

# **Congreso speakers urge students to choose to serve Christ**

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WACO—Regardless of a teenager’s background or future hope, speakers at Congreso 2018 urged students to choose to serve Christ.

Leaders at the event for Texas Baptist Hispanic students—held at the Ferrell Center on the Baylor University campus—selected Philippians 4:8-9 at its theme. In that New Testament passage, the Apostle Paul calls the church at Philippi to pursue whatever is right, good and lovely, and he urged the church to put those virtues in practice for God’s service.

## **‘Are you going to be desperate enough?’**

Often, that pursuit and the call to service begin with a change of plans, said Jason Paredes, pastor of Fielder Church in Arlington. He described how his desire to become a doctor changed when God called him to ministry.



Jason Paredes (Photo by Eric Guel)

Paredes challenged students to acknowledge how incomplete they are without God.

“Are you going to be desperate enough to pursue whatever God wants you to pursue?” he asked. “Otherwise you will settle for lesser things.”

What people pursue is what controls them, he insisted. Therefore, Christians must pursue God in everything, he said.

Although past experiences can leave wounds and scars, God always is willing to welcome people back when they stray, Paredes said.

“The love of God for us is pursuing, it’s unconditional, and it is relentless,” Paredes said.

Some people may think they are not good enough to serve God, but they need to know what kind of love God offers, Paredes said.

“God’s love can overcome every heart,” he said, adding that to think otherwise is to believe the lies of the devil.

No matter how far some people wander from God’s will, “God’s love is always open to receive them,” he said.

# 'A decision that will have an impact'



Ellis Orozco, pastor of First Baptist Church in Richardson, speaks at Congreso. (Photo / Isa Torres)

To pursue God at a young age can have long lasting effects, said Ellis Orozco, pastor of First Baptist Church in Richardson.

"You are making a decision that will have an impact," Orozco said.

As teenagers start to choose who they want to become, Orozco said, they must remember the passion God has given them must be used for his kingdom.

Like the Apostle Paul, Christians today must want "Jesus to be the passion that drives them," he insisted.

God leads many Christians to pursue careers outside of church ministry, but their passion for Christ should drive them to be the best they can be, he asserted.

“When you put Christ over what you do, that is when you live the life you are meant to live,” Orozco said.

At that point, young people find the “sweet spot” where passion and mission meet, he said.

“God created you exactly the way you are so that you would follow him,” Orozco said. “Live the life God created you to live.”