

# African-American Fellowship given a charge to keep

July 20, 2015

SUGAR LAND—Passionate preaching, jubilant worship and a spirit of joy characterized the annual [African-American Fellowship and Evangelism Conference](#), as participants responded to the challenge of “a charge to keep,” the theme of the July 14-16 event at [The Fort Bend Church in Sugar Land](#).

Fellowship President Oscar Epps, founding pastor of [Community Missionary Baptist Church](#) in DeSoto, preached on God’s impeccable timing and unconditional faithfulness.



Oscar Epps from Desoto, outgoing president of the African-American Fellowship, preaches at the annual evangelism conference. (PHOTO / Leah Reynolds / BGCT) God always is able to meet the needs of his people in every situation, Epps said. But he challenged listeners to consider what happens in people’s hearts and minds if it feels like God “just doesn’t show up.”

If God does not show up to save the day, Epps explained, it is not because he is uninterested or incapable. God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, and God's ways not the ways of humanity, he said, citing Isaiah 55:8.

Epps implored his audience to recognize God still is good even in the moments when he seems absent. In the Old Testament book of Daniel, three faithful Hebrews—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—told the king they believed God would come through, but even if he didn't, he was the true God, in contrast to the king's false idols, Epps said.

"Too many of us are bowing down to someone else's God," Epps said. "When you think about what God has done, that'll be enough for you to not bow. We could just think about the history, the ways he's made, the doors he's opened, the prayers he's answered. You don't need another blessing. You just need another memory."



Officers of the African-American Fellowship include (left to right) Michael Joseph of Houston, assistant treasurer; Elmo Johnson of Houston, vice president; and Ponce Brown of El Paso, president. (PHOTO / Leah Reynolds / BGCT)It doesn't matter what God does, Epps said. People are in no position to question his judgment when all anyone needs to do is look at everything

that God has done.

“God will take care of you,” Epps said to enthusiastic applause and joyful shouts.

H.B. Charles, pastor of [Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church](#) in Jacksonville, Fla., reminded the group of God’s ability to keep believers on their feet when the devil’s goal is to try to make them stumble.

“The now of your difficult circumstances cannot trump the now of God’s sovereign authority, he said.

He urged listeners to remember the goodness of God in sending Jesus to take an unfair punishment for the sake of sinners.



H.B. Charles of Jacksonville, Fla., addresses the African- American Fellowship. (PHOTO / Leah Reynolds / BGCT)“Jesus came to Earth to live the life you should’ve lived,” he said. “Then he died the death you should have died.”

Gleen Samuels, pastor of New Millennium Baptist Church in Lubbock, introduced the slate of officers for next year: President Ponce Brown, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in El Paso; Vice President Elmo Johnson, pastor of Rose of Sharon Baptist Church in Houston; Treasurer Leonard

Hornsby, executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield; Assistant Treasurer Michael Joseph, pastor of New Providence Baptist Church in Houston; and Secretary Joe Fields, pastor of New Beginnings Church in Lewisville.

The annual gathering included the Jim W. Culp Sr. Banquet, followed by two days of worship services and workshops on topics ranging from church administration, to women's ministry, to church starting.

The 2016 African-American Fellowship and Evangelism Conference is scheduled July 12-14 at Friendship Baptist Church in The Colony.