

Matt Chandler Acknowledges His Sin in Return to The Village Church Pulpit

Read Time: 2 Minutes 59 Seconds

At the end of Sunday's service, Texas megachurch Pastor Matt Chandler brought his family on stage, and the church rose to its feet to give them a standing ovation.

Chandler, 48, was overwhelmed especially since it was his first Sunday back in the pulpit since August, when he took a leave of absence following what he had previously termed as an "inappropriate online relationship with a woman." The relationship was not of a sexual nature nor romantic, but the church eldership was concerned about the frequency and familiarity of the messages between Chandler and the woman on Instagram.

It was decided in late August that Chandler, who has been the lead pastor at The Village Church since 2002, should step aside. He hadn't preached since that time.

Chandler's Sunday sermon was centered around sin, and he quoted Ephesians 2:13-17, compelling his congregation to see that "the true promise of Christmas is reconciliation with God. He also acknowledged the mercy God has shown him, and said that people need to acknowledge their sin and He will do the same for them.

"It is my understanding that I have fallen short of the glory of God and He has met me with grace, It is my understanding that I am inconsistent and I do have spots that are hypocritical, and there are parts of me I don't even understand.

“To humble ourselves before a living God gives us a shot at peace,” Chandler said. “I’ve got a part of this I have to own. It might just be 1%, but that’s my 1%. Forgive me. Now we’ve got a shot at reconciliation.”

The Village Church is a large and influential Southern Baptist congregation in Flower Mound, Texas, in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

In August before stepping aside, Chandler told his congregation:

“Several months ago, a woman approached me outside in the foyer. She had some concerns for how I was messaging on Instagram with a friend of hers. I didn’t think I had done anything wrong. My wife knew about it, her husband knew about it. But there were a couple of things that were disorienting in the things she said to me. I immediately came to the elder leader board and told them this is what this person just told me, and then I went home and I told Lauren this was what was said to me.

“They looked into the relationship with me and this other woman, and they had some concerns. They were not that our messaging was romantic or sexual. It was that our conversations were unguarded and unwise. I don’t ever want there to be secrets between you and me.”

The New York Times reported that members of his church greeted Chandler with cheers and whistles, and one shouted out, “We love you, Matt!”

Before his sermon, church elders walked on stage and laid hands on Chandler to pray for him.

Indeed, a perfect example of God’s love, mercy and forgiveness.

Josh Patterson, who has served as lead pastor at The Village

Church in Chandler's absence, said Chandler was disciplined because the church holds its leaders to a higher standard. Patterson said church elders affirmed Chandler's restoration without hesitancy.

Patterson compared Chandler's return to that of an athlete coming back after knee surgery to play his game.

"That athlete steps back on the field maybe with a little timidity, saying, 'Is the knee good?'" Patterson then looked at Chandler and said, "Brother, the knee is good. Run.

"He has faithfully worked that plan, genuinely worked that plan, authentically worked that plan," Patterson said. "He has had a very full three months and he's been faithful to do what the elders have put before him."

Chandler acknowledged the elders and thanked him.

"What a gutsy, godly group of men," Chandler joked.. "Gutsy—I almost used another word, and then would have to sit down again." {eo}

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

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