

# How to Resurrect a Dead Church

by David Wilkerson

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*A church can only be resurrected through prayer, communion, and seeking God's face, and leaders must be willing to go to the mountain and seek God's presence.*

**Duration:** 30:12

**Scripture:** Exodus 33:14, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Matthew 18:20, John 15:4, Acts 3:19, Ephesians 5:14, Hebrews 12:28, James 4:8, Revelation 3:2

**Topics:** "Church Revival", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for churches to be revived by the presence of Jesus Christ, highlighting the decline in spiritual fervor and the rise of dead churches. It calls for a return to prayer, communion with God, and a deep seeking of His presence to bring about true revival and transformation in churches and leaders. The speaker shares personal experiences and insights on the importance of maintaining a genuine connection with God to combat spiritual deadness and ensure the manifestation of Christ's presence in every service.

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## Transcript

Thank you so much, music team, for this wonderful special worship time we've had together. I appreciate your efforts in coming to all of these services and we thank you so much. Thank you for coming again to hear the word of the Lord.

We trust that he'll speak to us again. There'll be two services after this, including this evening. I'm praying about a prophetic word that God's been speaking in my heart, a Christian's answer to calamities, a Christian's answer to calamities.

I've been praying about this message and trusting that the Lord will speak very, very clearly to us. I told someone before the service of all my travels and all these years, this has been one of the most trying times to determine in prayer, in faith, what to preach to a city that is so well-ordered. It reminds me of Switzerland and also Singapore, a very well-ordered city.

Wonderful worship, wonderful Christians, people who pray and seek the Lord. So the message that I have felt the Holy Spirit lay in my heart today seems out of character for this city or maybe this nation even. Many, many great songs come out of this nation.

People have been led to worship. I look around this city. It's a lovely city.

I have not had the joy of attending any of the churches. I've met a few pastors who, very obvious when I meet them, they know the Lord, they walk with God. So I come along now and my subject today is resurrecting dead churches.

Folks, I have to tell you, I honestly do not know anything about what is happening in your churches. Some of our people who came forward, came first to set up these meetings, inquired about what some of the needs are, but I asked them not to even show me the page or show me any of their talk, because if I'm going to say anything from the Holy Spirit, I want to make sure you know I got it from him and not from somebody else, otherwise you might get angry at me and never invite me back. Resurrecting dead churches, Lord, I can't speak this, I can't do this unless the Spirit, your Spirit, comes upon me and I speak not out of my heart, not out of things that I feel personally, but those things that are on your heart.

You know your church, and you've put a love in my heart for pastors, you've put a love in my heart for the people of God, and I have no ax to grind. I have no personal agenda. Lord, I come as a man who's running his last laps on this journey, and what I say has to count because soon I stand before your throne and I give answer.

I come humbly, Holy Spirit, to you and I ask you to speak. Lord, even if I may not raise my voice, I pray that you speak from heaven and help us to realize now that we're in times that demand from us truth in the inner man. It demands from us more than the status quo.

It demands a seeking heart, an open heart and an open mind. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. I get letters from people around the United States and around the world.

We have a massive mailing list that's been accumulated over 45 years of ministry, and really 50 years, and more and more this is what I hear. I hate to get up Sunday morning. I hate to go to church.

There was a time it was the highlight of our family to get up early, anticipate going to church because we would meet the Lord, the presence of God was there, and now by the hundreds, even over the past few years probably the thousands who write and say Sunday morning is the most dreadful morning of the week. We despise having to go to church because it's dead, it's lifeless. It just came from when we were in England this past year, that very week, the week we were there, they desanctified, they call it, 12 churches.

Some of them were cathedrals, I mean huge buildings. They call it desanctification, means they shut the doors. Everywhere you go in England now you'll see beautiful buildings, old, wonderful, landmark buildings that are now occult centers, they're occult bookstores, they are theaters, they are dance halls.

You go to all through Europe and you see the secularization of all of their society, and you find some of the deadest churches. You find lovely pastors, you find a number of hungry people, but you see churches closing on all sides. A friend of mine who is one of the assistant superintendents of a large Pentecostal nation in the United States said we're closing six state churches every week now.

As I mentioned recently, a poll in the United States said that 10 to 12 million, the last few years 10 to 12 million born again people have quit going to church completely because they said there was no life. I told you of the interview the New York Times did after 9-11, after our towers collapsed, six months of revival people going, and then six months later fewer people going to church than prior to the explosions, and they were asked, and they said the church was dead. Young people said there's not one reason why I'd

ever want to go back to church.

Others said the pastor seemed to just be going through the motions. I'm not here to abuse pastors. I'm not here to abuse anybody, but I'm telling you that dead churches are caused by dead pastors, dead elders, dead deacons, and dead congregations.

There's a death. When God sent me to New York City 18 years ago to start a church, I could do nothing. A few churches that I attended, I attended some of the more famous evangelical churches and I sat there, and I was overwhelmed with the boredom.

I was overwhelmed with a sense of no one seemed to be anxious about whether or not the presence of Christ was there. It was just another service, a handful of people at night. I was told that you can't have a Sunday night service.

That's TV night. That's Desperate Housewives, and all of these filthy programs, and you can't have a church, but I remember standing for night after night on 51st Street and Broadway, and I remember looking down Broadway and just weeping at the sense that I couldn't find. Most of the churches in New York City are small.

Probably one of the largest and most effective churches is Brooklyn Tabernacle. You've got Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. You've got a number, Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

You have other ethics. We have 103 nationalities in our churches, and many of these nationalities have churches that are moving ahead and people are getting saved, but I remember just weeping, standing across the street. You can't take a poll in New York.

You can't get in an apartment house. You can't get past the concierge. You can't knock on any door.

It's illegal. You can't even get into the place. There's no possible way that I can follow the advice of going door to door and finding out what people wanted.

I really didn't care what people wanted to know about the gospel. I wanted to know what Jesus wanted me to preach, and that's all I wanted to know. I was weeping.

I didn't know that I was looking right across the street to the theater God was going to give us, a theater where they mocked Jesus for three years with Jesus Christ Superstar. They came and mocked him in this, and it's one of the most beautiful theaters in New York City, and I didn't know that I was weeping over that spot. God gave us that theater, and that's where God must have a sense of humor.

He said, if you're going to mock me here, I'm going to turn it into a house of worship. The young man who played Jesus in Superstar was drug crazed the whole time he was there. He was high on heroin all through his playing, all through his acting.

The Lord not only turned the theater into a church, he saved the Superstar. He saved the young man. He came to dedicate the church, and when he walked in, he said, pastor, he said, do you know this is, I've never seen this before.

I said, you played Jesus for two years here. He said, yes, I was so high, I never saw it. He said, could I go back into my dressing room? I said, well, that's our pastor's study right now, and I said, come on back.

He walked in, he said, but I worshiped the devil here for two years. I would light a thousand candles, and I'd ask the devil to come in and blow them out. One day it happened, it so scared me, and he said, my wife got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and got after me, and he's totally on fire for the Lord.

That was the beginning, but when that was opened, I said, God, there's only one thing that can combat the sin of this city. There's only one thing that I want, and that's the presence of Christ. If we don't have the presence of Christ, this place, no matter how, if we're here 10 years, five years, if we're here 15 years or 20, and we lose the presence of God, if I come here and sit in the pulpit, and I don't recognize the Holy Spirit coming, manifesting the presence of Jesus, the building should be shut down.

We have no church. Without the presence of Jesus Christ, you don't have church. I don't have church.

I don't care how well it is done. I don't care if it's the latest thing. As I told you, I've been told in Europe, I've been told in the United States, everywhere I go, Pastor Dave, you're of an old age, you're an old man now, everything is new, and it's bypassed you.

Well, I want to tell you something, my friends. The presence of Jesus has not bypassed me or anybody else, and never will bypass. And I can tell, and I sit in my chair on the stage with other pastors, five pastors, and I know the very moment that the presence of the Lord begins to manifest in my prayer as soon as I sit there, and every one of the pastors, Holy Spirit come, manifest the presence of Jesus.

And it began to happen when the church opened, it's been 18 years. There's never been an evangelistic service without people being saved in 18 years. And you have to come early.

On my way, I live two blocks from the church, and people pass me by, hello, Pastor Dave, and goodbye, wanting to get a seat an hour before the service, and we have seen the presence of God come down, and people so stricken, crawl on their hands and knees out of reverence. And then when I get a, see, I'm not boasting, I'm trying to tell you that I tell the Holy Ghost, unless you come, unless the presence of Jesus is manifest, how else is sin exposed? I can preach the greatest sermon against sin, and it will not be exposed, it will not have any impact unless the presence of Christ is there. It's the presence of Jesus that heals.

It's the presence of Jesus that holds our young people and convicts them of their drugs and alcohol. That's when drug addicts can come in and say, he's preaching right at me, he knows all about me. It's the presence of Jesus Christ being manifest by the Holy Spirit.

And I thank God for that, and I'm not boasting about that. But when I have a time, and I'm away, and I go to some services, I can tell when the presence of the Lord is not there. Any discerning Christian can tell when the presence of Christ is not there.

Any discerning Christian that's been on their knees can go to a service and see if it's just being hyped up. We hype it up, make the music louder if necessary, and you can tell the hype, but you can't fool young people anymore. The young people know whether or not it's hype.

The people that are in the pew come in and take a seat in the church, they know whether the pastor's been alone with God. They know whether or not he's been a praying man, is he seeking the face of God, or he's been so busy pushing a pencil, he's been so busy. And I hear that.

I hear all about how busy pastors are. I hear that. Folks, we have 10,000 people, we have a staff of over a hundred.

I know what business is all about, how busy a pastor can get. But you see, when God wants to move on a nation, when God wants to do us a work of reviving, and if we don't have a reviving in our church, if all we have are new methods coming down the turnpike every two or three years, some new kind of gimmick, some kind of new thing, a way to do church, a shortcut that doesn't demand prayer, that doesn't demand seeking God, it doesn't demand separation from pornographic literature or pornographic websites or whatever it may be, we're going to see churches closed all across the face of this earth in a time when it is needed, when there's a time that never we've been in such a time as this, as we need churches that truly have the presence of Christ being manifested in every single service. Folks, I made a pledge to God that we would never have what is called a throwaway service, simply because a pastor didn't have time to study or because we didn't seek God or we didn't go after everything in our hearts to see that every meeting, we're not just going to show a film, I'm not against showing films, we're not just going to fill in services.

We're going to ask that there be something in every single service where the Holy Spirit is present, where the presence of Jesus Christ is felt and known. When God is moving upon a church or a pastor or elders to resurrect the church, the first thing he does is call to prayer. I know that I'm going to go into exodus, therefore I'm going to burden my heart at any cost.

I'm just going to tell you what's burning in my gut. I know that we're not at Mount Zion. I know the 12th chapter of Hebrews says, or rather, we're at Mount Zion, but there are lessons in exodus, the children of God, and how God dealt with Israel.

He said, these things are example for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. And when you get to exodus, you see God calling the busiest pastor of the largest church ever known in man's history. No man was busier than Moses.

And the first thing God has to do to resurrect a dead situation is to call a man to the mountain. That mountain represents prayer, it means aloneness with God, it means communion. I've said before and I'll say it again, everything that is touched by the hand of God, everything that is anointed has to come out of communion.

Nothing I've ever done has worked. I've had to sell buildings, I've had to shut down ministries that were good ideas invented in my own mind, just out of human need, and I didn't get it in prayer, I didn't get it on the face of God, I got it because it was a good idea. I just shut down an \$8 million episode because it was a good idea.

And God calls Moses to come up to the mountain. You see, he'd just been, the congregation had been sprinkled with blood, and God had just laid down his plan, how he was going to build this wilderness church, and he has plans for Aaron and Nadab and Abihu. The scripture said Moses was called and Moses was told, bring with you to the mountain, bring Aaron with you, bring Nadab, bring Abihu, and bring the 70 elders.

Now God loves his church, he's building a church, and he says, I have to first deal with these men in love. He called them up there not to frighten them, he was going to appear in their presence. There would be a manifestation of the utter holiness of God.

And I would call it camp halfway. They went halfway up the mountain and they're there encamped. You see, Moses would be so busy, he would be what we would call the head of a denomination today, or head of an organization.

And how important is, my tapes, these tapes are widely distributed, and could I speak lovingly, I have as my friends, bishops from all over the world. And many of these bishops are like the Baptist bishop in Latvia in his 80s, and he said the reason I'm here in Pastor David's meeting is because years ago I was in a Russian prison, and I was given a hand copy of the Cross and Swiss Blade, and we weighed it page by page, and I got saved in a prison reading this man's book. And there stood the Archbishop of the Lutheran Church, and he said I was in seminary and I read Pastor David's book, and God set my heart on fire.

What I'm trying to say, I know superintendents, I know bishops, and I've seen how the enemy works. I've seen the devil get these men so busy and so preoccupied, good men, honest men, men who knew who to pray, men that were on their face, men who knew how to weep before God. And now some of those that I've known, some of those who put their arms around me and said I hear God through you, Pastor David, I hear something of God's spirit, and my heart's been stirred.

And a year later, I hear things that are absolutely of the flesh, absolutely leading the church and going in another direction, away from prayer, away from this communion with God. And I listened to a group of leaders, and it broke my heart. I was in a certain country and there's five of them, and one of the leaders of the organization said are you preaching your old Daniel sermon again? Yeah, I said well what about you, are you preaching on Peter again? You see there were five sermons that were preached over and over again.

There was not a fresh word, and there'd be no revival in Australia. There would be no awakening in this country, and there'll be no genuine move of God beyond anything you and I have ever seen until God gets a hold of leaders who once had the touch of the Holy Ghost and broke before God, and now have become so busy and so preoccupied and so many demands on their time, men who truly love God, and yet they've been called to the mountain, and they have no time to go to the mountain. They go halfway.

There are those here now, forgive me I said I wouldn't raise my voice, but I have to. Folks I'm preaching from a broken heart. I don't know anything about your country, but I know there's a spiritual death hanging, there's a cloud, and don't think for one moment Australia is going to escape terrorism.

Don't think for one minute that you're not going to go through a battle such as you've ever seen or ever known. You are not immune, and there's a pale of spiritual death hanging over this country, and I've only been here two, three days, and if God's going to awaken, he's going to go into the bedrooms and into the prayer rooms of leaders of denominations, and he's going to go into the prayer room of pastors, and he's going to go in the prayer room, or he's going to get this deacon or elder driving in his car, and God's going to call and say, you have neglected me days without end. You meditate, but you're not seeking my face.

You are not on your face pleading. You do not have the burden of the Lord. Now you know how to do church, and it's not enough to learn how to draw a crowd.

I preach to congregations that sit over 10,000 people, but it's not the crowd. That crowd can be gone overnight, so Nadab, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and 70 elders are called. You see, God knows what's in the heart of these men.

He knows the jealousy in the heart of Aaron. Here's a man who cannot rejoice in the blessing of God on another man's life, and God has to deal with this because he loves him, and this is the man that's going to meet him at the mercy seat, and they're going to be communing with him, and he said, if this man is going to be communing with me, if he's going to stand before the mercy seat, if he's going to bring the blood to my mercy seat, I've got to deal with these issues in his heart. He had this desire to be number one.

He could not rejoice in the blessing of his brother Moses, and there was something of sensuality in this man because he would break out later before the golden calf when he strips the congregation of those dancing around the golden calf. He knows what is in the heart of Nadab and Abihu. He knows that these men have a streak of lust.

They have a spirit of adultery and fornication, and God's loving these men, and God had said, I have called these men to minister to me. He said, they're going to minister to me, not to the congregation, but they're going to ministry to me. This was a genuine calling.

God had his hand, their blood sprinkled, and God's building a church. But God says, first, there's some issues. Here's Nadab and Abihu now, having this lust in their heart.

Here are 70 elders that are not under authority. These are the ones that probably went through the camp saying, we don't know what happened to Moses, but we have the same anointing as the pastor. They took matters into their own hands.

God said, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. He calls the men into his presence, and he appears, a theophany, God coming down a sapphire pathway, winding toward them, prepared a table. They're in his presence, and there was an utter manifestation of the holiness of God, and heaven in its glory.

You see, when God wants to resurrect a church, when God wants to do a work in a town or city or a man's heart, he has to start with the ministry. He has to get hold of the man, the pastor, who says, I love you, but you're watching pornography now on the internet. You did it out of curiosity at first, but it's got a hold of your heart, and I love you, and I need you, and I'm not mad at you, and I want to heal you, but I'm going to give you, I'm going to bring you in to a meeting.

I'm going to have a meeting with you face to face, and I'm going to deal with you in love. I'm not going to threaten you, but I'm going to warn you that it's going to destroy you, and it's going to take away the presence of God and the glory of God, and when you stand in the pulpit, you're going to be a dead man. When I was a young preacher years ago, pornography had just come out in motels and hotels.

I had finished a meeting, and I got out of curiosity. I turned one on, and I watched a few moments of it, and there was conviction, and I remember going out in a wheat field. It was in Kansas.

Wide fields, and the Holy Spirit came on, and He said, David, if you're going to do this, if you're going to go and say that I'm a mature man, I can handle this, I'm going to take your anointing away from you. You can preach, and I'll love you, but you will be a dead man in the pulpit. This is what is happening right now in this meeting.

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