

# How to Awaken a Dead And Unregenerate Church

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*Steve Lawson encourages pastors to preach from the book of 1 John in order to awaken a dead church.*

I was asked at my table what would I preach to bring church members to Christ. And I said the last thing I would preach would be John 3:16. That just lulls everyone in the building to sleep. I would preach the Lordship of Christ, I would preach repentance, I would preach the new birth, I would preach the necessary evidence of the new birth, I would preach the sovereignty of God in salvation to the extent that I could push that. I would do everything that I could to blow a trumpet in Zion and to awaken those that are asleep.

And when I was at my previous church, it was not a county church but it was a long standing church, 100 years old; when I preached 1 John and the necessary evidences of the new birth it rocked the planet – for good and for worse. And if you do not see this evidence in your life, you are not saved, you are self deceived, you have never been born again. And I mean across the board, it's not 3 out of these 9 tests. It's not a multiple choice. All 9 of these will be evident and present in your life if you are born of God, if you know God, and if not, you're going to hell. And I remember one year we had 100 adult conversions. That's a lot of adult conversions. That's a lot of people 60 years old, years old, being saved. I had one deacon saved in the deacon's meeting. I just happened to be sitting next to him and he said, "If this is what it is to be a Christian, then I've never been a Christian."

Well, you just got to peel back all of the veneers and layers of religiosity and churchianity to get down to the live nerve of what it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And there is a necessary evidence of the new birth and that's why 1 John is written. That you may know that you have eternal life and there is something worse than not having the assurance of your salvation. What's worse is to have a false assurance of no salvation. And so you just have to shake people loose from their dead testimony, from their dead religion and you just have to be relentless with it. You have to paint things black and white. And people like that usually don't walk the aisle at the end of the service.

I mean Spurgeon said the wounded deer wants to withdraw to the thickets and lick its wounds in private, rather than be paraded forward in front of a TV camera. And so there was week, after week, after week, just nonstop – that knock on my office door – when the service is over. "Can I talk to you?" And my office became like the birthing room at the hospital. And I would just say have a seat and the cushion is still creased from the last person that sat there, the box of Kleenex right there and people just under a sense of desperation and that's the way it was in Acts 2. They interrupted Peter's sermon and the sinners gave the invitation. "What must

we do to be saved?" There was a sense of desperation. So you know, there is a certain kind of preaching, and there are certain subject matters that are like well chosen arrows for the bow that find their target.