

Wait, what? You're a liberal?

By [John Nash](#)

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Recently I was having a conversation with someone and I said that a certain author was too conservative for me, but that his material could certainly be adapted to other uses, and they responded that I was one of the most conservative people they know. Through a little more dialogue I told them that I was not in fact a conservative, but was in fact a flaming liberal.

They then wanted to know how come they never knew this about me, and I said that a lot of it had to do with the fact that the town in which we live is very conservative and so I am very careful in what I say in church. They said that I was denying them the ability to know me for who I truly am, which I somewhat disagreed with but I have to recognize that the role of the minister is very different than most occupations. I cannot be the minister only to those who think like me. My job is not to proclaim policy positions but instead to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and there are both liberal and conservative positions to that.

They then wanted to know how I could possibly do that, how I could make distinctions about that, and I said that it's hard. But I also recognize the power of the pulpit and I try my hardest not to abuse that power, as so many do. I also know that to get an honest hearing from people they need to know that I understand that power and hold it as a sacred trust. I did say that I will use the pulpit to make a point when necessary, and I have even in this congregation, but that the purpose of preaching is not to be about scoring points "for my side." Again, the purpose is to proclaim the Kingdom.

I do know that my sermons are different than what they have heard in the past, and are also more liberal than what they have heard, and so I consider it somewhat of a success that they are hearing in what I have to say a message that resonates with their life and which they can hear. If I told them everything I believe they would not hear that message because I would be shut out. But I can proclaim a message that is authentic to me, and more importantly true to the gospel message, and get a genuine hearing.

What it also allows me to do is to build up trust and relationship so that later we can deal with more difficult topics but do them in ways that allow all of us to grow, change and hear differing opinions together and in respectful ways.

*Originally posted at [Yankee Pastor](#)*