



The Honest to God Church: A Pathway to God's Grace

Doug Bixby

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Doug Bixby knows that many of us have had enough of the liberal vs. conservative battles in the church. In *The Honest to God Church*, Bixby demonstrates how these extremes have distracted us from our true calling as conduits for God's grace--both individually and as congregations. Many churches see themselves as "okay," while everyone outside the church is "not okay." These churches embrace an ethic of perfection rather than love. Often they are very judgmental and rigid; little room exists for grace after a person is converted. Legalism, rather than love, becomes the primary defining characteristic; people pretend to be perfect even though they are not. In reaction to this approach, many churches have replaced judgmentalism with an ethic of tolerance. But tolerating someone is not the same thing as loving them. Tolerance demands only that we give people space. Love is deeper and more significant and demands that we enter into their space. Besides, if on our own we are okay, then why do we need God and one another? Bixby recommends we embrace the teaching of Martin Luther that we all are saints and sinners simultaneously. Churches that do this raise disciples who readily admit their sin and brokenness and see God's grace as the only means for straightening out their lives. Bixby encourages all congregations to live this way--authentically and transparently--so that we do not have to pretend that we are okay when we are not. Bixby challenges us to respond to Jesus's call to come as we are, not as we think we ought to be.

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