

Beth Moore Challenges SBC Policy, Says Women Should Preach in Church

Beth Moore made the case that women can and should be able to preach in church during a Twitter altercation this week. She also condemned widespread hypocrisy, misogyny and power abuse within the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.

The controversy began when Moore admitted on Twitter that she was preaching the Mother's Day sermon at an unidentified Southern Baptist Church. Several theologians issued rebukes of any SBC church that would allow a woman to preach to men. One such theologian was Owen Strachan, director of the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who published the blog post "Divine Order in a Chaotic Age: On Women Preaching" Wednesday on Patheos.

In it, he wrote:

Women have much to contribute to the life of the local church and the work of the kingdom. In terms of ministry and Christian testimony, women are free, gloriously free, to evangelize, witness to the glory of God in the secular workplace, and serve on the mission field (ideally on teams populated by men who can serve as pastors). Yet we cannot miss this: the scriptural focus on feminine domesticity means that the church joyfully promotes "homemaking" as a glorious call of God. Whatever a secular culture says, the Lord loves motherhood, wifely submission to a husband "in everything" (Ephesians 5:24), family-building, and the training of children to know Christ. Whether a woman is called to marriage or singleness, women should not preach or offer public teaching in the gathered worship service in local

churches. The call to local church leadership is not dependent upon gifting or talent; it is based on the creation order of almighty God. For a woman to teach and preach to adult men is to defy God's Word and God's design. Elders must not allow such a sinful practice; to do so is to bring the church body into disobedience against God.

Moore directly responded to Strachan's blog on Twitter, commenting, "Owen, I am going to say this with as much respect & as much self restraint as I can possibly muster. I would be terrified to be a woman you'd approve of. And I would have wasted 40 years of my life encouraging women to come to know and love Jesus through the study of Scripture."

On Saturday, Moore elaborated in a Twitter thread on Saturday which went viral:

I am compelled to my bones by the Holy Spirit-I don't want to be but I am-to draw attention to the sexism & misogyny that is rampant in segments of the SBC, cloaked by piety & bearing the stench of hypocrisy. There are countless godly conservative complementarians. So many.

There are countless conservative Complementarians I very much respect & deeply love even though I many not fully understand their interpretations of certain Scriptures as the end of the matter. I love the Scriptures. I love Jesus. I do not ignore 1 Tim or 1 Cor. What I plead for is to grapple with the entire text from Mt 1 thru Rev 22 on every matter concerning women. To grapple with Paul's words in 1 Tim/1 Cor 14 as being authoritative, God-breathed!—alongside other words Paul wrote, equally inspired & make sense of the many women he served alongside.

Above all else, we must search the attitudes & practices of Christ Jesus himself toward women. HE is our Lord. He had women followers! Evangelists! The point of all sanctification & obedience is toward being conformed to HIS image. I do not

see 1 glimpse of Christ in this sexism.

I had the eye opening experience of my life in 2016. A fog cleared for me that was the most disturbing, terrifying thing I'd ever seen. All these years I'd given the benefit of the doubt that these men were the way they were because they were trying to be obedient to Scripture... Then I realized it was not over Scripture at all. It was over sin. It was over power. It was over misogyny. Sexism. It was about arrogance. About protecting systems. It involved covering abuses and misses of power. Shepherds guarding other shepherds instead of guarding the sheep.

Here is what you don't understand. I have loved the SBC & served it with everything I have had since I was 12 years old helping with vacation Bible School. Alongside ANY other denomination, I will serve it to my death if it will have me. And this is how I am serving it now.

The Southern Baptist Convention's official stance is that women cannot serve as pastors, though local churches remain free to determine their own individual stances.

The SBC's official FAQ page reads, "The Convention recognizes the biblical language concerning the office of pastor. The BF&M [Baptist Faith and Message] statement says, "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." The passages that assign the office of pastor to men do not negate the essential equality of men and women before God, but rather focus on the assignment of roles. The Southern Baptist Convention also passed a resolution in the early 1980s recognizing that offices requiring ordination are rightly addressed to men. However, the BF&M and resolutions are not binding upon local churches. Each church is responsible to prayerfully search the Scriptures and establish its own policy."