

# Gaines insists ‘big God’ can lift Southern Baptists

June 13, 2018

DALLAS (BP)—Amid the perplexing and potentially divisive issues facing the Southern Baptist Convention, President Steve Gaines said the formula for unity and restoration is surprisingly uncomplicated.

“Stop talking about how big your problems are, and start talking about how big your God is,” Gaines said in his presidential address at the SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

## Believe and trust

Believing and trusting in the supernatural abilities of God are key to overcoming all obstacles Southern Baptists are facing, said Gaines, pastor of the Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church, who completed his second year as the convention’s president.

“What is going to be the solution to our decline? What can God do with us? First of all, you have to believe in a bigger God than you believe in right now,” Gaines said. “You need to believe in the God of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Gaines opened his message with a song, joining his daughter Bethany for a duet of “At the Cross.” He also closed with a song, this time going solo, for a rendition of the resurrection anthem, “He’s Alive.”

Between the two songs, Gaines delivered a message on four supernatural characteristics of God—his promises, protection, power and provisions—that can bring harmony and help the SBC fulfill its gospel

mission.

## **God's power is greater**

“God’s supernatural power is greater than any problem that Southern Baptists have,” he said. “God’s supernatural power is greater than any problem you have in your church.”

Gaines opened his message by citing both biblical and personal examples of instances in which God showed his supernatural promises being fulfilled.

First, Gaines referred to the story of the Apostle Paul in which, being transported as a prisoner, he was shipwrecked on the island of Malta, and God provided for all his needs. Paul was able to use the miracles to point the other passengers toward God.

“Encouragement is putting courage back into people,” Gaines said. “Discouragement is when the devil, or the world, or sin, pulls courage out of you. Paul encouraged the sailors” who had experienced the shipwreck.

Gaines then described how God’s supernatural powers appeared in how own life, when his son Grant was restored to health after doctors had feared that, at age 2, he might have leukemia. Grant now serves as pastor of a growing church.

“I can assure you that every promise of God comes true,” Gaines said. “If you have a need, God has a promise.”

## **God protects**

Gaines also spoke of the protective powers of God, pointing to Paul’s ability to shake off a snake bite. God gives similar protection to Christians today who believe in his abilities, Gaines said, noting this is true for each facet of

everyday life—guarding marriages, protecting children and safeguarding finances in times of needs and challenges.

“God can protect you completely and absolutely in every way when you pray it through, when you seek to live under an open heaven and when you steadfastly obey the living God,” Gaines said. “He will be your shield until it is time to take you heaven. No human is stronger than almighty God.”

God’s supernatural power is as much on display today as it was in biblical times, Gaines said.

“Our God can still move mountains,” he said. “Our God can still say, ‘Hush, be still’ to raging seas. Our God can still heal the sick and raise the dead. He can save you if you are lost.”

## **God heals**

God’s healing power can include deliverance from all types of sexual immorality and other moral crises, Gaines said.

“God is still alive, God is still sovereign,” he said. “He is the same yesterday, today and forever. If you will exercise faith, God will exercise power.”

Gaines—who said many Christians are more focused on their resources than their true source of joy and comfort—closed his message by challenging messengers to spread the hope and joy of the gospel into their everyday lives.

“I believe one of the greatest things we could walk out of here with in a few days is to tell the world that God is still on his throne,” Gaines said. “I believe there is a supernatural God. And I thank God that the hero of our Bible is not dead.”