

Why This Pulpit Freedom Sunday Is More Critical Than Ever

Nearly 1,100 pastors in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have registered to participate in Alliance Defending Freedom's (ADF) sixth annual Pulpit Freedom Sunday. Registration will remain open through the months of June and July to accommodate the summer schedules of churches who cannot participate in the event this weekend.

Registered pastors have committed to preach sermons that present the biblical perspective on marriage as the union of one man and one woman. In so doing, they will exercise their constitutionally protected freedom to engage in religious expression from the pulpit.

"Pastors should be able to speak truth into every area of life without fear or intimidation," says ADF senior legal counsel Erik Stanley. "Pulpit Freedom Sunday has always encouraged pastors to exercise their constitutionally protected freedom to do just that from their pulpits. This year, marriage is at the forefront of public debate. There's no better time for pastors to equip their congregations with the truth about marriage and why it matters for children, families, society, civil government and the church."

Pulpit Freedom Sunday is an event associated with the Pulpit Initiative, a legal effort designed to secure the free speech rights of pastors in the pulpit. Since 2008, one of Pulpit Freedom Sunday's aims has been to have the IRS rule known as the Johnson Amendment struck down as unconstitutional for its regulation of sermons, which are protected by the First Amendment. The primary focus, however, has been on encouraging

pastors to exercise their First Amendment freedom to speak truth into every area of life from the pulpit.

“When the church is silent, the culture suffers,” Stanley says. “The church is integral to the moral stability of a society. Every day that pastors are intimidated into silence on issues like life, liberty, the family and marriage is another day the cultural erosion continues unchecked. Pulpit Freedom Sunday is just one opportunity for pastors to speak up and make a difference for the good of their congregations and the culture.”