

Wood Uses Scripture to Defend Saddleback's Position on Women Pastors

Andy Wood isn't about to apologize for Saddleback's Church stance on appointing women to positions of authority in his church.

Wood, who took over as lead pastor at Saddleback last fall for founding pastor Rick Warren, says that, despite the fact his church was expelled from the Southern Baptist Convention in February for its decision to hire a female pastor—his wife, Stacie, as a teaching pastor—Saddleback will continue to stick to what God's Word has to say on the subject.

In a recent video on the church's YouTube channel, Wood pointed out several Scriptures in God's Word that proved that women indeed were allowed to take on such positions in the church.

Section 6 of the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptism and Faith Message disagrees with Saddleback's decision and discusses the role of the church, which reads: "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

Warren said he once held that belief for many years, but three years ago, he found the need to repent of those beliefs, citing three passages of Scripture to back up his turnaround.

One Scripture that often comes up in this discussion of women serving as pastors in the church is 1 Timothy 2:12, in which the apostle Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man, but to be silent."

Wood says the apostle Paul did not lead the local church in

that manner, and says it's important for believers to understand the concept of spiritual offices and spiritual gifts found in the New Testament.

"When it comes to spiritual gifts, there is a myriad list that you see showing up through the New Testament. In particular, there were five spiritual gifts that the apostle Paul talks about in the book of Ephesians that are equipping gifts," Wood says. "Paul is speaking in chapter 4, verse 11 when he says 'Christ gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; He gave them to equip His people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.' ...

"You see it through the book of Acts. The question to wrestle through is in the New Testament is, were there both men and women who had the apostleship gift, the pastoral gift, evangelist, shepherd, teacher. Undoubtedly, when you study the New Testament, almost every theologian would argue yes, there are men who are apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. The question that is oftentimes in controversy is, do women have those spiritual gifts or are they commissioned by God to be functioning in those particular areas of the local church.

"What we would say to that is all throughout the New Testament, both in Paul's teaching and in Jesus' teaching, we see apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. In Romans 16:7, there is a woman by the name of Junia who was commissioned as an apostle. In fact, Paul said she was known as an apostle. When it comes to prophets, we see Phillip, in Acts chapter 2, he had four daughters who were prophets. When it comes to evangelists, In John chapter 20 verses 16 through 18, the first evangelists after the Resurrection were women. When it comes to shepherds, in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 verse 19, we see very clearly that Aquilla and Priscilla were

shepherds that were in a local church and they were shepherding people. When it comes to teachers, in Romans Chapter 16 verse 1 and 2 in particular, Paul commends a woman by the name of Phoebe as a teacher.”

Wood says it is important for believers to recognize that, from a descriptive angle in the New Testament, it shows women in roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher.

 Wood said that’s clear throughout the Bible that God intended to have two genders and that while today’s mainstream culture focuses on “gender transitions,” he says Saddleback is not “caving to the culture.”

“We’re trying to get back to God’s design,” Wood says. “What did God intend when you go to Genesis and you see God making Adam and Eve? What was God’s intention?” he asked. “There’s a danger in this conversation with what is called a trajectory hermeneutic. A trajectory hermeneutic says, ‘Well, Jesus got the ball down the field this far, and now culture’s taken things further, and we’re trying to catch up to culture. We are not trying to catch up to culture in this conversation.’”
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