

In defense of God's order and the gospel, Part 6

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God's order and the gospel

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I would encourage you to take your Bible and turn to Jeremiah 9 and I'll read from there in a moment about setting the course of our day. We're continuing our series "In defense of God's order and the gospel." In defense of God's order and the gospel. This will be the second part of us looking at what's been called the Me-too Movement, but I'm looking at some dangers of the Me-too Movement.

Last week, I spoke and began the message giving some good things that have come out of the Me-too Movement so I encourage you if you weren't here last week, that you go back and listen to that to kind of find the context of what we're saying today and also if you haven't been here during this series going back to the beginning will help you get an understanding of the cumulative of what is going on. But even though there are several good things that come out of it, we are remiss if we do not address the dangers that come out of it as well, and so addressing them is to call us back to a biblical, impartial justice, not a social or a socialistic justice, not a justice where there is a humanly devised justice as prevails in much of our culture today where accusations equal evidence.

Many, as I've mentioned, will not speak out publicly against the Me-too Movement because of fear, because that they speaking out against it will be ruined, their reputation and everything, their family, by the sheer weight of accusations even if they're all false. It's already happened but if you get 10,000 accusations coming at you, you can't possibly address them.

Some don't defend publicly those who actually have been proven innocent of the accusations made by the Me-too Movement and others, and some use the Me-too Movement, by the way, they don't come out and defend them for fear of being hanged on the gallows of Me-too accusations, and so they choose to remain mute. But don't confuse their muteness with the guilt of those accused. It's simply an act of self-preservation, not wanting to be crucified like those that they should be defending.

Dr. Paige Patterson is well-known in Southern Baptist life and rightly so. He's one of the two leaders of what we call the Conservative Resurgence that went on over a quarter of a century and restored, took our denomination that had gone very liberal and brought it back to ensconcing the place of the primacy of inerrancy and all of the entailments that

go with that, in other words, trying to be a denomination that follows the Scripture. And so I mentioned Beth Moore and the women teaching and violating that and what she's doing because she's well-known, but she's not alone, there are others. And so in a similar sense, I mentioned Dr. Patterson, but also because I think his is proven to be one of the most egregious injustices, but also like you cannot talk about the Great Awakening without mentioning George Whitefield or Jonathan Edwards, you can't discuss the Reformation and omit the name Martin Luther, nor can you talk about the Resurgence, its beginning, its process, and the fruit of it without mentioning Dr. Paige Patterson. And what's going on today which is causing the need for the Conservative Baptist Network is, in part, you have to remember not everybody supported the Resurgence. There were liberals and moderates that didn't. The votes many times were right at 50%, so many of those people stayed and now they're emboldened by others, and so they seem to be bent on deconstructing the fruit of the Resurgence, and so his name comes up again.

So I'm going to, today, last week I told you that's what happened is people are afraid to speak out because they'll be ruined by the sheer weight of accusations so they're mute, they're mute about defending people that they know are innocent, and they tell them privately, privately. But today I want to show you that some cases, I cannot go over all of them, but just some that evidence what I have said last week.

So Dr. Paige Patterson. I'm gonna give you two of the accusations. I'm gonna give you part of the evidence, but you can go on my blog and search "Patterson" and five different article segments will come up and they will allow you to see the primary documents that I'm getting this information from.

So he was accused before being fired, that he encouraged a female Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary student not to report an alleged rape to police. So he is accused or was accused of doing that when he was President at Southeastern Seminary, but Dr. Patterson told the board when that came up that he did not recall meeting with the girl, and that seems to fit precisely with her words that come from original documents. April 15, 2003 is when this was going on at Southeastern and Lively, the girl Lively, she wrote to Dr. Patterson and said these words and her first name is Meghan. "Finally," now remember she's now saying she was raped and they said Patterson didn't handle it right but when you go back to 2003 and read her own words, it doesn't indicate that. She said, "Finally, thank you for the accountability and for putting me on probation. Even though Dr. Moseley has handled this," which was exactly what he's saying, he didn't handle it, "I think it is great that the school enforces discipline. At first, I was humiliated and embarrassed. But I know now this is from my own actions and the consequences of those." It doesn't sound like rape.

She later again apologizes and admitted what she recalled her sin, and again you should be able to see these up there. She said to Dr. Patterson, ""I just wanted to write you and first of all apologize. I know that you have been made aware of the sin that was in my life." Notice, "you were made aware." "While I have confessed this to the Lord, repented and sought accountability in my own life, I feel that I have disgraced the school." Being

raped doesn't, the raped person is not disgracing but the person who enters into sin willfully is.

In 2003 in a handwritten note card, which again you can access on my blog, she again expresses her appreciation to Dr. Patterson and she says and I quote, "I just wanted to take the time to thank you for the difference you have made in my life and the life of our seminary, and in my personal life. We will be praying for you and support you 100%. The faculty and students at Southwestern have no idea how blessed they are to have you as their new President." And that's when he was transitioning from President of Southeastern to Southwestern. Again, it doesn't sound like rape. Rape was not mentioned.

Accusation 2 that this Board of Trustees used at Southwestern when they fired him. They said, "Patterson did not handle appropriately an alleged case of sexual assault against Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary student, a female student." Again, the truth is and there are documents that demonstrate all of this, when the girl came to him and said she was raped, within six minutes he called the Fort Worth police. The accused man was called in and did admit to having consensual relationships but he denied that he raped. The man also produced evidence to the Fort Worth police to that effect. And this is from Sharayah Colter's releasing primary documents and so forth, and it says and I quote, "Southwestern's Chief of Police can confirm that the Fort Worth Police Department was called and responded. Patterson expelled the male student accused of rape, however, because the female student refused to press charges, Patterson had done all he could by calling the police, expelling the student, and encouraging the woman multiple times to press charges." Now any of you that are familiar with this whether you're a lawyer or you've been in counseling, you can't force someone to press charges and even if they say it is something and they won't press charges, you can't go further. So he had done all he could.

The Assistant Professor of Theology and Women's Studies, Dr. Candi Finch, she was in one of the meetings where Dr. Patterson met with the girl and family members and this is what she says of that meeting and I quote. "I personally sat in a meeting with Dr. Patterson and this female student and two of her family members." Finch recalled, "Dr. Patterson opened and closed the meeting with prayer for this young lady. He encouraged her in my presence to press criminal charges against the young man but she said she wanted to think and pray about it more." There's nothing you can do.

Mrs. Patterson in response to Lynn Dell making accusations against Dr. Patterson said, "Do you know Paige Patterson? Accusations used to slander him were proven false, one by three other administrators present but unwilling to offer their testimony publicly, and the other by officials present. Question the one accused and get your own facts. Get this view on biblical authority or get his view from him."

And you can go, there are more facts that I have that you can look at. Again, you can see it written in her hand or signature, all of these things, the police reports.

Some who support him do so privately, they don't believe he's guilty but because of fear of the weight of the Me-too Movement, they do it privately. May God forgive their cowardly hearts. Now if you've never been in a situation where you're crucified and seen as guilty and have others come to you afterwards testifying to your innocence or their support of you but unwilling to do so publicly, you can't imagine the hurt that comes from that alone.

Again, Dr. Patterson was the leader of the Resurgence. He's a frail and fallen man. He has all of his faults, but remember this was a hotly contested, quarter of a century, historic turning of a Convention or a denomination back to its historical Conservative roots. Many did not like it. Again, the votes were very close to 50-50, and now you have the weight of the Me-too Movement and those who don't like what we accomplished, what God accomplished through people, regular people, laypeople, they have joined in because, you see, if they can destroy the leaders of the Resurgence, they in their mind can destroy the credibility of the Resurgence and so they attack.

You probably do not know that the Board of Trustees had met on, I think, it was the 21 or 22 of May and they were not going to fire him, there was going to be a cordial retirement and an honorary one, and at that time Dr. Patterson had an engagement to preach in Germany, and while he and his wife and his aides were out of the country in Germany preaching, the Executive Board voted to summarily fire him while he's out of the country. Prior to that board meeting that they fired him in, it was made clear to Dr. Patterson and his lawyers that there was not even a thought about firing him. That was not on the radar, but the Chairman of the Board, the Executive Committee meeting at night said details had surfaced that were contrary to something Dr. Patterson had said. However, his lawyers were never apprised of that accusation and given a chance to respond. Dr. Patterson was never apprised of that accusation nor given a chance to respond but he was fired and they shut down the email, their phones, credit cards, everything while they're stranded in Germany. That not being able to respond is what I'm talking about in the Me-too Movement and the Board tried to say they weren't pressured by the Me-too but that's a Me-too act where there's an accusation and we will judge you guilty without you getting to respond. And there's much more evidence that what was done was, at least by some, a desired coup d'etat.

Now just personally, I have served on a Board of Trustees at one of our seminaries and I've served as Chairman of the Board, and I've served as first Vice-Chairman of the Board before Chairman. I was there when we transitioned to a new President and the President we had was a liberal President, had been there for years, and brought on a liberal faculty, and we had a lot of problems to deal with, but we dealt with him so that when he left, he was not besmirched. We honored the Trustees who hired him. Though we disagreed with hiring him, he was hired by due process and we honored that and that's something we did as much as possible during the Resurgence. And so he left with his dignity intact, his retirement intact because he was older and he was going to retire in a similar situation to Dr. Patterson.

I have never witnessed anything and the more evidence I find and I've talked to people that I'm not even going into, but the more evidence I find does nothing but confirm what I'm telling you the evidence that we can all be privy to.

Kassy Dillon and Ash Sho(ph) wrote an article in the "Daily Wire" and they had found and researched 35 different men who had had their lives ruined and been charged with rape only to be found out later it was a false accusation. Jackie Coakley, she infamously told "Rolling Stone" that she had been gang-raped by fraternity members at the University of Virginia. In reality, no such gang-rape occurred. Coakley invented a rapist, used a fake text messaging service to convince her friends he existed, this rapist, in order to make one of them, one of her friends jealous. Yes, it does get that shallow.

Crystal Mangum claimed she was raped by three Duke Lacrosse players after stripping for them at an off-campus party. I just can't pass this up. We're always arguing that, well, no matter what the woman does, I mean, it doesn't justify that, I mean, this gets really close. I mean, do women have a responsibility at all? I'm not saying in every case, I'm just saying if you're gonna strip naked and dance before them, it seems rather suggestive to me, but then I'm from Arkansas so you can doubt that. She made up the claim to avoid going to jail and losing her child. Later all three men were exonerated of all charges. Of course, they had lost everything by that time. Several years later, Mangum was convicted of second-degree murder for stabbing her boyfriend.

Tawana Brawley, she claimed she was raped by four white men as a hate crime. Reverend Al Sharpton helped make her name a household name, but later a jury concluded that Brawley faked the crime so she wouldn't get in trouble at home.

Beloved, waiting on the evidence to convict people does not trivialize rape and abuse, but to not do so does trivialize true victims.

One girl confessed after two years, it happened just before the trial, I mean, it was days. I watched this on the news. And she said she did it because she had consensual sex with two of the guys and if another guy that she was wanting to date knew it, he wouldn't like her. So if she said she was raped, then he could still like her. Yes, it does get that shallow that you would ruin people's lives. They were proven innocent by her own direct confession just before they went to trial but the shame and the guilt and the loss of scholarships was long gone and the social media witnesses, why, they had already tried countless other cases based on accusations.

As a Christian I ask, why are we so quick to believe the worst about someone from people we know the least? About things of which we know little? Wherein the potential damage is incalculably devastating? What is Christian about that? Not accepting every accusation of rape or abuse does not diminish the seriousness of rape and abuse. It doesn't diminish the true cases but actually extols them, makes them more clear. And remember what we said, we can minister to somebody who says that's happened to them without ever knowing whether they're innocent or guilty, but if we're going to condemn the one that is accused, we must have evidence. We must as Christians.

One young lady recently claimed to have been raped and finally the police, she said she was running in a park, this just happened and running in a park and said she was thrown down and raped, and so the police took her at her word but they began to investigate and looking and things just weren't adding up, and finally they got her to confess that she was lying and, "Why did you do this?" She said, "I just wanted some attention."

So now I want to read you from Jeremiah. I have more but I want you to think about what we're talking about in light of God's impartial justice that we should be practicing. Jeremiah 9:23,

23 Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

That's the impartial justice and, look, lovingkindness, justice and righteousness, God's kind, they all go together.

I want you to turn to a passage in Leviticus in chapter 19 and this takes that which God gives as a comprehensive statement that he wants people to know that he does lovingkindness, justice and righteousness and that's the way we're supposed to do this, not according to some human social justice. But that played out in very practical ways and one of them, there are many in the Old Testament, but one of them is in Leviticus 19:35,

35 You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. 36 You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah [ephah would be similar to our bushel], and a just hin [which would be similar, close to our gallon]; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. 37 You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD.

And the balances and weights, some of you have heard of the old deal where you go to buy meat and the guy puts his thumb on the scales and so he's weighting it more than you're getting. Well, God says when you deal even with these minor things, do it justly, do it righteously.

On a personal level, even if you're a woman but you may have a husband, you may have sons, you may have grandchildren that are boys, do you really want them crucified on the world's stage based on accusations alone? Or would you rather see at least the Christian community saying, "I can't speak to guilt or innocence because I've not seen all the facts. I can minister to the person but I'm not going to condemn someone on accusations alone." That's impartial justice that looks at the evidence.

Church discipline is something that we've done and we alluded to last week, but my experience over 40 years, and the same is true in this church, from the time where you are talking with someone and counseling and prayer, that can all be a part of discipline, most of the time it doesn't end up being where somebody's removed from the church, which I distinguish as formal church discipline, but the person repents or you get it right at a level and it just stays private between the person who knows, maybe the counselor or the one praying with them, and that person. It's never spoken to another person. But from that time to the time if it is brought before the church, can take six months to three years before the church ever knows. It's a long process because you're trying to minister to the person who's hurt and you are trying to minister to maybe the one who's wrong and you're trying to get them to repent, and if you're going to go forward, you have to have proof not just assumptions, not just ideas, not just hearsay. So you're balancing all of this and sometimes when I talk about taking six months or three years, some outside of the church criticize that and say, "Yeah, I guess Ronnie when somebody confesses they're looking at pornography, he just waits three years to tell them to quit." That's the kind of idiocy you have to deal with. We tell them immediately, "Stop it. It's sin. Repent of it." But that doesn't mean we're gonna say, "And we're gonna throw you out of the church." As long as they're repentant working on it, if there's any kind of danger, and again the times though the public likes to talk about the legal and many in our own Convention, what's legal and illegal, but I'm telling you most church discipline cases don't go into that. They're moral and spiritual. There is no danger of somebody. We're always working with the innocent party and deferential to what they need, but if there is any danger, the first thing that will come out of my mouth is, "You need to get to a place of safety. Don't worry about the cost. We'll pay for it. Just do it. What do you need?"

So the very idea that we're putting off and putting somebody in danger or not telling them to stop that sin, that's the kind of Me-too mentality even though some that aren't in the Me-too have adopted the mentality, or maybe they originated it. So we don't leave people in danger, we don't deny charges but we minister to everybody, and often I would use if a man is being charged with something, we are deferential with the wife. If children are involved, we, as a church, have been financially supportive up to a year. Those that have been hurt, we don't set a limit on how long we're going to minister to them. You know that we have money left over many times after the budget because we come in on budget, we don't go over budget, our system is set up to protect us from that. So sometimes there's money left over that has to be allocated different places and the elders do this and then you get a copy to see where that's happened, but in the cases when we're involved in discipline where we think there might be a need, we don't allocate it anywhere, we reserve it to minister to that family for as long as it takes and whatever it takes. That's the commitment.

And if we do bring somebody before you, we have incontrovertible, overwhelming evidence. I know those of you that have been a part know that, but those on the outside just say we're kicking people out of the church. One person one time said to me and I'm overstating the case a little bit, but this person who was concerned and said, "You know, would you mind telling me privately when you're dealing with something that is church discipline or could arise to church discipline and it's just private at this level, would you

mind telling me so I can pray for you?" And I said, "Well, just pray because I'm always involved in it." But we're not going to rush the process and we're not going to avoid grace and God's lovingkindness to everyone involved.

Again, I think you would know this but I've never had a woman tell me she was raped or somebody tell me they were abused and I doubted them. I just started ministering to them. But it's a different thing to then crucify without evidence the accused.

I think of Judge Cavanaugh. I mean, if that did not reveal to us so much. We're talking about a Supreme Court Justice in his 50s. He's been a lawyer. He's been a high judge already for years and we're going to go back what in adolescence he wrote in a high school yearbook as evidence? Do you understand how idiotic that is? Do you want us going back and looking what you wrote as a 17 year old? No. I mean, do you understand the silliness of it?

Of course, there are some according to the Houston Chronicle that revealed some things about those that had abused and they used a 20 year period and 200 that they put pictures and names in the Houston Chronicle, and that was in the Southern Baptist Convention, but I want to put that a little bit in perspective. It was over a 20 year period, 200 cases. Again, one rape or abuse is tragic immeasurably, but it doesn't give us the right to make things worse than they are by violating the context of numbers. There are over almost 15 million, over 14,800,000 who identify as Southern Baptist. Twenty years, 200 cases is tragic but to paint it as an infestation of pedophiles and whore-mongers and staff that's run amok is yellow journalism at its worst.

Peter Lumpkin, a historian, said and he's looked at many of the cases used by the Houston Chronicle, and he says, quote, "Given cases I've examined in the Houston Chronicle's data bank, there were very few cases which remotely hinted that something was amiss the way the church handled the issue. Routinely background checks were made," which we do, "while the church once aware dealt swiftly with the issue."

To put this a little bit in context, 200 sex offenders over 20 years, in Southern Baptist churches we have 47,000 churches, that means that one person in 20 years in 235 churches did something. So it's a difference in me telling you five people were killed in a car wreck yesterday and speaking nationally or what happened in Norman. There are 14, 813,234, last count, people who identify as Southern Baptist. That would mean that that's one in every 74,000 members over a 20 year period. You may not know it but 65.6% of Southern Baptist churches run under 99 in average worship attendance meaning it would take hundreds of churches, not the 235 on an average I gave you, but hundreds in many cases to find one situation that had happened. And by the way, when you looked at the pictures and the evidence of the Houston Chronicle, some of them were in prison for what they had done. Apparently they weren't being discovered, they had already been discovered and dealt with.

But my consternation and dismay and anger is not so much with the tawdry handling of the Houston Chronicle, I think they have an agenda. I don't think it was to help women.

That may have been a secondary or tertiary or quaternary or quinary, somewhere down the road but the primary thing was an attack on Christianity, and particularly the Southern Baptist Convention. What I'm bothered by is how some of our agency heads have dealt with this issue, our leaders. When the Houston Chronicle did its article, I wrote an article critiquing that article and how it was put together and, again, some of these people were in prison, some had repented and so forth, and so that article it's still on my blog, but it said in light of them not pointing out who had dealt with it right and some of these had already been caught and so forth, I said, "Noting the Chronicle's failure to make this monumental distinction does nothing to ameliorate the heinousness of the abuse nor lessen the life-long hurt the abused suffer because of these predators and cover-ups. It does, however, highlight the Chronicle's desire to make Southern Baptists look as hypocritical and unscrupulous as possible by minimizing or eliding any facts that would show that not all abuse in the SBC is so cavalierly treated as the article impresses upon people."

One agency leader, Russell Moore, who is the President of the Ethics Religious Liberty Commission, he could not wait to endorse the article. He said, and you should be able to read this with me, "This week the Houston Chronicle ran a series of articles exposing, *in painfully specific documentation*, hundreds of sexual abusers who have worked within Southern Baptist churches over the last 20 years." Italics added by me. Painfully specific documentation? Exposing? Some were in prison. Again, I think if you're in prison, you've already been exposed. The lack of balance that they didn't even talk about these other things, it was just all about what's gone wrong and didn't put it in the context of years, didn't put it in the context of the people and churches and so forth, indicates to me it was more about discrediting the SBC.

That doesn't undermine the legitimate cases. Three times that I'm aware of, there's been dependence by our leaders on the Houston Chronicle and the Houston Chronicle has given them bad information. It's proven to be wrong. One is Russell Moore saying "painfully specific documentation." J. D. Greear, the President of Southern Baptist Convention, when all this came out and so they're right on board taking care of abuse and want to be the stalwart protectors, and I'm for protecting, but they get too eager. So he brought out 10 churches publicly that had not handled it right and they were investigating to see what went wrong. The facts are seven of the churches did handle it right. One of them was not even an SBC church. They hadn't done their homework. One pastor, this happened like four pastors ago, and he said, "We had finally gained the respect of the community and the integrity of the church and when that came out from President Greear, it ruined everything and we're back at square one again." If you've been in a small town, you know how hard it is to regain your reputation.

Darrell Gilyard, who was just an unbelievable young preacher and he had a powerful testimony and so forth, proved eventually the testimony was a lie, made up. His aunt came out and proved that. He did commit adultery several times, and so Jerry Vines and Dr. Patterson and others were trying to get to the truth of the matter. Were the adultery charges true? Again, think of us here, what we have to do. And so he had one person who said they were but that person was a KKK member and Dr. Patterson didn't think that that

would really be a good credible source. And what if he would have accepted that, by the way, from a KKK member? And so finally he got the evidence. He's actually the one, and I've watched it, it was on the Houston Chronicle until I couldn't access it anymore but you may can, you can see the service where he actually went to his church and said, "You have to fire him. He is not suitable to be a pastor." He's the one that pursued that. I remember some of that. Randy remembers some of this going on. He did everything you could but when the Houston Chronicle ran the article, it brought in and the Me-tooers that he didn't handle properly the abuse, the rapes and stuff, child abuse by Darrell Gilyard. The article made you think in people talking about it that those happened together. They didn't. From the time that Dr. Patterson was through dealing with him and they had no more dealings, 16 years later he did the abuse and he went to prison for it. But it made it look like it was all Dr. Patterson, he was just dealing with the adultery charges. But again, the facts.

We all want to deal with the issue but if you really want to deal with it, you have to get to the local church and I've posted several things that I understand our leadership needs to deal with anything that happens at their entity level, of course, but biblically it has to be dealt with at the local church level. So if you have an employee that commits adultery at a high level in our Convention and you deal with it, that person has not been sufficiently dealt with until they are dealt with in their local church, biblically. And so I've asked why can't we get the local church discipline going? Why can't we support local churches in doing this? But little, if anything, has been said and I say that, I've not seen anything said, I'm just saying something could have been.

For some, it seems to me that they're all about appearing sympathetic and not appearing concerned about the facts, or at least not sufficiently so. They don't want to become objects of the social justice, Me-too Twitter barrage. Preservation of self at all costs. And the disregard for the lack of evidence and the disregard for the accuser's failure to delineate crucial distinctions between situations handled properly and not handled properly and called specifically or painfully specific documentation, all that's okay. All that's okay.

Jennifer Lyell was a seminary student, graduate student at Southern Seminary and she says she was abused, and so she wrote, "I was sexually abused by one of my seminary professors, Dr. David Sills, then a tenured professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. First, sexually acted against me on a mission trip in 2004, a pattern that continued and escalated for more than a decade following that trip. The reason that a professor was able to continue grooming and taking advantage of his student was because I became like a part of his family. This was not by accident. I believe it was by design."

So she claims to be sexually abused by this professor. She was accepted as being abused by much of our leadership and by the Me-Too, of course, because remember if the woman says it, end of discussion. You need not probe further. The accusation is sufficient. But the first thing I noticed when I read, she was 26 years old when she was a seminarian and it began. It continued for 12 years until she was 38 during which time she wasn't doing it because she was employed by the seminary and afraid of losing her job

because she wasn't. She actually during that 12 year adulterous affair, she lived in three different cities so she wasn't bound, and she wasn't a 16 year old, she was 26. So women want to be treated as adults and I'm 100% for that, I guess I just need somebody to clarify at what age should we consider them an adult? And if not 26, when? When does she become responsible for her actions? And I don't think she was a victim. If he and she had been members of this church, both would have been disciplined because both are culpable for carrying on a 12 year adulterous relationship. She says it was grooming. She became close friends with his wife. The children called her "Aunt." She went on vacations with them. A massive coverup and deception. I'll tell you who's the victim. If they were in this church, she and the professor would have been disciplined and we would have given everything we could to minister to the wife and the children. They are the victim. But not in the Me-too. Matter of fact, I'm not saying they haven't been mentioned, but in all my reading about it, I just didn't see it. It's like they don't exist.

So what are we calling for? We're calling for biblical impartial justice. Not social justice, not socialistic justice but biblical like we read in Jeremiah. So let me give you just eight quick things that we should always consider.

1. Men and women are both sinners capable of lying and deception. We believe all people are sinners.
2. Men and women can be seducers. Men can seduce women and women can seduce men.
3. Accusations need confirmation before judgment and confirmation is not being repeated.
4. Adult men and women are responsible for their actions. If you're going to be an adult, you have to be responsible. And let me say something to parents, you're rearing your children not to stay with you. They're not gonna do it, they're leaving, by the way, and what you're training them for is when they walk out that door. Prayerfully they'll love God and be mature, godly, clear-thinking adults because they're going into a very hostile system. So you're always training them and rearing them to leave.
5. We leave wrongs that cannot be proven with God. There will be justice. Sometimes there's a feeling that if we don't do something, an injustice passed, and I think we should do everything we can in the way that's commensurate with the word of God, but just because somebody gets away with it, we, as believers, do not believe they got away with it. There will be a day of reckoning and when God gets ahold of it, anything we can do will pale in significance.
6. We take accusations seriously but not as evidentiary facts. Enough for tar and feathering the accused and that's what's going on. So those Lacrosse players, these college people, their lives are ruined, their reputations. Their scholarships lost and then, "Oh yeah, the reason I did that's because I wanted to date this guy."

7. We can minister to people who make serious accusations without having sufficient evidence to convict the accused. Again, we've said this over and over, sometimes a person thinks if you don't damn the accused, you're not ministering to the person. Two different things. Again, I gave Doug Windel(ph) goes into prisons every week. Does he have to track down all the facts and go back and read the court documents and bring it before he can minister to this person? Well, no. He meets them where they are, does everything he can spiritually, but he's not the judge, he's not the jury. He doesn't have to be and we don't have to be. When somebody comes to us with a hurt, we can assume their truthfulness and minister to them without judging the accused.

8. We must do due diligence to get the facts as we have practiced in this church. Almost all the time, so we've had 12 cases in almost 22 years, almost all the time, and you know this personally, if you as an individual, or I, get something wrong in our life with God or somebody comes to us, it's resolved at a very private level. Very private. It doesn't go any further. Because they repented, it's dealt with and now they go on with their life. It's only after repeated attempts, trying to get them to repent, trying to see the spiritual change, when it comes to a dead end and they decide that, they say, "I'm not gonna repent. I'm not gonna do," then they force us to take it to the next level and we get other people involved just like Matthew 18 says, and the attempt there is that more people involved will be able to speak into their lives and they will repent and we will salvage that soul and maybe a marriage, maybe a child having a dad or a mom, maybe a testimony at work. And if that doesn't work, then we bring it to you, the church, and those of you who have been through it, we give two or three weeks for the whole church to contact this person, and the prayer is that by the whole church contacting them and asking them to repent, assuring them of our love and the sinfulness of their acts, that they will repent. And then after two or three weeks, sufficient time, we gather for the Lord's Supper. We've already had testimony before the church by people who have firsthand knowledge that led up to telling the church, and now it's time for the church to speak and I ask the question, "Does anybody have any reason in here why we should not move forward and remove So-and-so from the fellowship of this church? Do you have any indication that they're willing to repent?" And all along the continuum, and every elder will testify to this, if one elder or one person says to us, "Hey, I think maybe I can help. Would you give a little time?" We stop the process and say yes. And when nobody in the church responds, we say, "According to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, because of their lack of repentance, they are removed from this fellowship until they repent. They are no longer welcome at the Lord's Table, but upon repentance, they will be welcomed back into this fellowship and to join this body in the fellowship of the Lord's Table." But that's after the lovingkindness and the grace and the facts are overwhelming.

What we do here is what we should do everywhere. You say, "Well, on the internet I'm not gonna be privy." Well, then let's don't jump in on the judgment. We don't have to. There'll be enough that will do that.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your word and the guidance we get from it and, Lord, may we be a people who we live in this world but we are guiding by Your word. May our hearts not grow cold, may we not grow cynical in so many things we see and hear, but may Your lovingkindness flow through us, compassion for those that are victims of abuse in any fashion or form, but also those that are victims of being sentenced as guilty and suffering the consequences as though they are guilty when they're not. May we be people who can show restraint. May we be people who are untiring in our seeking to help those that need it and are in sin, and to minister to those that have been hurt. May we do it in prayer and graciousness, confidentiality. May You be honored. May You be the audience that we seek to please. So Lord, we pray for You to use us in a world that we think has gotten as crazy as it can be and then we see it go down another lane and get worse. May we not be a part of it. May we always be a light shining in the darkness. We love You. We ask it in Christ's worthy name. Amen.