

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

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The Great Falling Away of the Church **01** Pastor Tim Dilena

At times, it can seem that all of hell is standing in direct opposition to a message that God wants delivered to His people. Though it may make me uncomfortable to share it, and it may make you uncomfortable to read it, I must be obedient and share it. I believe the Holy Spirit is giving a strong warning that the great falling away of the church is here!

Leonard Ravenhill in his book *Sodom Had No Bible* says, "When we get humble enough, low enough, desperate enough, hungry enough, concerned enough, passionate enough, broken enough, clean enough, prayerful enough, then God will send revival from heaven. God will pour out His Holy Spirit."

We need a revival. We need God to bring us to our knees again.

Ten years ago, a Christian research group conducted a poll that showed 59% of young adults with a Christian background would drop out of church in their twenties. At that time, the church was alarmed, and as such, it adjusted, but it never repented. The adjustment was to "get younger," yet as of the latest poll, the number of young adult dropouts in the United States has increased to 65%. Something has gone wrong, and we cannot be content with just admitting that. We have to look at what is wrong.

Ravenhill also said, "Christianity today is so subnormal that if any Christian began to act like a normal New Testament Christian, they'd be considered abnormal today."

We need to return to what the early New Testament church looked like. We must be equipped with the Holy Spirit if we want to witness the power of God in our lives—and in the church. We don't need monster trucks, barbecues, tea parties, or trampolines. We need the presence of God, not to the prodigal pigpen with Christian songs being sung in the mud.

“ The prodigal came home. He didn't go to a different pigpen. ”

The prodigal came home. He didn't go to a different pigpen. For some, entertainment is the substitute for the joy of the Lord. But when the Holy Spirit fills a place, joy fills people's hearts. You don't have to have a circus. The Holy Spirit is enough.

During a recent testimony service, a young man shared that he grew up in the church but then walked away. He said that when he returned to church, he wasn't looking for a church that agreed with his lifestyle. He was looking for the presence of God, not another pigpen.

In the 1990s, David Wilkerson said that based on the Book of Ezekiel there would be two types of leaders or priesthoods that would rise up. I now understand that the two priesthoods would be two churches. One church will accept the profane and the other will go after what is pure and holy.

"And you have not kept charge of My holy things yourselves, but you have set foreigners to keep charge of My sanctuary. Thus says the Lord God, 'No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel shall enter my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel'" (Ezekiel 44:8–12a, NASB).

Of note is the fact that it was the priests who were far from God when Israel went astray. They sought after idols, and in verses 12b–14 (NASB), God declares the consequences of their falling away:



"Therefore I have sworn against them," declares the Lord God, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service and of all that shall be done in it."

God is saying that these are leaders who are walking in disobedience and with idols in their hearts but are not removed from leadership. It's what we're seeing happen all over our country

As it says in Jeremiah 5:30 (NASB) "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets are prophesying falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?"

God has given us leaders after our own hearts when our hearts are not right.

When God begins to expose the distinction between the two priesthoods—the two churches, it will be evident because the preachers will realize that they're at the pulpit to minister to the Lord. The preaching, the singing, the worship, the lifting of our hands will all be done for the sole purpose of ministering onto Him.

That's what God has called us to do, and anytime we find ourselves playing to the crowd, we've messed up, we've stepped into a different priesthood at that moment. There are some pastors who stand in the pulpit promoting their drink of choice, showing off their cigar-smoking parties, laughing at each other's profanity-laced jokes and gestures. They have made no distinction between the holy and the profane.

A Chinese pastor was asked for his opinion of American Christianity

having been given a tour of megachurches in the U.S. he replied, "I'm amazed at how much the church in America can accomplish without the Holy Spirit."

There is a great falling away of the church and 1 Timothy 4:1 (NASB) shows us how it is happening: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

The falling away happens when there is teaching with no discernment between the holy and the profane in the houses of God. Deception is evident when it is considered entertainment at a Christian men's event, where a man takes his shirt off and dances on a pole thinking that thousands of men need that to face what we're getting ready to face.

The caption of a recent article in one of our local newspapers read, "Piety and profanity ... the raunchy Christians are here."

This is how the world views us. The profane has replaced what is holy, for the sake of entertainment. The doctrine of demons removes the boundaries of right and wrong and seems to say that there's nothing wrong, and everything is right. We have pastors that are afraid to stand for what's biblically true. The deception has come!

Deception finds its way into the house of God through a bitter spirit. Some people will get hurt by the church and hurt, undealt with, will turn into bitterness. Bitterness then opens the door to deception. Bitterness opens the door to demonic activity and the scripture shows it.

Ephesians 4:26 (NASB) states, "Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."

That's what happens when you don't clear your heart. When you allow something to live, a toxic heart begins to form. Bitterness of the heart opens the door for demonic activity.

The psalmist says, "Be acceptable."

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer" Psalm 19:14 (NASB).

God wants us to have a warning system for when we go astray with rogue, evil, or lustful thoughts. He wants us to arrest them while it is still a meditation—before it becomes a manifestation. If bitterness is the thing that brings deception, then we've allowed the enemy to infiltrate our hearts.

I've been in ministry for 42 years. I know that I've hurt people, and I have been hurt by people. I find healing by making a list of the people and things that have caused bitterness, and I pray for the blessing of God upon them, every night. Sometimes when hurt comes, we may feel overlooked, but God is scouring our souls for every form of bitterness.

I want the truth. I want the Holy Spirit. I want all that God has. I pray that this ministry will be as a pulpit of the righteous priesthood that says—before anyone sings, before I preach, before the band plays—that we've come to minister to the Lord. We're not interested in a show. We want God to rend the heavens and come down and pour out His Holy Spirit. That's all we're interested in.

So often we ask, “Why me?” when we face problems and challenges. But how often do we ask that question when something miraculous happens to us?

At the end of November 2023, I had my annual physical, during which my physician pointed out several places on the EKG that indicated definite blockages in my heart. He told me to leave his office and go straight to a nearby imaging facility to schedule a CT angiogram. Right away!

The CT angiogram showed that I had many moderate to severe blockages in several arteries. When my physician received the report, he told me that a stent would not suffice and I would need quintuple bypass surgery. He prescribed several medications for me to start immediately.

Before my appointment with the cardiologist, Pastor Tim asked if I would like the pastors and elders to pray over me.

I gratefully answered, “Yes!”

While on the stage, surrounded by the pastors and elders, Pastor Tim laid his hands on my shoulders to pray. At that moment, I felt a rush of heat go through the upper part of my body! I have never felt anything like that before in my life. I was very hesitant to tell anyone about the experience because I didn’t want it to sound sensational, but at that moment I knew something powerful had happened.

At the appointment with the cardiologist, the doctor explained to my wife and me that a cardiac catheterization was necessary to see the extent of the blockages. He needed to see if stenting was even a possibility to rectify some of them, but if not, they would have to schedule me for bypass surgery.

My procedure was the first scheduled for the day. Before I was prepped, the doctor reiterated what would happen. He said if there was anything else that could be done, he would do it, but I should be prepared to have open-heart surgery.

As the procedure was about to begin, I asked if everyone involved was in the room and if I could pray before they started, which I did. The next thing I remember is the cardiologist leaning over me at the end of the procedure.

“Steve, we are done here!” he said.

In my confused state, I wanted him to repeat himself.

He said again, “We are done here! If I wanted to give you one stent, I couldn’t, because your arteries are all clear. This is the best possible outcome we could have hoped for.”

Three different doctors, using three different machines in three different facilities, pointed to the same conclusion. There was no mix-up, no faulty equipment—this was a miracle! A documented, genuine miracle had occurred. The timing was amazing too! TSC had scheduled the three days of prayer and fasting months in advance. The confirmation of my miracle came two weeks to the day before we were scheduled to pray for healing.

Lastly, the following is a letter from my cardiologist that I picked up from his office shortly before coming to share my testimony on the Monday night of the three days of fasting and prayer:

“Steve Barrett is a patient who recently had a CT angiogram demonstrating multiple obstructive lesions throughout his coronary arteries. He was placed on preventative medications and referred to Cardiology for Cardiac Catheterization and possible intervention (PCI or CABG). He sought spiritual support from his pastor prior to undergoing his procedure and was found to have no blockages or lesions in any arteries at the time of the catheterization.

“To the best of my professional knowledge and 29 years of practice experience, there is no scientific explanation that substantiates how a patient with multiple obstructive lesions in all coronary arteries suddenly has them disappear in a matter of weeks. No treatment known to science will result in this phenomenon.”

I have no words!

I have no answer to, “Why me?” I can attest to God’s healing power. I know that what happened to me was a miracle—the first of many to come for the Glory of God—not just for me, but for all who will put their trust in Him!



Summit's Gap Year Program Expanding Fall 2024!



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