how we do things, it's right here in the Bible. That's how we do it. As long as we do that, we are under God's protection. So what do we do? We encourage people to live in God's order.

2 Timothy 4:2:

"Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not."

Whether the time is favorable or not. We live in a culture that would love to rip apart everything I've just told you. That's what the Enemy does. He wants to tear down the protection—the spiritual authority and protection—you are under, because he wants you vulnerable. And once you've separated a sheep from the protection of the shepherd, the predator has free rein to destroy.

We're all sheep. Our ultimate shepherd is Christ. The under-shepherd is your pastor. The shepherd in your home is supposed to be the man. And I get it—some of you may be in a single-parent home and have to fulfill that role. Just stay under the authority of your church and of Christ, and your children will have that protection too. But you stay under that authority. That is protection.

We need to encourage people that this is God's way. It is not loving to tell them, "Sure, you can do whatever you want. You want to be a woman pastor, fine. If you're a dude but you think you're a woman, fine. We just want to be affirming of whatever you want to do." That's not protecting people. That's condemning them to a life of deception, separating them from the spiritual authority over them, and leaving them unprotected from the predator.

Go look at the suicide rates for people who are "transitioning." They are astronomical because they are outside the spiritual authority God has given them. They are outside His protection, and the predator ravages them. The only way to fix that is to tell them the truth about what they were created to be, where they will be safe, and where they will be protected. It's under the authority of God, which comes through Jesus, to the church, to the home. It's there for a reason.

If somebody is wandering around and you know there is a bear out there that likes to maul people, do you go, "Hey, let me tell you about a cool hiking trail!" No! You tell them, "Get inside where you'll be safe!" You tell them to go where they'll be protected. That's what we need to do. That is the most loving thing we can do—to tell people, when you see them out from under that protection, that they are vulnerable and that there is a roaring lion prowling about seeking whom he may devour.

Our job is to tell them, "Hey, you're out there, and there is a dangerous predator. Come back inside." Now, they have to choose to do it. We can't force them to do it. But we need to be telling them. We need to be preaching the truth, preaching the Word of God, and be prepared whether the time is favorable or not.