

# Does Grace Forbid Us From Sharing Gospel Truth With Gays in Church?

A practicing homosexual man can't call himself an authentic Christian. It's a contradiction of biblical teaching—it's blatant sin. So when a gay couple started visiting a South Florida church, the pastors welcomed them with open arms. But when one of them decided he wanted to drum for the church band, the worship pastor knew it was time to present the simple gospel of Christ.

After inappropriate displays of affection with his partner in the pews and at the altar, one of the gay men approached the pastor's wife about joining the worship team. She sent him directly to the church's new worship pastor, who was excited about having a new member—until he discerned homosexuality. Nevertheless, he set out to interview the young man without any presumption, just as he would anyone else who wanted to join the worship team.

An associate pastor sat quietly praying in the Spirit as the worship pastor set out to get to know more about the young man. The worship pastor asked about the young man's testimony of salvation (he didn't have one). He explained that worship team members must be holy and set apart for God, not practicing drunkenness, adultery, idolatry, homosexuality and other sins (1 Cor. 6:9). Then the worship pastor asked the man if he was practicing any of the sins he listed.

"I'm a homosexual, but that's not a sin," the man said boldly.

## **A War in the Spirit**

At that point, the war in the Spirit for this young man's soul was peaking. The worship pastor masterfully and lovingly used

Scripture to explain why homosexuality is a sin. He told the young man he understood he was experiencing same-sex attractions and assured him that God loved him passionately.

But when the worship pastor extended an invitation for repentance, the young man insisted he was saved. Moreover, he argued that the Holy Spirit already lives in him, that Jesus loves him the way he is, and that—as confirmation that God accepts his lifestyle—he moves in gifts of healings and has worked miracles.

The pastors were shocked at the reasoning. The enemy had not only deceived this man into believing he was right with God despite practicing homosexuality—and even displaying same-sex affection at God’s altar—but the enemy had also convinced him he was right with God because he had laid hands on people and seen them recover. The pastors were stunned and heartbroken at the same time. The young man sat there in the office and flat-out rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, saying, “I guess this is not the church for me.”

What happened next, though, left the pastors’ jaws hanging down. The senior pastor, who had walked in near the beginning of the interview and listened the whole time without saying a word, rebuked the worship pastor for trying to show the homosexual with all grace why his lifestyle was not pleasing to God. The senior pastor insisted the worship pastor had no authority to share the gospel with a lost soul in bondage who was clearly sent by divine appointment to this very moment of decision. The senior pastor said the worship pastor “ran the man out of the church” and robbed the Holy Spirit of an opportunity to reach him in the next church service.

The young man left, but he left after hearing the truth—truth without condemnation or compromise. If the worship pastor had failed to share the simple gospel of Christ, the blood would have been on his hands. Now, at least prayer can continue to go forth over the seed of gospel truth that was planted in his

soul with grace and love.

But the entire experience brought up some serious questions.

### **How Should We Treat Practicing Homosexuals in Church?**

We should treat them with love, but we cannot allow them to mock God at the altar by displaying same-sex affection. We cannot tolerate open sin of any kind in the assembled congregation. Just as we would not tolerate a drunk man disrupting service or heckling the pastor, we cannot tolerate open displays of homosexual affection at the altar or even in the pews. We must correct those who, like this homosexual man, claim to be believers.

Should we preach the gospel to practicing homosexuals who come to the church looking for a visible position of ministry? Or is it wrong to tell them, in love, that they need to seek freedom in Christ first? Of course, we should preach the gospel! And we don't need permission from any man to do it. Jesus has called us to preach the gospel. Just because the pastor isn't preaching it doesn't mean you shouldn't.

Take it from Paul: "When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people" (1 Cor. 5:9-11, NLT).

This homosexual drummer was freely admitting to a sinful lifestyle—and refusing to admit it was a sinful lifestyle while claiming the healing power of God was flowing through him. This is a serious error. No one was trying to run him out of the church because of it yet failing to correct this in love would have been irresponsible at best.

## Follow the Holy Spirit

Of course, you must be led by the Holy Spirit because timing is everything. Leading practicing homosexuals to repentance with God's kindness and truth is a very delicate matter, and not everyone is comfortable or equipped to do it. But when a practicing homosexual tells you adamantly that his lifestyle is not sinful and that miracles flow through his or her hands, time may be running out. The deception is deep. Light needs to break in. You may not get another chance, and as a defender of the gospel, you have a responsibility to speak the truth in love rather than compromising your faith to fill another seat in the church.

What happened in this local church is not an isolated incident in American churches. Far too many pastors today refuse to take a stand for righteousness. (One would be far too many!) Instead, they propagate a seeker-friendly gospel and claim that we should not confront sin—that it's the Holy Spirit's job. It's this type of compromised gospel that's sending people to hell.

The more I reflect on the story about these two pastors and the homosexual man, the more my spirit grieves. With so many gay-affirming churches rising up, it's likely the young man could find a position on a worship team somewhere else without repentance. He may never repent. But at least he was given an opportunity to hear the gospel of grace. Amen.

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