

Heretical Progressive Pastor: 'People Don't Need to Be Saved'

A leftist, progressive pastor in Michigan may have simply gone too far in his teaching about Jesus and the gospel.

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, who leads the congregation at the United Church of Christ in Douglas, Michigan, not only says he isn't sure if the Resurrection of Jesus ever happened, but he also says that because God's love is unconditional, then people don't need salvation.

Sapienza's definition of the word resurrection appears to be much different than what the Bible represents, especially when it comes to Jesus.

In this video released by the ministry Vision Unsealed (fast-forward to the 13:00 mark), Sapienza is recorded as saying that in his Easter message, "I don't really know if the Resurrection of Jesus really happened, but I know stories of resurrection happening all the time. Just go outside in the springtime and look at the flowers popping out of the ground, the leaves on the trees, the birds ... Resurrection is real."

More blatantly, however, Sapienza says he agrees with the teachings of another United Church of Christ pastor, Carlton Pearson, who Sapienza says began to teach the "gospel of inclusion" when he joined the United Church of Christ in 2006.

"Rev. Pearson said if God's love is pure love, if it's unconditional ... if God's loving is all forgiving, then there can't be a hell," Sapienza said. "And, that people didn't need to be saved because God is all loving and forgiving, so all people are saved. People do not need to be saved. All people experience salvation."

Sapienza alleges that the scene of the road to Emmaus, from Luke chapter 24 in which Jesus appeared to two of His disciples days after His Resurrection, was a “myth.”

“Emmaus is now,” Sapienza said. “And it is here, everywhere. Another progressive theologian, John Dominic Crossen said the road to Emmaus never happened. The road to Emmaus happens all the time.

“I think he got that from Joseph Campbell because if you remember, Joseph Campbell said about myth, a myth is something that never happened but happens all the time. I talked about that in my Easter Sunday sermon (about the Resurrection of Jesus).”

This type of teaching is exactly what deliverance ministers Mike Signorelli, Isaiah Saldivar and Alexander Pagani spoke of in this recent video about witchcraft in the church, as reported on by Charisma News.

“People who deceive others are successful in their deception because they give the people what they want,” Signorelli says. “They tell them what they want to hear. What happens is you become self-deceived because you are trying to get something and they are enabling you to get the thing you want. You know the red flags and see the signs, but you ignore them because self-deception becomes the only thing to possess the thing you want.

“The only reason why false prophets and Christian witchcraft exist is because those people in leadership are giving the people that they are leading exactly what they want. I don’t know how many times you can violate not just your conscience but the voice of the Holy Spirit through you before you become dead to that voice.”

Pastor Voddie Baucham, Dean of Theology at African Christian University in Zambia, says if that is true, our faith is in vain and we, as Christians, are liars and blasphemers.

“There are people that want to say they don’t believe in the Resurrection. If there is no resurrected Christ, then I’m spouting blasphemy because I’m saying God did something that He didn’t do,” Baucham says. “That means you are still in your sin.

“If you believe there is no such thing as Resurrection, then you’ve got a huge problem because you’ve got over 300 eyewitnesses and the Bible which says Christ was raised from the dead and if Christ was not raised, our preaching is in vain. If Christ has not been raised, preaching is the dumbest thing in the world because we preach Christ and Him crucified.

“Unfortunately, there are some in this world whose preaching is unaffected by the Resurrection because they preach self-help and not the gospel. So when I say preaching, I’m talking about gospel preaching. I’m talking about preaching Christ. If there is no such thing, if Christ has not been raised, then preaching is useless. It’s vain.”

Which makes one question, what is Sapienza preaching to his congregation every Sunday?

On its website, Douglas UCC claims it is a church within “A just world for all.” In its about section, it reads: “Douglas UCC is a progressive and radically-inclusive spiritual community working to create a just world for all. We are actively engaged in social and creation justice, and we are one of the first churches in all of the U.S. to declare itself *Open & Affirming*, meaning fully inclusive of LGBTQ people in our church’s life and ministry. We are known as the church of the *Extravagant Welcome*.

Witchcraft? You decide, but Pagani, Saldivar, Signorelli and Baucham have already made up their minds. {eoa}

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor at Charisma Media.