

Rick Warren's 'Middle of the Road' Jesus Post Sparks Outrage

Rick Warren, the well-known founder of Saddleback Church and author of "The Purpose Driven Life," recently found himself at the center of a theological firestorm after suggesting that Jesus Christ would be a political centrist today. Warren's post on X quoted John 19:18:

"They crucified Jesus with two others – one on each side & Jesus in the middle. The guys on both sides were thieves. If you're looking for the #realJesus, not a caricature disfigured by partisan motivations, you'll find him in the middle, not on either side."

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– Rick Warren (@RickWarren) February 11, 2025

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His comment was met with immediate backlash, with many Christian leaders condemning what they saw as an attempt to force a political lens onto a spiritual truth.

Among the most vocal critics was Pastor Greg Locke, of Global Vision Bible Church in Tennessee, who did not mince words:

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– Pastor Greg Locke (@pastorlocke) February 12, 2025

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So, why did Locke reference Revelation 3? This passage includes Jesus' stern warning to the church of Laodicea, where He rebukes them for being 'lukewarm'—neither hot nor cold. Specifically, Revelation 3:15-16 states: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

Locke, like many others, interprets this passage as a condemnation of spiritual indecisiveness or compromise, arguing that Warren's statement implies a passive, middle-ground approach to faith when Christ Himself called for wholehearted commitment.

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Joel Berry, managing editor of the Babylon Bee, offered a pointed response, noting the irony in Warren's interpretation. He remarked that if Warren were to take the analogy further, he would have to acknowledge that the thief on the right was the one who repented and was promised paradise.

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– Joel Berry (@JoelWBerry) February 12, 2025

Warren's comment attempts to paint Jesus as being above political partisanship, which is something most believers would agree on. However, framing Jesus as being in the "middle" between two thieves as a metaphor for political centrism stretches biblical interpretation. Jesus' placement on the cross was not about finding balance between two viewpoints—it was about fulfilling His mission of redemption.

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