

Axe-Wielding Burglar Attacks Pastor on Thanksgiving

Attacks and break-ins at churches across the United States have surged in recent years, reflecting a troubling trend of hostility toward Christian institutions. Vandalism, theft and violent incidents have risen sharply, often driven by spiritual forces and diminishing respect for houses of worship. In early 2023, nearly 70 incidents were reported in just three months, underscoring the vulnerability of these sacred spaces and the challenges faced by communities trying to protect them.

This growing trend culminated in a dangerous encounter on Thanksgiving morning when an axe-wielding burglar attempted to break into the First Family Church in Antioch, California.

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Pastor Nick Neves responded to the church's alarm system and encountered the suspect smashing windows with an axe. Using his martial arts training, Neves subdued the intruder in a physical altercation in the parking lot, ensuring the safety of the property until police arrived, as reported by News Nation and The Christian Post.

"I shouted at him to stop, and that police were on their way, and he ran and I grabbed a hold of him, and we ended up wrestling in the parking lot of the church," Neves recalled, according to NBC News.

"I was able to pin him to the ground, and he got up and tried to get away several times, but basically just trying to wear him out because I knew I could outlast him. It was very helpful to be able to grapple with this gentleman without having to do much harm to him," he added.

The Antioch Police Department backed up Neves' account of the matter, and lauded his handling of the situation on Facebook:

BUT THE RIGHTEOUS ARE AS BOLD AS A LION.

When the pastor at First Family Church on Contra Loma responded to check an alarm in the early hours of Thanksgiving he was not expecting to confront a burglar, but that's what happened. When the burglar saw his wicked deeds had been discovered he decided to fight with the pastor instead of repent. What he did not know was the pastor would win this battle of good and evil and he held down the perp until APD arrived and placed the man in custody. We are thankful today that the pastor was uninjured during this incident and hopeful that with amazing community members like we have been highlighting lately, we can turn the tide on crime in our city. (The axe in the photo was used to break a window on the church which is how the burglar entered.)

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It is commendable that Pastor Neves had the skills and courage to defend himself and his church against the axe-wielding intruder. However, as Christians, we must also remember that Scripture warns us about the inevitability of persecution. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. 5:10). When faced with trials or attacks, as believers, we are called to respond with faith, perseverance and love, trusting that God is our ultimate defender. While practical preparedness is extremely valuable in this day and age, our greatest strength lies in our unwavering commitment to Christ, even in the face of opposition.

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