

BGCT president urges seminary students to ‘move forward’

February 24, 2020

FORT WORTH—Michael Evans, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, exhorted students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to “move forward with victory in mind.”

Evans, senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, spoke in a Feb. 20 seminary chapel service, preaching from Deuteronomy 20:1-4.

In that passage, God assured the Israelites of their future victory in the Promised Land, Evans noted. He encouraged his listeners to face the world today with the same assurance.

Evans recalled a recent conversation he had with a student at another seminary who asked him, “In this time of chaos and confusion and division, what would you say to us seminarians who are in such despair as it concerns spreading the gospel?”

Evans smiled and replied: “Are you kidding me? This is our time. We are uniquely placed to boldly go before men and women and to proclaim the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Perk up. Get ready. Put your armor on. Because it is time to go and fight the good fight of faith.”

Evans told the seminary chapel audience, “Those of us who have been called to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you need to get your armor ready, because we are going out to war.”

‘Compassionately confront the world’

Christians today are called to “compassionately confront the world,” he asserted.

“If we keep silent in the face of injustice, we then become complacent,” he said. “If we keep silent in the midst of immoral behavior, we then lose our moral direction. If we keep silent and fail to establish rules in our families, our relationships will rot, our communities will crumble, our churches will become meaningless meeting places and mere museums. ... We dare confront the world.”

Such confrontation, Evans explained, means first and foremost seeing all human beings as “prospects for salvation.” He further encouraged the chapel audience to live by faith, not by sight, which he termed as living with a “sanctified mind.”

“A sanctified mind is a transformed mind,” he said. “You rebuke negative opinions of yourself when you have a sanctified mind. Self-criticism is not what defines you. Failure does not defeat you.

“... There ought to be people in here who can say, ‘Because of the experience that I’ve had with God myself when I found myself in impossible situations and in impossible places, all I know is that my God can make a way.’”

Evans concluded that God “goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you the victory.”

“He’s not there just to hold your hand,” Evans said. “He’s not there just to be your big buddy. He is there to help you to conquer whatever it is you’re dealing with in your daily lives. ... Whatever it is that you need God to do on your behalf, if he’s assigned you to it, it may look tough, but it’s already

done.”

“How do you know?” Evans asked.

“(Christ) fixed it on a hill called Calvary on an old, rugged cross, when they put nails in his hands and rivets in his feet. He died for us,” he said. “There’s mighty good news in that, because when he died for us, in that was our salvation. And then early Sunday morning, when he got up with all power of heaven and earth in his hands, we were able to inherit that power—overcoming power, making-it-through power, salvific power, deliverance power.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, move forward with victory on your mind.”