

It Began With Repentance

by David Wilkerson

The church's degeneration is caused by idolatry, specifically a driving ambition for success, which leads to a pursuit of worldly recognition and acquiring of things.

Scripture: Jeremiah 2:11, Jeremiah 2:21, Matthew 6:24, Luke 9:23-24, Romans 12:2, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:18-19, Colossians 3:2, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Idolatry", "Repentance"

Description

David Wilkerson emphasizes that the church's foundation was built on repentance, as seen during Peter's sermon at Pentecost, which united believers in love and evangelism. However, he warns that idolatry, particularly the ambition for success, has led to the church's degeneration from its noble beginnings. This ambition, often justified by doctrine, has become a powerful idol that distracts believers from their true purpose. Wilkerson calls for a return to the gospel of self-denial and a focus on God's glory rather than worldly recognition. He highlights the need for the church to recognize and confront these idols to restore its original mission.

Transcript

The church as we know it today began with repentance. When Peter preached the cross at Pentecost, thousands came to Christ. This new church was made up of one body, consisting of all races, filled with love for one another. Its corporate life was marked by evangelism, a spirit of sacrifice, even martyrdom.

The wonderful beginning reflects God's word to Jeremiah: "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed" (Jeremiah 2:21). Yet the Lord's next words describe what often happens to such works: "How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (2:21). God was saying, "I planted you right. You were mine, bearing my name and nature. But now you've turned degenerate."

What caused this degeneration in the church? It always has been, and will continue to be, idolatry. God is speaking of idolatry when he says to Jeremiah, "My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit" (2:11).

Most Christian teaching today identifies an idol as anything that comes between God's people and himself. Yet that's only a partial description of idolatry.

Idolatry has to do with a much deeper heart issue. The number-one idol among God's people isn't adultery, pornography or alcohol. It's a much more powerful lust. What is this idol? It's a driving ambition for success. And it even has a doctrine to justify it.

The idolatry of being successful describes many in God's house today. These people are upright, morally clean, full of good works. But they've set up an idol of ambition in their hearts, and they can't be shaken from it.

God loves to bless his people. He wants his people to succeed in all they undertake honestly. But there is now a raging spirit in the land that is overtaking multitudes--this is the spirit of love for recognition and acquiring of things.

A man of the world said recently, "He who dies with the most toys--wins." Tragically, Christians, too, are caught up in this pursuit.

How far we have strayed from the gospel of living through dying to self, ego, and worldly ambition.

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