

Hundreds Saved from Suicide



David Wilkerson April 1, 1978

We have declared war on suicide, and already we have witnessed many great victories. A few months ago, in a newsletter, I told how God prompted me to preach about suicide in every crusade we conduct.

When God first prompted me to speak out on the subject of suicide, I was incredulous. I argued, "How can I preach on such a morbid subject in city-wide crusades? Only a small percentage of the audience would relate to such a message! People might think I was making too much of the problem."

But I obeyed the Lord. About five months ago, I preached on "Suicide" for the first time - in Spokane, Washington. I have been preaching about it in every crusade since, and the results have been both tragic and miraculous. Tragic, because I have had at least 35 on any given night confess they were on the brink of suicide. In Reno, Nevada, 72 people confessed they were thinking of suicide. In nearly every service, from 15 to 35 people admit they have attempted suicide at least once.

Is it just a bunch of phony confessions from teen-agers looking for sympathy? Never! Not when they roll up a sleeve and show you scars from razor wounds. They reach into their pockets and purses and hand me their vials of sleeping pills. Others sob out detailed confessions about how they had it all planned out. Girls use sleeping pills mostly. Boys use guns and knives. Many commit suicide in a speeding car - purposely driven out of control.

It is tragic because even ten and eleven-year old children share with us their heartbroken confessions.

One ten-year-old girl, last week, really broke my heart. I broke down and wept in front of a large audience when she looked up at me and said, "Sure - I know what you mean by suicide! I've been thinking about it all week. Dad's an alcoholic; he beats me up. Mom runs around - she's never home. She hates me! Nobody loves me. It's easy to kill yourself when you got nothing to lose." Hundreds who heard that confession wept with me.

In a recent crusade, a very overweight teen-age girl stood and blurted out, "I'll tell you why I've tried to kill myself - twice! Look at me! I weigh over 200 pounds, and I'm only 15 years old. The kids in school call me a freak. They laugh at me. I have no friends. They don't know it, but inside me there is a girl like everybody else, who needs love. I don't want to live like this. I'd rather be dead than be a sideshow for people to laugh at."

How my heart went out to that poor girl. We meet so many overweight kids who hate themselves. Thank God, this particular girl has been turned around and, hopefully, is sticking to the diet our follow-up people shared with her.

Letters of Confession

In response to my last newsletter about suicide, some very shocking replies were received in my office. Here are just a few::

1. "After ten and one-half years of troubled marriage, separating, getting back together, my husband finally shot himself through the head. Your letter is the best thing I've read on suicide. I only wish someone had said it sooner. I know it will help others. A.L."
2. "The message on suicide couldn't have come at a better time, for ten minutes before my brother brought me the mail, I was contemplating which way I should do it. I tried to kill myself this summer, but my friend caught me. You said how it wouldn't be the end - judgment and darkness, but what about a backslidden Christian? I am curious, would God send me to hell for it? Take care and please write me and answer my questions, if you have a minute or two sometime. B.F."
3. "Your last message on suicide really hit home with me. I'm from a broken home, and I was running away and taking drugs most of my teen years. then I quit drugs, got married, had a beautiful baby girl, then ended up divorced. I'm new in Christ, and I'm trying but I guess somehow I've been letting myself think about suicide. I thought I'd be forgiven. Praise the Lord for your message! I'm putting suicide out of my mind, and i'm going to concentrate on the Lord and raising my daughter in Jesus. J.K."
4. "Your letter on suicide arrived Wednesday, just an hour or so after I was informed that a high school junior I know is suicidal. I was grateful for the letter, not only because it made me aware of the situation, but I believe it can be used by God. As a substitute teacher, I've noticed that many, many kids writing term papers have chosen suicide as a topic. Tomorrow I will put your letter in the library with the reference books used to write these papers. I know the Lord will use your paper to speak to the right kids. S.C.L."
5. "Yes, I know all too well the heartbreak of suicide. I stood over the dying body of a beloved granddaughter who had poured a gallon of gasoline over her body and set herself on fire. She lived long enough to give me the assurance that she was saved. It was an experience I shall never forget. Her words still ring in my ears, 'Grandma, how long will it take me to die? I did not pray for her to live; she wanted so much to die. And though she could not speak to me, I know she had found the Savior in those days of dying. Now I have another granddaughter on the same road. Please pray for her! I pray constantly and so do her parents. C.O."
6. "I received your message on suicide today. It is something - of all times. My son just yesterday told me he was going to kill himself. I talked to him and told him that wouldn't end it. That he would not go to heaven and be with God. That it is the devil's work. That's what he wants people to do - destroy themselves. I am leaving this message lay on my table so he can read it also. Please pray for my family . S.E.U."
7. "My daughter contemplated suicide. She even wrote a letter of a last will and even checked on the price of funerals, so I learned from one of her girl friends. One evening I came to the house, and she had it locked, and all the gas jets and oven were running without flames. It shocked me. I called in a minister to help, and she came out of her bedroom like it was a lark - but it was no lark to me! Since a prayer of healing between us, at least we can communicate on the natural level now. For one of her term papers, my daughter researched suicide and reported on it - but it was only on the worldly level, not what the Bible says about suicide to murdering. Now she is married and has a little girl herself. Shortly after the little girl was born, I told her that as she loves her little daughter, so I loved her so she told me she knew that. I'm praying for the day of her salvation. A.A.G."

Thank God for the miracles of deliverance!

Each night, after preaching about suicide, I return to my motel room with mixed emotions. I can never erase from my mind the haunting faces and tragic confessions of so many young people who almost took their lives. I see them, in my mind, lying dead from a self-inflicted wound or overdose of pills - and I break out in a cold sweat. I shudder at the thought that it's now payday for all the past ten years of permissiveness, divorce, immorality and spiritual emptiness. Now the bill has come due. Consequently, there is a whole generation of lonely, mixed-up kids who scoff at death - and who despair of life. they are not in a majority - at all! But, their numbers are growing. And any true Christian who can't weep over these tragedies is not really aware of what is happening in the world of youth.

But my heart also leaps for joy because of all those who are being plucked out of Satan's grip! Jesus is not only saving souls - he is saving bodies! Young bodies once self-condemned to suicide and death are now completely healed and turned around.

They come forward, boldly. they follow us backstage to the "miracle afterglow" service - and we share with them the simple steps on how to touch Jesus with childlike faith. To see their troubled frowns turn into smiles of victory and inner peace is worth the whole world to me. What a joy to have them stand up and tell everybody, "Jesus lifted by burden. The thoughts of suicide are all gone! I will never allow self-pity to destroy me! I'm free!"

Letters of thanksgiving come into our office daily. They are testimonies of miraculous changes in their lives. They tell about how Jesus took away their sense of failure - how He filled their lives with love - how new-found friends were discovered - how the Holy Spirit is helping them to graciously endure a hopeless home life - how Jesus gave them a renewed sense of self-importance - and how grateful they are that I obeyed God and preached a message on suicide that put the fear of the Lord into their hearts.

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