

I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry, And I Love You

Timothy Berg



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Several years ago, I wrote a public apology for what I had come to consider to be horrid things that I had found the movement I was a part of teaching, and that I had myself either taught directly, or had by my silence allowed those who heard me preach to assume that I believed. I recanted, confessed as sin, and repented of, those positions in a FB post written [here](#), on April 9th, 2015. But I find myself regularly referring back to that post to clarify what I do and don't believe, primarily to those in groups that still profess those things, and who confusedly think that if I have left such positions I must surely have left orthodox Christianity as well.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

To make myself more clear, I repost here what I said with great pain on that day.

(Warning - long post!)

I was wrong. I'm sorry. And I love you.

If I ever said or let you think by my silence that the Resurrected Jesus is not the most important element in all of our theology, I'm sorry. If you ever heard me preach, and thought me more passionate about anything else than I was about Him, I am so sorry. If I ever made any thing else seem important, and it made you see Him as less important by comparison, I'm so sorry. Nothing else matters more. He is the center. He is the Everything. I'm broken, sinful, fallen, and utterly unworthy. But He is gracious, forgiving, sacrificially loving, and the most amazing encounter awaits you if you run to Him. If you have trusted in Him and will proclaim the glorious, orthodox gospel that tells His story, you are my friend, my brother, and my companion. You are not, and never will be, my enemy. I may have different positions than you on lesser things. I'll be glad to tell you why. But I will not divide from you because we disagree on lesser things.

And everything else is a lesser thing.

If I ever told you that the KJV is the only Bible God wants you to use in English, or that He thought less of other modern translations, and less of you if you used one, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Totally wrong. I don't believe that anymore. I love the KJV. I use it (not exclusively). I think every Christian should own and read one. It's an incredible translation of a good text. But I don't think that anyone should say that it, or the Greek text which it birthed, is inerrant and to be equated with the original autographs. That position undermines a healthy and Biblical view of Scripture itself. It is contrary to the beliefs of the KJV translators, of the man (Scrivener) who compiled the Textus Receptus itself, of the Fundamentalists heritage, and I think even of Jesus and the Apostles themselves. Keep using the KJV. Keep preaching it. It's an awesome translation. I'll never try to get you away from it. But I will no longer make claims for it that are not true. I will be happy to sit down with nothing but you, me, and a KJV 1611 and show you why I don't believe that anymore. (Yes, I have read Psalm 12:6-7; Matt. 5:18; Matt. 24:35; Luke 6:17; 21:33; and Mark 13:31. If those passages are coming to your mind now as proof that I am wrong, you might not have read them very closely.) Nonetheless, I will be happy to sit and genuinely listen if you think you can present a biblical or historical case for that position. I'm not unswayable in my convictions. I will submit to the clear teaching of Scripture. Make the case. I will listen. But I'm not convinced anymore. And I won't say that anymore. (And yes, returning my Diploma to HBBC, a school I love, as promised, is in the works, for those who might wonder.)

If I ever told you that dressing a certain way at church (or anywhere) pleased or honored God more than dressing another way, I'm sorry. You're accountable to God for how you dress. Period. You are not accountable to me or any other man. Apart from basic modesty issues, I don't believe that anybody else has the right to tell you how you should dress. If you wear or let your daughter wear or not wear pants, shorts, or a bathing suit, that's between you and God. It's not my business. As a preacher, I have the responsibility to say what the Bible says. Where the Bible is silent, I have the responsibility to stay silent and not burden God's people with my own standards. (Yes, I've read I Tim. 2:9-15; Is. 47:2; Deut. 22:5; Ex. 28:42 and I Peter 3:1-6. Carefully. If those passages are coming to your mind right now, there's a good chance that you haven't read them closely.)

I was wrong.

I'm sorry.

If I ever suggested by my silence that you displeased God when you listened to music that contained solid, robust, biblical, theology just because it wasn't played on an organ, guitar or piano, I'm sorry. I don't believe that. I believe that God is honored by so many different kinds of music. Have standards. Seek God. And know that I believe that those standards are between you and Him. It's not my business, or anyone else's. I will not twist the Bible to impose standards upon you that its doesn't set.

If I ever told you that I thought one man should alone be in charge of God's church and your life, I am so, so, sorry.

I was wrong. I was so wrong.

The Bible's teaching of a plurality of elders is so clear to me now that I'm ashamed I didn't see it before. I guess I was afraid to look. Any church that wants to run on a single-elder-led model is free to. I would not intend to interfere or argue. That's their business. But know that I don't think that that is the most biblical model. Yes, I've read I Pet. 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Thess. 5:12-13, Titus 1:5; I Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17; Acts 20:17, 28; 21:18; 11:30; Phil. 1:1; and James 5:14, if those passages are coming to your mind and you think me in rebellion. Maybe you didn't notice that all but one of them refers to leaders in the PLURAL. If you don't think that convincing, maybe consider just Acts 14:23 alone. Luke, under inspiration, makes it clear that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders [plural] in every church [singular]. And should you still think that I need to be turned over to Satan, know that the pastor of preaching and vision (of a plurality of equal pastors) of Bridgeway Community Church, where I am a proud member, deeply affirms that biblical position. [So am I in rebellion, or submission?? My head hurts...]

If I ever told you that Jesus started an IFB church, or allowed you to think that through my silence, I am so, so sorry. I was wrong. I was utterly ignorant of history. I am a Protestant, proud to affirm my heritage. I believe in the five Solas. Don't misunderstand me - Jesus loves IFB churches. He is at work in them. He is using them. He will continue to use them. But they are not His only children, and His other children are not foster children, and Baptist emphatically are not the only biblical churches. Baptist are Protestants. Saying that they are not is essentially re-creating Jesus in your own image, and that is dangerous. I do not believe that there is an invisible "trail of blood" undiscoverable in all of Christian history, which represents the "one true church," and that you have to have baptism from that "one true line" to really have God's favor. I don't think that every man or woman in history who didn't line up with IFB doctrine should be maligned as a heretic. I will not demonize and vilify great men of God in history, even though I disagree with them at points. I will not divide history into "God's true people who were just like me" (can't find them anywhere, but I know they existed) and "everyone else," who should then be vilified. If they professed the glorious gospel of Jesus, they are my brothers, and I accept them as family, warts and all.

For my nervous Baptist friends,

Know that I believe firmly in the Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority of the Bible (I'm right in line with the position spelled out in "The Fundamentals" Vol. 2 - Check it out; it's a good read. You might find that your positions are *not* in line with that historic position). Know that I believe in Believers Baptism by Immersion. Know that I believe that there are two ordinances, neither of which grants saving power. Know that I believe in the virgin birth. Know that I believe in the autonomy of the local church. Know that I believe in two offices of the church - pastors and deacons. Know that I believe in the perseverance of the saints. Know that I believe in individual soul liberty, the priesthood of the believer, and the separation of Church and State.

But know that I believe more deeply than I do in any of those in;

One God the Father;

in One Jesus Christ,
 who is eternally very God from very God,
 yet was made man;
 who was crucified,
 buried,
 and risen bodily from the grave,
 who will one day return bodily;

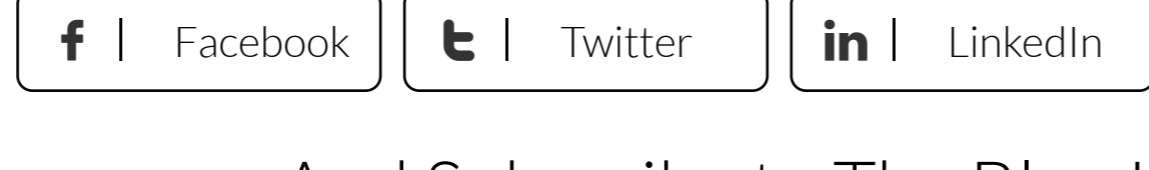
and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life.

In fact, by comparison, all those other things are but shallow pools compared to the depth of my belief in the Risen Jesus. If I ever made any thing else seem more important, I'm so sorry. I was wrong. The Resurrected Jesus has become the center of my faith, and my one Foundation. Everything else is secondary.

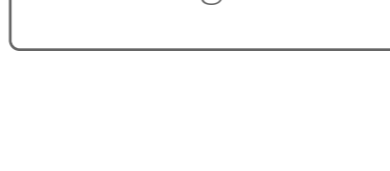
Know that I believe in and treasure the creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon. Know that I'm honored to count my heritage among those who've affirmed those truths.

I love you. If you want to unfriend me, go ahead. I understand. I'll love you anyway. I'm more than willing to talk if you want to talk. I know that most of my FB friends will just assume that "since I've changed" I must not be wrong. I'm sorry. I don't view "change" as I view truth - I view truth as the goal. I was wrong. The Resurrected Jesus has become the center of my faith, and my one Foundation. Everything else is secondary.

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