

# Pay attention to God's 'warning lights,' Orr urges in opening session of 2024 SBC Pastors Conference

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Speaking on the theme "Faithful in Our Calling," Bartholomew Orr opened the first session of the 2024 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference in Indianapolis on June 9.

Orr, senior pastor of Brown Missionary Baptist Church in Southaven, Mississippi, since 1989, spoke on the life of Hezekiah, chronicled in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, and used a traffic light to illustrate his sermon title, "Watch the Light."

## **'Cream of the crop'**

Hezekiah was "the cream of the crop" as far as leaders go, Orr said. "He was faithful to his calling. He didn't wander or waver in his trust in the Lord. ... He had the 'green light' from the Lord." Hezekiah's faithfulness was rewarded, and he rose to the TOP, Orr said:

T: He trusted God no matter what was going on.

O: He obeyed the Word of God no matter how things were going around him.

P: He was a man of prayer, looking to God no matter how bad things got.

Hezekiah's initial faithfulness shows the value of following God's direction in order to move forward in ministry and in life.

"I'm thankful for the green light God gives that simply says, 'Go for it,'" Orr said.

Sometimes God gives a yellow light, however – a warning to look in all directions and exercise caution. "Yellow means something is happening, something is changing. We need to be aware."

Hezekiah had a period of peace, prominence and prosperity, but something was going on inside Hezekiah. Ministers are wise to pay attention to the yellow light, Orr said – to slow down, get some rest and honestly examine themselves.

**'Watch the light. Remain faithful.'**

Ultimately, Hezekiah's pride was his downfall. He not only showed his adversaries his treasure (2 Kings 20:12–19) but he also took credit for his success. "He showed off stuff when he should have been showing off God."

"Always give the glory to God almighty," Orr urged, and pay attention to the red light.

"Sometimes God gives us the red light to say it's time to look within our lives because something is wrong. Something is not right."

And if you think pride will never be an obstacle for you, "it's already started," Orr said.

"Watch the light," Orr urged. "Don't run the red light. Watch the light. Remain faithful."