

Title: Superman is Dead

Text: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” – Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

Preacher: Robert L. Toney

Introduction (The Trouble in the Text and the World)

Superman is dead.

I said... *Superman is dead*.

Now I know that’s a hard word for some of us. Some of us grew up watching him leap tall buildings in a single bound, stop trains with one hand, and save the world before dinner.

But let me say it again, in case someone didn’t hear me in the back: **Superman is dead.**

And I ain’t talking about the movie version.

I’m talking about the *myth* we’ve believed.

The *burden* we’ve carried.

The *lie* that ministry means martyrdom.

Brothers—I’m talking to the men out there. The pastors. The lay leaders. The faithful servants between 30 and 50 who are running on fumes trying to save the church, save the community, save the marriage, save the budget, save the dream, and still look good doing it.

But Superman... is... dead.

Point One: The Myth of the Hero

Superman, Batman, the Hulk—all fiction.

There is, was, and will only ever be one Savior: **Jesus Christ.**

Now Jesus was heroic, yes.

But he didn’t try to do it all alone.

He had disciples.

He had support.

He had a rhythm of retreat and return.

Jesus didn’t die from burnout—he died for *purpose*.

But some of us are dying from something else.

Trying to be everything to everyone.
Trying to carry the cross and everybody else's too.
Trying to smile through the stress.
Trying to lead without grieving, serve without healing, preach without rest.
And I've got to ask: **Why?**

Point Two: The Cry We Don't Speak

I know the pressure. I've lived the pressure.

I've worked with brothers—Black, white, queer, straight—tired and disoriented.
I've stood at caskets too soon—men taken by heart attacks, depression, and despair.
I've seen the bottle drain the pulpit.
I've seen men burn out trying to do what only God can do.

And all the while, we're quiet.
Because who can we tell?

If we cry out, will we sound weak?
If we say, "I can't," will they take the mic from our hand?
If we say, "I'm tired," will they say, "Then maybe you're not called"?

We hear the women finding power in Womanist theology—and thank God for it.
But where is the space for men to confess their *limits*?

Where is our *barbershop theology*?
Where is our *sacred brotherhood*?

We were taught to be strong, but not how to be whole.
We were told to lead, but not how to lean.
We were taught to protect, but not how to heal.

And so... we fake it.
We isolate.
We gossip.
We check out.
We escape.

But the people still call us "Pastor."
And the pain doesn't go away.

Point Three: The Power of a New Vision

But I believe there's another way.

I believe Jesus shows us a ministry that doesn't kill you to save others.

A ministry built on **communion, not isolation**.

A rhythm of **rest and renewal**, not just relentless motion.

A call to **be human first**, and let God be God.

Brothers, we need *each other*.

We need to build circles of care, not pedestals of perfection.

We need listening spaces. Resting places. Retreats with no performance—just presence.

I dream of:

- **Awareness** of where we really are.
- **Safe spaces** to explore our gifts and our gaps.
- **Sacred tools** to help us minister without losing ourselves.

We've got to stop pretending.

Superman is dead.

But Jesus lives.

And in Jesus, there is *rest for the weary, grace for the broken, and life for the dying*.

Celebration and Close (Whooping Cadence)

You don't have to be Superman!

Because Jesus already did what no man could do!

You don't have to be the hero!

Because Jesus is the Healer!

You don't have to carry it all!

Because Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light!"

You can lay it down!

You can rest!

You can heal!

Because the cross has already been carried!
Because the tomb has already been emptied!
Because the victory has already been won!

And I came by to tell somebody...

Superman is dead.

But the *Savior* lives!

And if the Savior lives—then you can too!

Amen.