



WEBINAR SERIES

Justice, Love, AND Humility

PASTORING A DIVIDED CULTURE

presented by  AMPLIFY MEDIA

Episode 2: Courage and Compassion: Preaching a Prophetic Message

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Host

Rev. Lisa Yebuah, Lead Pastor, Southeast Raleigh Table, Raleigh, North Carolina

Panelists

- Rev. Dr. Jevon Caldwell-Gross, Teaching & Guest Experience Pastor, St. Luke's UMC Indianapolis, Indiana
- Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, Ohio West Area, The United Methodist Church Worthington, Ohio
- Bishop Will Willimon, Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry, Duke Divinity School Durham, North Carolina

Episode Recap

As hard as this season is, the panelists reminded church leaders that it is also an opportunity for leaders to serve. This dramatic period of innovation and conversation – although deeply painful – will open us to a new spiritual journey if we allow it.

When giving advice for preaching a difficult sermon, the panelists had these insights:

- It's hard to express a value if the first time you're expressing it is from the pulpit. It's important that church leaders are sowing the seeds of their values in contexts outside of Sunday morning.
- This is a difficult conversation because for some churches it is a new conversation. When you are proactive about talking about these topics and consistent with your values, then you won't have to be only reacting to these events when they occur.
- "Who is our God?" and "Who is are neighbor?" are the two questions churches should always work to answer.
- It's never too late. It's simple, not easy, to say, "I'm ashamed I've not spoken on this before. Now I will ..."

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- Many pastors don't speak out for fear of saying the wrong thing. Say something anyway and embrace the opportunity to learn from your mistakes.
- Instead of focusing on the potentially negative reactions to your sermons, instead think about the people you may lose for not saying something. We are not called to grow the church; we are called to make disciples.
- What does the Bible say about who God is concerned for?

When responding to negativity:

- Is the response based in what you said or what they're reading into what you said? Try to respond in empathy.
- Every preacher has to learn how to talk about Jesus to people who may not want to hear from Jesus.
- Pastors many times are deconstructing who people think God is or who they think their pillars of their faith are. There is a difference between something being bad for you and something being hard. Sometimes it's difficult for people to see that distinction.
- Sometimes clergy think their only job is pastoral, but ministry is also about truth telling.

We all have evolved through the Spirit. If the Spirit has worked in you, then the Spirit can work in others. Leading in this time gives us an opportunity of great spiritual adventure of hope and growth.

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us. Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves even as he is pure." 1 John 3:1-3 CEB