

## **Killing Ourselves in Jesus' Name**

By Habitual Sabbath-Breaking Pastor Scott Thomas

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I am driven. As far back as I can remember I wanted to excel, to accomplish, to produce and to be successful. As a teenage kid in my backyard, I shot basketballs strategically, religiously and sacrificially until 11:00 pm most nights. I dreamed of playing college basketball because my only perceived avenue to get to college was a sports scholarship. I played college basketball on that scholarship, and with my degree and sports accolades in hand I set out to succeed as a pastor.

As a driven pastor, working seventy hours a week was common. Days off were notional. I felt justified to work non-stop because the need was great and I sadistically took on nearly dead ministries that demanded ICU-like care around the clock. As each church began thriving, I looked for another game to conquer and I moved my family to the next team. My perception of achieving success drove me to "steward" my gifts for even greater good – *more* success.

### **I have been killing myself in Jesus' name for years.**

It became clear that I had an idol of success as I was backstage preparing to preach at an Acts 29 church. I was praying for the 800-or-so mostly college-age people in the room and God said to me in that still, small (pesky) inner voice, "*What about **your** sin?*" I was convicted of my sin of success. That I trusted in my abilities as a functional savior. I know that Jesus is our source and fountain of all joy. Yet, in reality I found joy in achieving my definition of success. Sick.

I am honored to serve as a pastor at Mars Hill Church. I get to direct the Acts 29 Network. I get to interact with big-name pastors and with wide-eyed, passionate young church planters. I get to travel the world (London, NYC, Hawaii, Scotland and even Texas). My job is a sandbox in God's Kingdom. But as long as I am killing myself, the dust of my overworking toy truck clouds God's glory.

### **A Repentant Prayer of a Sinner**

*From this day forward, Jesus, I relinquish control. I will rest in You and in Your will to build Your Kingdom. I will enjoy every aspect of the journey on which You are taking me. I will worship You and glorify You by taking a Sabbath (including not worrying if You need my help on my day off). I do not have to prove my worth to You, others or, the most annoying, myself. I am declared righteous by the unmerited gift of Jesus. I am loved by You in spite of my ongoing sins. Rather than killing myself in Your name, lead me to turn and see God's glory in You—especially when the demands of ministry come like an avalanche toward me.*

**"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."**

**– 2 Corinthians 4:4-6**