

# **Ed Stetzer: Tumultuous times call for fearless followers**

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GALVESTON—In “tumultuous and turbulent times,” Christians can find guidance and motivation in unchanging truths from Scripture, missiologist and cultural observer Ed Stetzer assured Texas Baptists.

Stetzer, director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, addressed the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Galveston.

Preaching from John 20:19-21, Stetzer used the Risen Christ’s appearance to his frightened disciples to remind Christians today how they should respond in troubling times.

“Fear is always the opposite of faith,” he said.

While “fear is a recurring theme in our day,” Christians can counter the cultural factors that feed fear by remembering they serve a risen Savior, Stetzer asserted.

“We need people today who will say, ‘We are not afraid because Jesus is back from the dead,’” he said.

## **Peace in tumultuous times**

The first words Jesus spoke to his frightened followers who gathered behind locked door was “Peace be with you.”

“Peace is always the Christian response,” Stetzer said.

However, he acknowledged, too many 21st century American Christians

are “discipled by cable news sources and spiritually formed by social media” rather than by the gospel.

While some Christians bemoan the loss of “home field advantage in culture,” Christ wants his followers to focus on the centrality of his sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, Stetzer asserted.

“The cross is always our hope and motivation,” he said.

## **‘Cultural conversions’ can birth spiritual renewal**

Society is on the “front end” of a period of “cultural convulsions,” Stetzer observed.

The last year comparable to the past one was 1968—a time characterized by rioting in the streets and political assassinations, he said. However, it also birthed the “Jesus Movement” that shaped a generation of young Christians, he noted.

Similarly, the current “tumultuous time” could spark a renewed “pervasive commitment to the gospel,” he said.

God wants followers who are known for “running toward the crisis” with a message of transformation and hope rather than retreating, Stetzer said.

“We always go because Jesus came to us,” he said.

Like the Hebrew Prophet Isaiah, he said, God wants followers who are willing to respond to his call by saying: “Here I am, Lord. Send me.”

“The moment we are in does not pause the mission we are on,” Stetzer said.