

Pastor Ed Young Uses Live Lion and Lamb in 'Wild' Sermon Series



Pastor Ed Young of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas, holds a lamb near a cage with a live lion during his Easter "Wild" sermon on April 8, 2012.

Pastor Ed Young of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas, is leading a controversial sermon series called "Wild" which uses live animals, including lions, as part of his presentation.

A video from an observer shows the megachurch pastor preaching at an Easter Sunday open-roof sermon holding a lamb before the congregation, while a lion inside a cage stands next to the stage. The video shows a handler walking around the cage trying to get the animal's attention, and the

lion responding by bustling around the small enclosure before the curious onlookers.

Pastor Young's "Wild" sermon series also includes other exotic animals like giraffes and elephants, local television news station [WFAA](#) reported. The "Wild" series is part of Fellowship Church's initiative to teach children about animals and their role in God's creation. According to Young, God's use of a lion and a lamb are meant to demonstrate Jesus Christ's role as both animals, as the Bible refers to Jesus as the "lamb of God" as well as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

The Easter sermon presentation, however, has attracted criticism from people wondering about the well-being of the animals, particularly the caged lion, **and some who attend Fellowship Church services** have suggested that Pastor Young does not need live animals to get his message across.

"I don't feel it's necessary," said Fellowship worshipper Lisa Chatlain. "I think Ed Young has a way of getting his point across without **live animals as props, entertainment.**"

"Thousands and thousands of churches are able to convey the same exact message without using live animals," said Stacy Smith, a member of the Humane Society of Flower Mound, who shot the video used by WFAA in its report. Smith, who attended the Easter Sunday sermon, said handlers appeared to be poking the lion.

Speaking to the news station, however, Pastor Young addressed concerns over his use of live animals, and said that he would never do anything to endanger his congregation or the animals. He also revealed that the 17-year-old lion lives on a 55-acre ranch in California, and has starred in movies.

The pastor said that the "Wild" sermons will continue for the next five weeks.

"I think it's great to expose our kids, to expose our church to that," Young said. "I think for far too long, the church has stifled creativity."

Grapevine authorities shared with the news station that they are investigating to make sure Fellowship Church is treating the animals properly and has the required licenses for such exhibitions.