

As I worked on *Preaching as Resistance*, I kept running up against several popular, unfortunate myths. While these concerns are addressed in depth in the book, I put this list together in order to have a quick resource to share as needed. If you encounter similar conversations (I'm guessing I'm not the only pastor who does!), I hope you find this useful. Feel free to use as much or as little as is helpful — and let me know what else needs to be added (it's also online at [philsnider.net](http://philsnider.net)). My deepest gratitude to each of you for your courage and faithfulness in times such as these.

- Phil Snider

# 10 UNFORTUNATE MYTHS

## **Myth 1: Preaching as resistance means you have to choose to be either prophetic or pastoral**

This is a pervasive yet false dichotomy designed to maintain the status quo; it's especially popular in privileged circles. Preaching prophetically is among the most important ways to extend pastoral care, especially by equipping listeners to seek justice with and for those crushed by the ruling powers. If one doesn't preach prophetically, at least from time to time as situations demand, one also neglects to preach pastorally.

## **Myth 2: Preaching as resistance is mostly relegated to high profile leaders like William Barber and Jim Wallis**

While preachers of the resistance find great inspiration from well-known voices (and often take their cue from them), they also know history is frequently shaped by those whose names history will never recall. The movement is galvanized and sustained by everyday pastors and people who refuse to stand idly by in the face of injustice, whether famous or not.

## **Myth 3: Preaching as resistance should be avoided because churches are supposed to preach the gospel instead of politics**

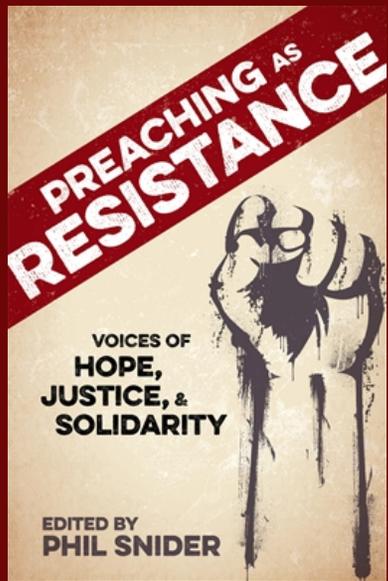
This is another popular yet false dichotomy designed to maintain the status quo. Jesus' teachings had overt political implications from the start. Plus, not to be political is to be political; not to speak is to speak. As Elie Wiesel said, "We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest."

## **Myth 4: Preaching as resistance recognizes that progressives have it all together; it's only the conservatives that need to be called out**

Preaching in progressive circles sometimes runs the risk of becoming a form of virtue signaling. For example, it's possible for some progressives to call out the sin of white-cis-hetero-patriarchal power structures, yet at the same time be quite complicit in benefitting from such structures. But resisting oppressive structures includes recognizing how one is complicit in them, and then working toward transformation.

## **Myth 5: Preaching as resistance is new**

Truth be told, preaching as resistance has a pedigree at least as ancient as St. Paul, and has long been a primary mode of sermonic discourse among the oppressed in the U.S. The rise of Trump may amplify the racism and misogyny that runs deep in our country, but it's been in the DNA of the U.S. since its inception, and preachers have long been responding to it.



*"Phil Snider has assembled a talented array of ministers committed to preach praxis — acts of resistance to transform the church into a community which does good news rather than simply provides lip service."*  
- Miguel A. De La Torre

*"This is exactly the book that preachers need in this critical moment in our history."*  
- Derek Penwell

*"Read, rise up, and resist!"*  
- Carol Howard Merritt

---

Available October 2  
Pre-order at  
[chalicepress.com](http://chalicepress.com)

# 10 UNFORTUNATE MYTHS

## **Myth 6: Preaching as resistance only takes place in liberal churches in liberal areas among members who all think alike**

Contrary to popular assumptions, preaching as resistance isn't relegated to big steeple churches in big cities in blue states. Rather, it's taking place everywhere, including small towns across the heartland, where it's not uncommon for parishioners to pass Confederate flags waving high in the air on their way to worship. Our world needs to be saved, and pastors are called to witness to God's saving work in Christ. Not just in blue states, but in red and purple ones too. That's where you'll find some of the most courageous pastors around.

## **Myth 7: Preaching as resistance is accomplished in single, stand-alone sermons**

Transformative preaching takes place in community, and it's forged over the course of many sermons over many weeks, months, and years. As Rev. Elizabeth Grasham recently observed, the whole idea of crisis preaching is a misnomer. In times like these, we just reel from one crisis to the next, which makes it impossible to fire off one sermon after another on topic after topic. Deeper foundations must be built in order to withstand the deluge of information and announcements that flood us on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Preaching as resistance is committed to the work of community formation every bit as much as it's committed to the work of theological formation.

## **Myth 8: Preaching as resistance should be left to heads of staff**

While it's not uncommon for senior ministers to occupy pride of place in the pulpit, this collection of sermons shows that some of the most important preaching taking place today is by those who aren't serving in the role of senior minister, lead pastor, or head of staff. This isn't a knock on heads of staff, many of whom are also great preachers! It's just a way of pointing out that there are all kinds of wonderful preachers out there who don't serve in such a capacity, for whatever reason. And we are better off for listening to them.

## **Myth 9: Preaching as resistance is not a means to an end but an end in itself**

Good preaching helps listeners experience God's call for justice, which in turn leads them to hunger for it all the more, well beyond the liturgical setting. The purpose of preaching is edification and transformation, so that listeners are equipped to partner with Christ to do the work of justice. Otherwise, it's all just empty lip service.

## **Myth 10: Preaching as resistance is a constant downer, focusing only on the negative and never the positive**

This is far from the truth. Preaching as resistance compares and contrasts the world as it is in comparison to how God wants it to be; this includes celebrating the hope, possibility, and transformation evoked in the gospel, which leads listeners to experience the saving beauty and wonder of God's transformative love that no principality or power — not even a ruling despot in the White House — can take from them. This is good news!

