

How God Protected This Megachurch From Armed Gunman

A Tennessee church is counting its blessings after a gunman walked into its sanctuary with several guns on Easter morning.

Police say, Marcus Donald, 31, arrived at Bellevue Baptist Church around the time of the 11 a.m. service with an estimated 4,500 people inside the church.

A church usher saw the man who was carrying several guns and alerted the church's security team. Security then contacted the Memphis Police Department.

In 2014, *CBN News* highlighted Bellevue Baptist, one of the largest churches in Memphis, for a story about church security.

Andy Willis, who heads up security at the church, has the monumental job of keeping this large congregation safe.

"Today, churches that speak the truth, that teach and preach true biblical principles, they draw a lot of attention because there are a lot of components of society today that don't want to hear that," Willis told *CBN News*.

Willis said the church relies on state-of-the-art cameras.

"A camera system that constantly monitors and records activities on campus is extremely important," he explained.

"They are not very expensive, and the thing that you get is the protection in a liability situation that you won't have if you don't have it."

Police said Donald told them that "people in society are a threat to him and that he must be vigilant."

He was arrested without incident, and police are continuing their investigation into the incident.

In a statement, the church said, "A heavily armed man entered our building today about 11 a.m. He was stopped by our security people before he could enter the sanctuary, and was subsequently arrested by Memphis Police. We are thankful for the diligence of our security people and the Memphis Police Department."

On Twitter church leaders said, "Today an armed man came to Bellevue's property. Memphis Police arrested the suspect. Nobody was injured. Praise the Lord for His protection!"

Willis said Christians need to trust God, but be prepared.

"The biggest thing that makes me cringe when I talk to other churches about security is they will say, 'We don't have security; we're just praying that nothing happens,'" Willis told *CBN News*.

He went on to say that trusting God must be paired with understanding we have a part to play in our safety as well.