

The Parable Of The Church That Died

There was a man who had a new house, two cars, and a bright, shiny boat filled his garage. A color television gleamed in his den. His family was well-dressed and healthy. His custom -- when he was in town, when the fish were not biting, when he was not on the beach, when he had no guests, when he could get up on time, when he was not too tired, or when he had nothing else to do -- was to go to church services. When he went, he spent his time deploring the decaying state of the church: Bible class attendance was low, the congregation was small, the singing was not very good, the contribution was poor, and the preacher was discouraged. "They ought to do better," he said. "What do they think the gospel is all about, anyway?"

Many vacations came and went. According to the way of the world, this man's children grew up. They never obeyed the the gospel. The reason, their father said, was that those people down at the church had not kindled his children's interest in religion. The man's health failed. One day he noticed that the people at the congregation no longer came by. He was in the hospital and they did not visit him. He was mad! Being a good-hearted man, he forgave them and went to services once more. However, when he arrived at the building, it had been replaced by a corner grocery store. "Where is the church that used to meet here?" he demanded. "Oh," somebody said, "that church closed its doors several years ago." "Oh," he cried, "they should have never let it die!"

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