

Church in a Time warp?

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[0:00] It seems like a judgmental church caught up in a cultural time warp.

! is the point of going out to Elizabeth with the King James Version when so many people are illiterate? Many of the hymns have out of date words like the King James Version and will not be understood by many.

This style of ministry is a relic of a bygone era. As for being anti-ecumenical, anti-Pentecostal, whatever happens to love for your brother and sister in Christ?

What sort of church is this? The question asked was, what sort of church is this? Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for this time of fellowship and your word, Lord, that we can take it into our hearts and encourage each one.

Lord, we know you are the God of all comfort and we can look to your promises from your word. We can take heart in your word today. Lord, help us to be that church that is pleasing unto your name.

[1:25] For your glory we ask it. In Jesus' name, Amen. A church in a time warp. Imagine if you can, stepping into the time machine, into another time zone, going through the time tunnel, maybe right back to the days of the early church.

Wouldn't that be great? To step back in time, to be so out of date that we were a New Testament church. Wouldn't that be a blessing? To go into that time warp, to be that church that believes the book, that stands on its promises, a church that would be willing to die for it, as well as live for it, God willing.

Will we be that kind of church, that kind of church that might be looked upon as out of date, perhaps a Bible-based church?

Wouldn't that be good? If we could be that kind of church. If the Bible is out of date, then we are with the Bible. If the up-to-date methods are unbiblical, then we are out of date.

If the latest new fad ways are not biblical ways, then we are out of date. You know, it says here, Colossians 3.16, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

[3:01] Does the Word of Christ dwell in you richly? Do you teach and admonish one another with spiritual songs? Will you be a church that goes by the book?

If it's not in the book, we don't care for it. I read recently, this just came last week and it's dated March 6, 2010. How did we make such an evangelical mess?

It says here about the observers of the church scene of our day, the ideas, the philosophies, the programs. Christ-like virtues are absolutely essential.

Biblical discernment, wisdom, determination, endurance, skill in handling the Scriptures, strong convictions, the ability to speak candidly without waffling, and a willingness to enter into conflict. Yet, today's church movement, in some quarters, are obsessed with opinion polls, with brand identity, with market research, merchandising schemes, innovative strategies, and numerical growth.

[4:10] About image. That's what seems to obsess and take the form. Rick Warren said, If you want to advertise your church to the unchurched, you must learn to think and speak like they do.

It's as if the Gospel, the Word of God, the truth has become a commodity to be sold at market, rather than plainly preaching Christ and the Gospel in a way that unleashes the power and the truth of it.

We're desperately trying to package the message to make it subtler and more appealing to the world. Pastors are asking now, not what's true, but what works.

They care less about theology than they do about methodology. Trying to customise the message to people's felt needs, rather than earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. And for many years now, some leaders are systematically embracing and fostering everything that is worldly, shallow, frivolous, superficial, obsessed with the pop culture.

[5:32] And they ape it fanatically. Church leaders trying so busily to stay current with the latest fads that they fail to give heed to the weightiest scriptural matters.

That's just put on the shelf. Churches competing for attention in a media-driven world, and that's true, we are that. But do we have to put on the latest spectacle to keep up, to follow the latest popular trend?

Is that what we have to do, brothers and sisters? When it's at the discounting of God's truth? No, sir. It's not about relevancy, where it takes away from the Word of God.

We can still be relevant. We are relevant. This message is never more relevant than it has ever been. The Gospel, the good news, the cross, the truth about salvation, is never more needful, it's never more relevant than today.

Sound doctrine. They say it's too archaic, it's too old-fashioned for the average churchgoer. Biblical exposition that alienates the unchurched.

[6:45] Clear preaching on sin and redemption. Let's be careful not to subvert the self-esteem of hurting people. The Great Commission. Our most effective strategy has been making the church service into a massive Super Bowl party.

Serious discipleship. Sure, there's a great series of group studies based on the Matrix trilogy. Let's work our way through that. Worship where God is recognised as high and lifted up.

Get real. We need to reach people on the level where they are. We've forgotten who is the Lord of the church. It's so truthful, isn't it?

There's much more, that's just some little quotes. But people today, it may be in the Church Growth Experts book, but unless it's in God's book, if it's in conflict with that, we don't want to borrow it.

We don't want to chase after that. And that's not to say we can't use technology as we try through different media and using the internet. Our church is very active in that way.

[7:58] And we've got lots of opportunities. We're trying to reach young people through the wonderful work of the youth leaders, through the Sunday school, trying to reach our generation for Christ because we do care.

We want to reach our world for Christ. We want to reach our young people. We want to reach the everyday person on the street. But that's not to take away from the truth. We mustn't do that.

That would be dangerous. Someone said this, what kind of preaching do we need today? Why, the same kind we've always needed. Nothing important has changed.

Just because we have split the atom and sent men to the moon does not mean we need a new kind of preaching. Certainly not sermonettes for Christianettes.

I would hope that in this church we will stand strong. Every one of us. Every believer here in this church. Every young man, young woman, older man, older woman, that we'll stand squarely and strongly and be willing to stand and be counted for the word of God.

[9:00] I would hope that we are a church not in love with the spirit of the times, of the end times, but in love with the Lord of time. The one who is the Lord, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

A little outdated, yes, we are caught in a time warp. We are not of these latter times. We're not of these days of perilous times. We don't want to go along with the flow.

Especially not when it's going against the almighty God. We don't want to go with the flow, with what is popular or trendy, when it is counter to God's truth. We need to be a New Testament church.

Yes, we are of the bygone era. God willing, we tread in the tread of the men and women of God, the reformers and revivalists of old who went to their deaths for the truth.

They were willing to stand and be counted and God truly blessed them. Oh, that we would walk in their tread. We don't have to use the ladies' gimmicks and fans and hoo-ha to have the dancing girls and the drum kit.

[10:07] We don't need that. We just need the blessed truth of the Holy Scriptures, of the Word of God soundly preached. Not celebrity status, not some kind of keeping up with the up-to-date junk.

We don't want it. We love the old-fashioned God-blessed Bible and the soul-saving truth of salvation preached, of true tears of repentance shed.

And that's not to say we can't use innovative ways. I'm not discounting that. I'm all for being innovative and using our creativity as God has equipped us in different ways and means that God would be glorified.

That is the end result. And to sing the old, old story, to love the old, blessed good news, the Gospel, to not compromise it in a way that is going to hinder its truth to be declared.

That we will stick with the truth even if it is unpopular. Some would argue, why not copy the world's ways? Why not appeal to the senses to take on the entertaining style of whatever music or means or being contemporary?

[11:20] But, friends, if we're following the Pied Piper, we may be being led up the wrong road. And we need to watch out, to use discernment and be careful and to draw the lines where the Word of God draws them that we're not in conflict with God's principles, with God's truth.

An old-time preacher, Vance Haffler, said this, I know today much of the professing church has gone in for theatrics running a showboat instead of a lifeboat.

Stating a performance instead of living an experience. A form of godliness but denying the power thereof. Let's not be a showboat.

Let's be a lifeboat. Let's go out into these dark and dangerous waters with the waves lashing and the people crying and going glug, glug, glug and reach out with the lifeboat, reach out with the message of salvation, reaching out to the perishing while we still can.

And we do want to engage our generation. We do want to be relevant to the 21st century with the most relevant message that we can ever give to them because this is as current as today's newspapers and tomorrow's.

[12:35] And we must step in to the time warp such that we go back to the old-fashioned New Testament church. Secondly, we need to be thoughtful of this critique of us and it was some while back we haven't had too many people saying such things but the second kind of aspect that this critic raised about our church was a church that is judgmental.

A church that is judgmental. If it is judgmental to say sin is sin we are judgmental. If it is judgmental that says right is right and wrong is wrong we are judgmental.

Our Lord instructs us to admonish one another to sound a warning a needful warning and we ought to be hardest on ourselves.

Amen. We ought to be hardest on ourselves. Not pointing fingers because there is four pointing back at us but to be hardest on ourselves to ask examine yourselves whether you be in the faith for one thing.

Don't take it for granted that you come and sit and sing and stand and go home that you are a Christian today. Let us judge one another. Examine ourselves whether you be in the faith and step outside of the comfort zone and ask the Holy Spirit to convict your heart to convict my heart that we might be right with God.

[14:13] That's what counts and have no fellowship Ephesians 5.11 with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them there was a man in the time of Spurgeon who said this Joseph Parker he said the only colours Mr. Spurgeon knows is black and white.

In all things he was definite you either were in or out up or down alive or dead he believed in absolutes and folks we are dealing with absolutes the absolute authority of the scripture the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ the absolute power of the Holy Spirit brothers and sisters this is absolute is an absolute message and Vance and if that sounds too dogmatic for some today and he's talking about the winds of doctrine people blowing here and there you just have to see the

latest fans the latest moves the latest revivals that we're blown away from dogma to smogma we live in a fog we need dogma we need truth we need doctrine we need the word of God soundly declared and we are to judge righteous judgment to decide there is a needful judgment that we need to make about how we are living how each one of us are living to judge am I right with God to decide to take a stand on issues to discern between good and evil the discerning of spirits some churches do not make a stand they would rather not speak against something for fear of losing people

God forbid that you should get upset this morning oh you might not come back but shouldn't we be stirred with the word shouldn't we be provoked unto love and to good works shouldn't I be challenged it may offend people the word of God it may unsettle us we might get uncomfortable we might actually get convicted of our sin challenged about something that's not right it might be unpleasant to come to church for some who would prefer their ears tickled their souls pampered and patted on the back and we have been accused of being a church that is unloving yet I would contend that a church that loves the truth will act upon it will not care they will contend for the truth if it is unloving to kill a redback spider or a poisonous snake that threatens your child if it is unloving to correct a disobedient child in order to help him if it is unloving to call a child abuser a child abuser if it is unloving to call a false prophet a false prophet if it is unloving to call false doctrine false doctrine then yes we are unloving we love the truth it talks about if you love the truth you will hate evil you will eschew it you will avoid it you will put a barge pole between you and evil you will declare it the truth and you will hate being evil and most of all when I tell you that judgment don't get me wrong the one we judge is ourselves amen that is the one we judge we are not pointing fingers at anybody here but we are wanting ourselves to be right with God that we would have that motive that spirit and truthfully we love the souls of men and women the Christless ones the children enough to say get out of error and get into the truth get into

Christ of course we do love one another as brethren love will speak the truth love will warn of error and challenge and speak of danger and correct another person accused me and this was some while ago of separatist and divisive theology someone from Life FM he said this church has got separatist and divisive theology yes yes amen we are divisive Christ himself was the cause of division John 7 43 so there was a division among the people because of him we do divide we do divide truth from error we don't want a dangerous mix of the two when we trust Christ there's a division that happens there's a separation that happens there is a separating we are separatist because there is a setting apart of him that is godly unto the

Lord and that we can be that church that loves the lost enough to save them because there is a separation that will happen it already has happened but then there's no crossing over when the door is closed like it was when God shut the door of the ark and when the Titanic sank in 1912 they called it unsinkable yet that is what she did sink and on board that great ship there were millionaires there there were celebrities there was poor people rich people people with moderate means you could divide them by all kinds of categories but when the news came out and they posted on the wall there was two lists on the wall of the ship's office it carried only two categories the lost and the saved all other distinctions were crossed down there is a division brothers and sisters

[20:18] God is divisive one day he's going to separate the sheep from the goats one day he's going to separate the lost from the saved God is truly separatist and divisive there will be two great divisions the lost and the saved sin is absolute hell is absolute heaven is absolute judgment is absolute and our preaching must be absolute yes it's a church caught in a time war a church that is judgmental and thirdly a church that is fundamentalist yes on biblical fundamentals a church that is fundamentalist now we know in our day as the media uses the word fundamentalist means those nutcases who blow up people and go ballistic we're not talking about that sort of thing but we're talking about being biblical fundamentalist based on the biblical fundamentals there are fundamentals here there are promises here this is yay and amen the promises of God and it should set us on fire a love for the truth of God's word and Paul wrote to

Timothy take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine take heed we've got to be careful we've got to be careful about what we say about what we do about what we preach and fundamentalist they're a

dirty word today but when we talk about Christian fundamentals that is the foundation of our faith that is what we are standing strongly for contending for solid for and that we care for that truly the fundamentals they're necessary we must beware of doctrines of demons of seducing spirits and get back to the fundamentals there was a famous racing car driver he was asked one day this man Bill Vukovic about what was the secret of his success he won the Indianapolis 500 a number of times and they wanted to interview him and ask him what was the secret of this famous racing car driver's success and Vukovic replied there's no secret you just press the accelerator to the floor and steer left he had some fundamentals that made him win the race amen we too brothers sisters we got some fundamentals in this word in this bible in these covers in your hands the word of God it's fundamental we're not going to steer away from it we're not going to shy away from it we're not going to change it or manipulate it or massage it or differently deliver it or just cut bits and pieces out of it we're going to declare soundly and truly rightly dividing giving the fundamentals of God's truth and these were fundamentals for Vukovic steer left and hit the accelerator have you left the fundamentals of the faith believe us today you're commissioned you've got to commission every single one of you there's no non-commissioned officers here amen you've all got the commission the great commission you've all been called you've all been commissioned you've all been given his mandate his message you are his messenger to declare that message to the world about you to give the message to the lost while you still can the fundamentals must be obeyed and as a church we need to get back to the fundamentals the soul saving truth of God's holy word of sound doctrine the truth matters it still matters today the truth hasn't changed it matters what you believe what you preach what you practice what you teach is it worth it is it worth it shouldn't we just cave in to the pressure shouldn't we just go with the flow shouldn't we just move with the times is it worth it why not join the crowd why not be like the so and so church down the road

France we want to stand and be counted we don't want to deviate and that's not to say we've got it all together and we're holier than thou and somehow we've got a monopoly on the truth there's other godly men and women in other godly churches in the neighbourhood and beyond who love the saviour who love the truth we're not big noting ourselves and saying we've got the greatest church that ever can be we've got a long way to go a long long way to go because there's human beings in this church just like you and me amen and we've all got our faults and failings especially this one and god has sent different people into our lives you know we've got folk of different persuasions and backgrounds and hang ups and doctrines in this church but i was talking to a man just yesterday that we just make christ and the cross the centre we can just get back to the fundamentals that's what counts and not go with the flow where it's going the wrong way and your labour is not in vain in the lord we're told it's not in vain it is worth it it is worth standing for truth it is worth being men and women of conviction and it's central it's vital it's needful it would be easy to ask is it worth it wouldn't it be easier to cave in to the popular trend to go along with the crowd to adopt the new fad methods is it worth it having a relatively small church when many turn and walk away because they want something more entertaining is the truth truly worth standing for isn't it it is we're not called to the easy path we're not called to win a popularity contest it's not what it's about we're called to be a biblical church and pray for us pray for me pray for everyone who comes here who visits here that we'll be a biblical church that we'll care for the truth we'll stand for it we might be criticised as a church in a time walk but God willing we'll be a New

Testament church we'll be a biblical church we might be critic for being a church that is out of date but yet we're based on the Bible that's what matters a church that is judgmental and yet we care for the truth we're willing to discern between right and wrong to declare the truth a church that is old fashioned with hymns yes we sing songs that have got meaning that have got truth that have got doctrine we worship in spirit and in truth we've been in churches where what's sung is not true and you wonder why why is that a church that is divisive that separates between truth and error a church that might be called unloving but loves the truth enough to act upon and we will speak the truth in love they go hand in hand and a church that is fundamentalist yes based on biblical fundamentals based on bible fundamentals not based on some kind of history or tradition but based on the truth but that's where we get our doctrine and practice from from this our rule and faith and conduct the word of God that's what we must stand for brothers and sisters be encouraged this morning if you're feeling like you're critiqued or some might lambast you or mock you because you might be here today or your fellowship in here that we will stand for the truth and we'll ask God to search our hearts and see if there be any wicked way in us examine yourselves whether you be in the faith and ask God to convict you to draw you closer to the cross today let us pray dear Lord

Jesus we praise your wonderful name the Lord of Lords the King of Kings our marvellous Saviour Lord for the Calvary's cross where you bore our sin and shame and guilt Lord that our sin was paid there and if any know not that freedom that relief or that burden of sin been cut off their back that they'll bow at the cross today they'll say Lord Jesus forgive my sin save my soul help us Lord to walk that tread that path of the saints and men and women of old some who bled and died for it Lord that will declare it that will care enough for the lost that will reach them that will be obedient to your mandate your mission your commission that you've given every one of us to go ye into all the world and preach the gospel help us Lord to do so not to be neglectful not to neglect that great salvation that you've given to us and Lord that you be glorified in your church unto you be glory in your church both now and forevermore amen