

John Piper: 'Retire' Is Not a Biblical Word

Best-selling author and pastor **John Piper** will focus on his writing after preaching his last sermon as senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, where he has served for more than 30 years.

"This is the last message in the series of 30-year theological trademarks, and I am calling it 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' " Piper said from the pulpit Dec. 30. "I believe for these decades this theme and tone has marked us deeply. We are a happy people. But we are not what you might call 'chipper.' There is a plaintive strain in the symphony of our lives. I think Jesus was the happiest man whoever lived. And oh how sorrowful! A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Piper, 66, has stepped down from running the church with close to 5,000 weekly attendees, but he still has the passion to write books, preach and tour the country with his *Desiring God* ministry, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reported.

"I have ... a limited amount of energy, and I want it to go toward reading, writing, preaching, but not organizational efforts at meetings," Piper told the newspaper.

His dozens of books include *Don't Waste Your Life*, *Spectacular Sins* and *What Jesus Demands From the World*. *What Jesus Demands From the World* and *Spectacular Sins* won in the Christian Life category of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association's Christian Book Awards in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

A 2010 LifeWay Research survey of U.S. pastors ranked Piper among the 10 most influential living preachers alongside Billy Graham, Rick Warren and Max Lucado.

Piper will stay on as a Bethlehem associate pastor until

Easter. Along with his wife of 44 years, Noel, and their 17-year-old daughter, Talitha, their youngest of five children, will then move to the Knoxville, Tenn., area, for close to a year while he works on his writing, the *Star Tribune* reported. Then they plan return to their home near Bethlehem's downtown Minneapolis campus.

Piper will be succeeded Jason Meyer, 36, but said he will still occasionally preach at the church.

"I don't think that's [retire] a biblical word," he told the newspaper. "No offense to people who do it. I feel God's pleasure when I preach. I feel really alive."

[Click here to view the text of John Piper's last sermon.](#)