

## Suicide



David Wilkerson November 1, 1977

The Holy Spirit has been prompting me to speak out about suicide. At first, I rebelled against preaching about such a morbid subject, but there was no way I could shake off the urgency to warn young people about the horror of self-destruction. Consequently, for the past few weeks I have been preaching about suicide in all our city-wide crusades.

Now I know why God put this message on my heart! Last year this nation experienced a 200% increase in youth suicides. More than 38,000 teenagers killed themselves. Thousands more of young adults also committed suicide. It is fast becoming the most tragic youth problem in our country. What a terrible shame!

I have been shocked to tears each night that I have preached on suicide. Hundreds of young people come forward each night. And they are always honest in confessing their needs. I wanted to know why God prompted me to preach this message, so each night. I have been asking the question, "How many of you standing here have been thinking of taking your life?" In every service that I have asked this pointed question, at least 10% of them raised their hands. This means anywhere from 20 to 40 young people were flirting with suicide. Of that number, five to ten of them confessed they were planning to commit suicide within the day or week.

There is an Epidemic of Suicides

In my twenty years of preaching to troubled youth, I have never been as shaken and sorrowed as I have been in learning of all these mixed-up kids wanting to destroy themselves.

In Dallas, Texas, a few weeks ago, a bank president went out in his front yard to get the morning paper. He turned toward the house - and there on the upper back porch - he saw his son hanging by the neck. The boy was a drug addict who came to the conclusion suicide was the only way out.

I received a pitiful letter from a 15-year-old girl in Los Angeles. She wrote, "My boy friend dropped me for another girl. I really loved him. My heart is broken, and I'm so lonely. My parents laughed when I talked to them. They called it puppy love. They don't know it, but I'm going to kill myself. Unless you can help me, I'll end it all." signed, Janet.

I tried to call Janet, but couldn't reach her. I sent her a special delivery, airmail letter, urging her to call me collect the minute she received my letter. I assured her I had a solution, only "please don't take your life!" a week later I received the letter back, unopened. It must have been her parents who scribbled the note on the back side - "Please send no more mail - Janet is no longer with us. She took her life." I've never forgotten that and I never will. I was too late!

Jesus is Robbing the Devil's Grave

Two weeks ago a young man stood in the counseling room and wept through a confession. "I'm so glad I surrendered my life to Jesus tonight. I am a drug pusher and my guilt is destroying my mind. I planned to kill myself tonight. It seemed to be my only way out. But tonight when Mr. Wilkerson said people who commit suicide face the judgment of God, a fear came over me. Now I know why. Jesus is the only real way out."

His face was completely transformed. He cried and laughed and left the crusade a truly new-born person. The next

night, he came backstage with a duffel bag full of marijuana. We turned it over to the narcotics agents - it was over \$2,000 worth of pot that had been destined to be sold to teenagers in his school. What a beautiful miracle!

Last week, repentant teenagers stood up in the Afterglow service to confess their suicidal urges. One 15-year-old girl cried out, "My mother killed herself, and I couldn't forgive her. So I decided tonight was the night to get even with her by killing myself. I've lived with anger and hate every day since she died! But tonight Jesus took away all my hate. I will never kill myself now. Jesus has given me a new hope!"

Another teenager confessed, through her tears, "My drug addicted brother was murdered. I loved him so much. I got mad at God for allowing it to happen. Suicide was going to be my way of getting back at God for being a killer. But not anymore! Tonight when Mr. Wilkerson preached about suicide, I knew the message was meant just for me - to save my life. I forgive! Never again will I allow Satan to make suicide look attractive. It's all over! I am going with Jesus now!"

One teenage boy jumped up, pulled out a knife and cried out, "This is the knife! It was going to be tonight! My life is filled with fear and loneliness! I want to be saved and set free from these thoughts of suicide." I rushed a counselor over to him to grab the knife. He willingly gave it up and fell to his knees, limp and broken before the Lord. Three young people from his high school ran to his side and began to pray with him. Not only did that boy get a new lease on life, he left the crusade with three newly made friends to help overcome his loneliness. What is Causing This Wave of Suicides?

I find two major causes of suicide among the young people who come to us for help. One of the prime causes is the despair of enslavement to an addiction. Drug addicts, alcoholics and homosexuals are all candidates for suicide. Thousands of our precious young people are hooked by demonic habits that have ruined their lives. They look in the mirror each morning, horrified! They see the sunken eyes, the deep, dark rings under their eyes. The emaciated arms and legs. The hurt and sickness inside. Then they think of how they are destroying their parents. Most of them still love their parents, and they become overwhelmed with guilt and sorrow for all the torment and misery they have caused. Then, suicide seems to be the only escape left.

One young addict confessed, "Brother David, I've ruined my life. I was innocent and tender just a few years ago. I was that average, respectable teenager just a short time back. I got in with the wrong crowd, got hooked on drugs, and now look at me. My parents have lost respect for me. Mom looks at me now and just breaks out crying. I know I'm just like an animal now. I have no reason to live. I'm tired of hurting myself, and I'm sick of making my parents suffer so much. I know they die a little inside when they see how much I've changed. Maybe when they stand in front of my casket, they can forgive me and remember me the way I used to be.

So many times I have had parents in my office crying out their deep hurts caused by discovering their children were hooked or perverted. Recently a fine middle-aged Christian couple confessed, "Just this week our son told us he is a practicing homosexual. We tried to share our hurt with our daughter, and she dropped a second bombshell on us. She admitted she is a lesbian. We are so hurt, we don't know how to react. We are almost numb with anxiety. We don't even know how to talk to them now. Our only two children, and both are mixed up. We hear Anita Bryant talking about the dangers of homosexual teachers - and our children are going to teach. But we still love them! What do we do now?"

But when I questioned those two heartbroken parents further, I discovered that both the son and daughter also carried deep hurts. They hated what had happened to them. They especially hated bringing hurt and shame to their parents. I began to feel compassion not only for that father and mother but also for that poor son and daughter trapped in such a terrifying habit. These two kids are both on the brink of suicide. And, because those parents still love their kids, that just adds to the despair of that son and daughter.

The "hooked" teenager wants to kill himself (herself) to atone for his sin. He thinks, "I am a failure. I deserve to die!" It's a form of self-crucifixion. They want to go to their cross, like Jesus did, and pay for sin. They don't know Jesus already paid for it all.

Divorce and Broken Homes

The second major cause of teenage suicide is a broken home. Last year: one million new divorces - ten million kids victimized by broken homes. On the judgment day, I see a generation of lonely, mixed-up kids, rising to witness against parents who let them down.

The prophet Isaiah must have been thinking of our broken homes when he said,

"Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers." (Isaiah 14:21).

Splitting, breaking-up parents are provoking children to unbelievable anger. In Denton, Texas, sits a 14-year-old mute girl who refuses to talk or move. She was an outgoing, happy girl who idolized her parents. But one day dad just "walked out" and moved in with another woman. That very day, Margie crawled into a shell and has not spoken a word since. I can't reach her. Nobody can. She is like a vegetable. One day she may choose to end it all. That father will stand before God on the Judgment Day and answer for that ruined teenager's life!

Not all children of broken homes and divorce are mixed up and on the verge of suicide. But sometimes it doesn't show up until years later. In every service we now counsel with young married couples who fall into total despair - and trace it back to their teenage years. They felt rejected and cheated. They put up a good front to cover their hurt. But then one day, years later, the hurt and hate explodes all over the place. Their own marriages suffer. And all too often, they begin to flirt with suicide.

What Our Kids Have Not Been Told

I am shocked beyond words to discover that the majority of young people contemplating suicide have never been told the truth about what happens after death. Satan has lied to them. Death has been romanticized and distorted. Those young people who have been saved from attempted suicide admit they thought death was the end of everything! One boy said, "When you die, you just die. It's a world of peace and tranquility. It's the end of all your problems and troubles. No one can hurt you after you die."

That's why I am traveling this nation warning young people that suicide is not the end. God helping me, I am going to try to warn every young person possible that suicide is a ticket to hell! Everytime I hear of another teenager swallowing an overdose or pulling a trigger, I say to myself, "He could have never committed suicide if he had really known where he was headed. He did not know that death is just the beginning."

Precisely, this is what I want every teenager in the world to know. When a person takes his own life, he is guilty of five major sins - for which he must stand before God and answer. These sins are murder, stealing from God, fearfulness, unbelief and lawlessness. Just kill yourself, then float away on a cloud of rest and peace? Never! Here is what my Bible says about it:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

It is not a way out. No! It is instead a way into outer darkness. After death, the judgment! Every suicide victim goes straight to the judgment hall of Christ. Life is a gift! You can't play God and throw that gift back in His face. He alone holds the keys to life and death - only God can decide when to use them.

You have no legal or moral right to defile your body. It really doesn't belong to you at all. Jesus bought and paid for it - and suicide is stealing from God! And God will never let that go unpunished. The Bible says,

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

If you are ready to face the Judgment Day as a thief - if you are ready to face an eternity isolated from God in an outer darkness - if you are ready to sell your body for nothing to the devil - then go ahead! Take your life! Play God! Give in to your guilt and self-pity! But you were warned! Just keep this in mind - you don't know what trouble and sorrow are until you stand before God as a thief! In dying, your troubles will just begin. You will go from hopelessness - to terror and judgment!

A message of fear? You better believe it is! Yes, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wise up, teenager! Get rid of every single thought of suicide. Now!

God's way out is through simple, childlike faith. Trust Him! He can lift your dark clouds and dispel all the gloom. Trust Him to give you a miracle - to make all things turn out for good! Trust Him as a friend that sticks closer than anyone else on earth! Trust Him to keep your mind clear, stable and well-balanced. He has promised to do all this

and more for all who simply trust Him like a little child.

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard. Thank God, we are going to see the Holy Spirit rescue thousands of mixed-up teenagers from the clutches of suicide and death! We are seeing God's power do it every single night! Thank God that the gates of hell will never prevail against the truth!

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

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