

# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 1:

## WHY WE NEED REVIVAL

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Psalm 85:1-13 (NASB)

○ Lord, You showed favor to Your land;  
You restored the captivity of Jacob.  
<sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of Your people;  
You covered all their sin. Selah.  
<sup>3</sup> You withdrew all Your fury;  
You turned away from Your burning anger.  
<sup>4</sup> Restore us, ○ God of our salvation,  
And cause Your indignation toward us to cease.  
<sup>5</sup> Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?  
<sup>6</sup> Will You not Yourself revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You?  
<sup>7</sup> Show us Your lovingkindness, ○ Lord,  
And grant us Your salvation.  
<sup>8</sup> I will hear what God the Lord will say;  
For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones;  
But let them not turn back to folly.  
<sup>9</sup> Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,  
That glory may dwell in our land.  
<sup>10</sup> Lovingkindness and truth have met together;  
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.  
<sup>11</sup> Truth springs from the earth,  
And righteousness looks down from heaven.  
<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the Lord will give what is good,  
And our land will yield its produce.  
<sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before Him  
And will make His footsteps into a way.

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message in the series *Revive Us Again* is to learn how to recognize and address the root of the problem that leads to spiritual decline, in order that we as believers might truly experience revival—which is the restoration of spiritual life of God’s people.

**INTRODUCTION:** Too often Christians want to enjoy the blessings of God’s favor, while overlooking or choosing not to deal with the root problem that is keeping God’s blessings from flowing into their lives.

But ignoring the real issue is like taking painkillers when you have an infected tooth—a situation I faced on vacation one time when my wife and I were on a cruise together. I was planning on having a great time, but then I started to experience severe pain in my tooth just as we got settled onboard the ship.

I tried to ignore the pain for a couple days, but it kept getting worse. I finally went to the clinic on the ship, and they gave me pain medications. But they didn’t work, and the pain just increased each day. So I called my dentist and described my symptoms to him. He told me that he believed the problem was not just a toothache, but an infection. He also told me that since I was treating the wrong problem, dealing only with the pain, I wasn’t going to get any better until I got some antibiotics to treat the infection. I followed his advice, and began to feel better.

My situation illustrates how easy it is for us as Christians to do the same thing spiritually. We know there’s a problem because we feel the pain inside, but we only treat the symptoms and leave the real problem unresolved. We want to go to church and pop a few “sermon” or “music” pills and leave feeling all better. These things certainly have their place, but if our real need is for a revival from the Lord, then relying on other things to cure our spiritual pains and defeats will never work. We can’t fix this revival need with more good deeds or good church programs.

No, true revival has to be an inner work of the Lord and no one else. We can see that our society is in a state of spiritual decline, but what about the decline in spirituality among followers of Christ? We need to return to the Lord before we can ever hope to effect real change in society. In Psalm 85, the psalmist describes the problem and what it means to return to the Lord, who is faithful to draw us back to Himself. Nothing can replace a reviving and life-refreshing touch of the Lord. Let us proclaim with this psalm, “○ Lord, revive us again.”

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### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. REVIVAL PRESUPPOSES SPIRITUAL DECLINE:

A spiritual decline necessitates revival

- Christians are divorcing at about the same rate as unbelievers (almost 50%)
- There is much pain and abuse even within churches
- Too many churches display a spirit of lifelessness and decline
- There is an obvious need for a return to the Lord (Psalm 85:8)

Treating symptoms is not enough

- "Popping pills" is a short-term solution to a long-term problem
- The root is changed when the daily life of a believer is changed

Revival motivates us to serve the Lord

- Christians must start relating and thinking better
- There is a difference between church programs and true spiritual revival

#### 2. REVIVAL IS THE RESTORATION OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE:

God's people must be reconnected to Him

- Connections can be lost over time and without care
- Revival is the giving back of the life lost (Psalm 85:6)

God's people are the main recipients of revival

- God must bring revival to His people before it can spread to others
- Misunderstanding revival is a very easy thing to do for a Christian

#### 3. REVIVAL IS NOT MERELY REFORMATION:

More than an external change is required

- Politics show us that a reformation won't always change the situation
- Reformation is concerned mostly with outside change

More than religious activity is required

- Going through the motions is missing the point of revival
- Rituals and routines often overshadow the reason behind what we do on a regular basis

#### 4. THE ROOT PROBLEM IS DEALING WITH GOD'S DEMAND FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS:

God is a God of love and also righteousness

- The need for revival always springs from some sort of idolatry
- Revival is needed because the true God has been replaced with a false god
- Our actions will prove our thoughts and allegiances

God's divine demands must be dealt with

- God's wrath against sin is an area of the Christian life that is often overlooked because it can be uncomfortable
- We have a need to be "taken back" to where we should be in our salvation and walk with God

We need to know where we stand with God

- Being on the wrong side or the right side of God makes all the difference
- We all need a rescuing and a deliverance from our sins

#### 5. WE NEED TO BE DELIVERED:

God has told us of His wrath that we need deliverance from

- His wrath is a built-in holy wrath, not a reactionary wrath (Psalm 85:4-5; Romans 1:18)
- We often know when we have displeased or disobeyed Him

The New Testament shows us the covenant of grace

- The covenant of grace is why we don't see God's wrath unleashed among us
- God speaks grace and peace to His people

#### 6. GOD IS PRESENT WHEN MERCY MEETS TRUTH:

God brings together truth and His mercy

- He brings together things that were separate beforehand (Psalm 85:10)

- This occurs when we reconnect with God

Blessings require the very presence of God

- The fruit of a changed life will only come when God is a part of the mix (Psalm 85:11-12)
- God wants to move us closer to Himself

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### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

#### DEFINITION OF REVIVAL:

If someone faints, we give them water, or something to bring them back or revive them. We've all heard of celebrities and athletes who have come back and achieved success, or revived their careers. In many of these cases, the person seemed to be in decline, but their prominence was revived. A revival is new life; this is the very definition and example of revival—new life.

#### REFORMATION VS. REVIVAL:

Reformation is a change mostly on the outside. Reformation changes your looks, just as some new clothes can change your appearance. If you go shopping at the right place, you can change your appearance; have a reformation. That doesn't mean you've changed who you are, however. It just means that you have changed how you look. A new hairstyle or even new contact lenses or glasses can be a reformation, but that's not a revival because revival comes from within.

#### BEING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF GOD:

When my wife and I left for vacation, we went east. We arrived in the dark because we were on the dark side. When we returned from vacation, we arrived in the light of daytime because we were on the light side. You know why we stayed in the light? We were coming home where we belonged. It's all about which side you're on, and that is especially true when it comes to God. The issue of His divine fury and His divine love must be addressed.

### BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

#### BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY:

(Psalm 85:1) As we read in the book of Daniel, this was a time of 70 years when God's people lived in a miserable and sinful place called Babylon as a result of their continual idolatry. They were taken captive by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar because they were sinful and disobedient to the Lord. Their idolatry ranked highly amongst their many sins. God appointed a set amount of time for their captivity and restored them to their land after that time and their crying out to Him. He entered the situation after 70 years, not only fulfilling prophecy, but also changing their situation according to His promises to His people.

### GOD'S WRATH:

(Psalm 85:3) Paul tells us in Romans 1:16-18 about the wrath of God and what that means to us today. God's wrath is a built-in and automatic response that comes from His perfect and righteous standing. It is not a wrath borne out of reactions or violence. Paul further sheds light on Psalm 85 by talking about the power and glory of God, along with His divine wrath. God's wrath has been revealed to us from heaven and is against all who are ungodly and seek to suppress the truth of the Lord. The New Testament tells us that the final wrath of God is coming against all evil, but the righteous will not be subject to it.

### SERMON LINES:

This sermon will help you show how virtually every revival recorded in Scripture was introduced with a crisis on the part of God's people that drove them back to Him.

This sermon will help you explain and illustrate the crucial difference between reformation and true revival; between simply adding more programs or special services to the church calendar and coming to grips with the issue of sin and lack of life among us as Christians.

### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"Revival is almost always focused on God's people, not to the world at large."

"We welcome the side of God that we are comfortable with, His grace. We don't want to talk about the side of God we are uncomfortable with, His wrath."

"Some of us need to say 'Revive us again' because we remember a time when we were in love with the Lord."

"The reason we are in this perpetual mode of defeat is the absence of spiritual vitality."

"One of the beautiful things about the New Testament is that because of God's covenant of grace, you don't see fire falling down from heaven."

"Draw a circle around yourself and say 'God, start revival here; revive me again.'"



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MESSAGE 2:

## NOW IS THE TIME FOR REVIVAL

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Haggai 1:2-11 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt."' "<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup> "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways! <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." <sup>7</sup> Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways! <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> "You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the Lord of hosts, "Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *Now Is the Time for Revival* is to learn how to recognize God's warnings in our lives and to return our hearts and lives to our first love for the Lord, where we will be completely satisfied in Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** This message concerns something that, although often ignored, is very important to our walk with the Lord. There are times in our lives that God gives us warnings and tries to speak to us through life circumstances, but we don't hear Him or listen to His warning.

We are familiar with the function of an alarm clock or a siren. They serve to get our attention and make us aware of something that needs our attention. God did this in Scripture many times when He spoke messages through the prophets of the Old Testament. Like a loud and intrusive noise, their message was not always expected or readily accepted, but it was necessary for the people.

Although a "minor prophet," Haggai sounded the warning to the Jews who had come back home to Israel after being in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. The problem was not that they were back, but that their priorities and lives reflected selfishness, not godliness. Haggai sounded the alarm to wake everyone up spiritually and point to lessons learned in the past. The people had been back from captivity for 15 years, yet the rebuilding of God's temple had been neglected, delayed, and, eventually, ignored.

Haggai pinpointed the problem in verse 2: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt."' "<sup>4</sup> The temple had been destroyed when the Babylonians came many years earlier to take them into captivity. But when asked why they had not rebuilt, these Israelites who had come back to the land said, "We don't have time to rebuild the temple." One of the reasons that they didn't have time, or said they didn't have time, was because of opposition, as recorded in Ezra 4:1-5; 5:1-17.

But the main problem was that the people of Israel were satisfied without the temple because they were still carrying on with their religion. They were content to have God "in the vicinity" of their lives; they felt they didn't need Him "in the midst" of their lives, which is what the temple represented.

But there is a clear difference between a life that reflects true worship of God and one that just acknowledges God on the edge of life. Sometimes people need a stark reminder and an alarm to be rung before they realize their sinfulness. This problem was not unique to the time of the prophets; it is a problem still plaguing Christians even today.

We all recognize the need for a genuine revival, and we know that the alarm has been sounded. What do we need to do in order to right the ship? How do we get to the position of putting God first in our lives? The answer is simple—we need a revival that will shake our comfort and put us in a right relationship with the Lord.

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## SERMON POINTS:

### 1. DON'T BE SATISFIED HAVING GOD JUST IN THE VICINITY:

There is a difference between "God general" and "God specific"

- General means God is just there
- Specific means God is in your midst
- God is either on the outside or in the middle

There is a difference in knowing of God and experiencing God

- God is good to everybody
- God is good to you in specific ways
- You're either just acknowledging God or praising God

### 2. YOUR LIFE WILL INDICATE WHETHER YOU'VE RETURNED TO GOD:

Treat the problem, not just the symptom

- Israel's neglect of the temple was an indicator light saying something was wrong
- Don't just do part of the work

A full 180 degree turn may be necessary

- You must turn from your sin (Zechariah 1:4)
- You must also turn to the Lord (Zechariah 1:6; Luke 15:17)

### 3. THE PROBLEM IS OFTEN OUR PRIORITIES:

We make time for the things that matter most to us

- Schedules are shuffled for what we consider top priority (Haggai 1:3-4)
- Time is not often "taken" as much as "made"
- A turn to God begins to happen when our schedules change

### 4. YOU ARE RETURNING TO GOD WHEN HE TAKES TOP PRIORITY:

We don't reposition Him, we reposition ourselves

- God does not move or change who He is
- We must affix ourselves to Him as our steady point

The Bible speaks often of Him being first

- Give the first part of everything to God (Deuteronomy 26)
- Jesus Christ must have first place (Colossians 1:18; Matthew 6:33)
- He wants to be our first love (Revelation 2:1-4)
- He is to have our best, not just our leftovers

### 5. GOD DEMANDS OUR "FIRST FRUITS":

We often don't give to God our first fruits

- Most Christians give only a small percentage of what they should be giving
- God sees our lack of giving as selfishness and stealing (Malachi 3:8)

First fruits are more than money

- Energy and physical work are also fruits
- Focus and a clear mind are important fruits

### 6. WE MUST CONSIDER OUR WAYS:

We must think about what we're doing for the Lord

- We must consider what the Lord says before acting (Malachi 1:7)
- Our efforts are in vain if we don't obey the Lord

Our contentment can only be found in the Lord

- Paul agrees that the secret of contentment is the Lord (Philippians 4:11-12)
- Being constantly discontent is a sign of a needed heart change

## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

### SOUNDING THE ALARM:

I'm sure we all have alarm clocks sitting by our beds or on our phones that play a pivotal part of our daily routine. They are set the night before to alert us that it's time to wake up and start our day. They often go off during a very inconvenient time, but nonetheless they go off and stir us out of bed. We can try to ignore them, we can reset them, and even resist the call of the alarm, but they demand an immediate response.

### REFORMATION VS. REVIVAL:

Reformation is a change mostly on the outside. Reformation changes your looks, just as some new clothes can change your appearance. If you go shopping at the right place, you can change your appearance; have a reformation. That doesn't mean you've changed who you are, however. It just means that you have changed how you look. A new hairstyle or even new contact lenses or glasses can be a reformation, but that's not a revival because revival comes from within.

God had alarm clocks in the Bible called His prophets. Prophets were called in to wake the people up and alert them to something that God wanted them to hear. Just like our modern alarm clocks, the prophets were often unappreciated and

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people tried to ignore or even resist them. But God wanted His people to be roused out of their cozy situation so that He could accomplish something great with them.

### INDICATOR LIGHTS:

Our vehicles all have indicator lights, or “dummy lights.” These lights tell us that there is a bigger, deeper problem with our vehicle. The actual indicator light is not the problem, but it functions to tell us that something is not working properly. We can try to turn off the indicator light, but that doesn’t mean we’ve fixed the problem that can strand us. Many folk want to come to church knowing there is an indicator light problem, but they just want the warning light turned off for their convenience.

### MAKING TIME:

It’s amazing what happens to schedules during football season, especially here in the Dallas area. People always say they don’t have time to do this or that, but all of a sudden at three o’clock on Sunday afternoon, people have three or four hours to watch the Dallas Cowboys. They will even rearrange or push back their schedules to accommodate the game watching time.

### BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

#### THE TEMPLE:

The Old Testament temple was much more than just a building. It was the physical dwelling place of the glory of God, the representation of God among His people.

#### OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS:

(Books of Isaiah-Malachi) There are five “Major Prophets” in the Bible: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and twelve “Minor Prophets”: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The Major Prophets are considered so because they are longer and their implications are more worldwide in nature. The Minor Prophets are called so because their books are shorter and their implications are more localized in their sweep. But all of these books are important to read and are the inspired Word of God

#### BOOK OF DANIEL:

(Daniel 3) The familiar story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego takes place during this time of Babylonian and Persian captivity before the people of Israel return home. Daniel and his friends were carried off in this captivity to serve the Babylonian

King Nebuchadnezzar. God used them in mighty ways and gave them positions of leadership to display His might and power. This well-known story was perhaps the greatest display of God’s power over the power of the false gods and earthly kings.

#### PERSIAN EMPIRE:

(Haggai 1) Haggai prophesied during the Persian period of Jewish history. They started in Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, but the Babylonian kingdom was taken over by the kingdom of the Persians and Medes. King Cyrus of Persia took Babylon, and the Jews were shortly thereafter allowed to begin returning home. The biblical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Zechariah take place during this time period of about 200 years. Persian kings such as Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes played an important role as they allowed the Jews to return home to Jerusalem and God allowed favor to rest on His people, also fulfilling prophecy of their 70-year captivity followed by a return home.

#### SERMON LINES:

This sermon will help you learn how to bring God from the “vicinity” of your life into your midst, which is His manifest presence.

#### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

“Many of us came to church today with God in our general vicinity, but we’re going to go home and He’s still not in the midst. But there’s a big difference between general God and specific God.”

“A lot of folks come to church to fix the ‘indicator light’ in their lives that tells them something is wrong. They want to address the light, but not the problem the light is pointing to.”

“Once you put God first, once He becomes your priority, you not only turn from your sin, you are returning to your first love. You are putting God first and therefore calling God down in your midst. Our problem is we are satisfied with a leftover relationship with God.”

“There is no problem in being blessed, but there is a problem when you leave God out of the blessing.”

“If you’ve returned to the Lord, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all you can ask or think. If you’ve returned to the Lord, then He can sustain you during the rough times.”

**GO,** therefore



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## MESSAGE 3:

# SHAKING THINGS UP FOR REVIVAL

### **SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Haggai 2:5-7 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup> 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' <sup>6</sup> For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. <sup>7</sup> I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts.

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *Shaking Things Up for Revival* is to learn how to be prepared for the disruption that God brings in our lives, and to understand that even though God often shakes things up for us, He uses these troubles to produce great things in our lives.

**INTRODUCTION:** This message contains both bad and good news. Even the people of God sometimes focus too much on making sure things go smoothly and according to their plan and timetable. There's nothing wrong with having plans and schedules, but sometimes we need a disruption or even a trouble that forces us to focus on things we hadn't seen before.

We need these disruptions because God often shakes things up to bring about great change and even better results. We tend to panic and get frustrated when things get thrown out of whack, but it is in these times that God often is trying to tell us that He's about to do something big in our lives.

The prophet Haggai and the priest Zerubbabel, the leader of God's reorganization of His people, knew what the shake-up was all about. Once they changed their priorities and put the Lord first, things began to get stirred up. Even though this may have caused some uneasiness for the people, God's messengers knew that what they needed was on the other side of this God-driven upheaval.

Without God and His desire to grow us and be worshiped by us, things would just stay the same. Besides being really boring and having a lack of vision, we don't actually want things to stay the same forever. God's people need a fresh touch from the Lord, and we often need to have things readjusted so that He remains supreme in our lives and worship.

God may be a God who doesn't change, but His people should be ready for the change and shake-ups that He brings upon the earth. Being ready and obedient and faithful in the midst of changes show Him our true faith and bring us into a closeness with our Savior that we never even knew existed.

You can't draw closer to the Lord and move from where you are simply by staying in place. Let's be excited when God shakes up our lives and our schedules, because if we remain in Him throughout, great things are in front of us! For a true reviving work of the Spirit of God to take place, things have to be shaken first. We need to remember this and praise the Lord for His coming change.

### **SERMON POINTS:**

#### **1. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR US DESPITE THE TROUBLES:**

His Spirit always abides with us

- He never forgets us, even in the turmoil of life
- Being pulled closer to God means there will be some movement

God's shakings are intentional and purposeful

- A shaking from God is usually something unexpected that disrupts life
- We need shaking to bring us back to God and prioritize Him (Colossians 1:18)
- God will shake us when He is not our priority

#### **2. GOD OFTEN DOES THINGS WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE:**

Going to a new place requires experiencing new things

- When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, they saw new things (Exodus 14)
- Abraham saw new things when he was willing to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:1-24)

Even if the situations are scary and shaky, God is with His people

- Going into the unknown requires great faith in the Guide
- Though pain may be involved, it produces great things

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- Christ may well be changing the world now to prepare for His return

### 3. TUNE IN TO GOD WHEN THINGS START TO SHAKE:

When bad weather approaches, we listen to the weatherman

- Although the weather interrupts us, we pay attention to it
- When breaking news pops up, it's because there is something that needs to be said

This shaking up is not just in the Old Testament

- Many New Testament passages share a picture of shake-ups (Hebrews 12:18-24)
- We need to pay attention to both past and future shake-ups (Hebrews 12:27-28)
- God's kingdom will shake the kingdoms of this world

### 4. GOD ALLOWS US TO CONTINUE ON THE WRONG PATH UNTIL THE NEED FOR CHANGE IS OBVIOUS:

When we see need for change, He can do something new in us

- God often wants to manifest His presence in a new way
- Sometimes He simply wants us to have better spiritual health
- Just because things around us are shaking doesn't mean we need to shake

The world is insecure, but God's kingdom is secure

- Rahab was a biblical example of security amidst shakiness (Joshua 2)
- Change sometimes requires caving in our current world

### 5. BELIEVERS ARE PART OF AN UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM:

We see constant upheaval and distress around us

- Remaining calm and assured is difficult in this cut-throat, fast-paced world
- Even if things are difficult, we can always see God's blessings (Psalm 37:25)
- Christ wants us to see that He's God even when all hell breaks loose

Your priority of Christ (or lack thereof) is the deciding factor in your security

- He will shake things up to get your top priority back to Himself
- He will also shake things up when He's number 1 to show you even better things
- Nothing on the earth or above it or below it is beyond His shaking reach

### 6. GOD'S PERFECT TIMING IS IN CONTROL OF ALL SITUATIONS:

Timers let you know that something is ready

- Our lives are not on our own timers, they're on His timer
- If something is not ready for change, then changing it could be disastrous

Our timers are subject to our finite minds and abilities

- When God's timer is followed, we know He can see the whole process
- God's timing and our timing are not always the same (Isaiah 55:8-9)

### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

#### BIRTHING PAINS OF CHANGE:

Much like the birth process, the process of huge change is not always comfortable. It often involves pain and inconvenience. Labor pains are the mother's body and the baby saying that something new and wonderful is about to emerge—but the painful process must take place first. Sometimes when God changes things, the process is difficult and even painful, but we know the end result will be something new and beautiful.

#### MAKING US THINK OF SPIRITUAL THINGS:

Have you ever been shaken up by the death of a loved one? Often, when we attend a funeral for a loved one, we start to think of things a little differently. We reflect on things that are spiritual and eternal, and they seem much closer and more real all of a sudden. When death or some other disruption occurs, the temporal life and the eternal life collide and cause us to think of what really matters. Death often forces us to see the unseen. Even in the normal times of life, God does not want us to forget to look at things from the eternal perspective.

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## BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

### RETURN OF CHRIST:

(Revelation 19) There are a few hints of things that must change or come about before the rapture and before the return of Christ. Three of them are the return of the nation of Israel to its land, which happened in 1948 (Ezekiel, Isaiah, Amos, etc.); the coming together of Europe into one system (Daniel); and the rise of Babylon in modern day Iraq (Daniel and Revelation). When we see all of these happen, we know that the time may be drawing close for the rapture and return of Christ to establish His eternal kingdom.

### NEW TESTAMENT SHAKE-UP:

(Hebrews 12:18-24) The author of Hebrews tells us that we need to look back and remember God's workings and holiness, and that there will be more shaking in the completion of the new covenant. These verses describe the removal of the things that can be shaken, and the eternity of the things that cannot be shaken. It is intended for us to think of the Old Testament passage the author quotes, which is our main text in Haggai 2.

### RAHAB:

(Joshua 2) Rahab was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. She was neither a Jew nor a righteous woman, but her faith in the one true God earned much for her. Knowing that the God of the Israelites was the true God, she hid the spies who were scouting Jericho. Later in the story, as Joshua and the Israelites conquered Jericho (with the marching and horn-blowing), the wall crumbled, but not Rahab and her house. Even though her house was a part of the crumbled wall, her small part stayed intact because of her faithfulness. Rahab is a true story of faith and being on sure footing despite everything around her shaking and crumbling, which is why she is included in God's "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11.

### SERMON LINES:

This message will give you a solid biblical example of the good reasons behind God's often puzzling way of shaking things up for His people, shaking us to turn things around.

It will also reveal the truth that when God shakes things up in our lives, He wants to reveal what is often invisible to us in the normal routines of life.

### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"When God is getting ready to deliver something great, He creates labor pains—a shaky situation that forces us to deal with the new place He's taking us to."

"God does not want His people so attached to earth that they lose sight of heaven. He does not want us to be so attached to time that we lose sight of eternity."

"The great tragedy today is that God will shake stuff up and people don't know it's God who is shaking things up, so they don't make the connection to the purposes of God."

"There is no greater experience you can have with God than when everything around you is shaking, and you're unshakable."



**GO,** therefore



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 4:

## A CRISIS THAT CRIES FOR REVIVAL

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** 2 Chronicles 20:1-20 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup> Now it came about after this that the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Then some came and reported to Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, out of Aram and behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (that is Engedi)." <sup>3</sup> Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to seek help from the Lord; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court, <sup>6</sup> and he said, "O Lord, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You. <sup>7</sup> Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? <sup>8</sup> They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying, <sup>9</sup> 'Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver us.' <sup>10</sup> Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), <sup>11</sup> see how they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance. <sup>12</sup> O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You." <sup>13</sup> All Judah was standing before the Lord, with their infants, their wives and their children. <sup>14</sup> Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph; <sup>15</sup> and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. <sup>16</sup> Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup> You need not fight

in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you." <sup>18</sup> Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. <sup>19</sup> The Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel, with a very loud voice. <sup>20</sup> They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *A Crisis that Cries for Revival* is to learn that we need to turn to the Lord when a crisis hits; praise Him as He takes care of the problem for us; and be reminded of God's constant faithfulness no matter the circumstances.

**INTRODUCTION:** A crisis is something every one of us has gone through to some degree, probably at multiple points. The world panics and doesn't know what to do when a crisis hits, when they're faced with overwhelming obstacles. But Christians should be different in our response to a crisis.

It's intimidating to stare down your opposition and see that they are formidable. You're probably not facing down a crisis of military proportions, as King Jehoshaphat was, but perhaps you feel that you're surrounded on all sides by those who seek to do you harm. You have almost certainly been at the point where you feel like your life is breaking down all around you.

It is in situations like this that we desperately need the intervention and revival of the Lord. In this passage, we see King Jehoshaphat in a tough situation that he knows is well beyond him and his abilities. We see him have a conversation with God and cry out to the only One who can save a king or a kingdom. Before anything can be corrected, there needed to be some changes and people needed to turn back to the Lord.

our society's problem  
is not solely our *government's* problem.  
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# REVIVE US AGAIN

## SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

As soon as Jehoshaphat called the people to turn to the Lord, we start to see change happening. Although the times are different and the situations are different, we need to follow the same formula for divine intervention. God is always faithful and always present in your situation. He doesn't require any secret formula or strategy, just a simple returning to our dependence on Him alone.

Perhaps today you are in the middle of a crisis that is crying for a much-needed revival. Don't face circumstances on your own when your God is fully able and fully present with you. A personal crisis calls for action, for something to be done. That something is to turn our lives back where they belonged in the first place, in the hands of an almighty God. We must remember that we are in need of the Lord in all situations, and we must cry out to Him and be ready to obey and worship. Then and only then will our crisis turn into a soul-satisfying revival.

### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, YOU'RE IN A CRISIS

A crisis often brings fear

- We get afraid when we don't have the ability to fix it
- A sense of powerlessness accompanies a crisis
- A crisis reminds us that we are imperfect people

A crisis is deep and complicated

- Sometimes we don't feel like we can take one more thing
- A crisis causes us to raise our hands in desperation (2 Chronicles 6:34-35)

#### 2. GOD ALLOWS A CRISIS TO SHOW HIS ALMIGHTY POWER

God has a purpose for the crisis

- He wants to move us from knowing of Him to really knowing Him
- He wants to move us from words to action
- He wants us to remember His faithfulness

There is a difference between crisis and non-crisis

- A crisis prayer is a desperate cry for help; non-crisis prayers are just nice words
- A crisis forces us to see something we've ignored before

#### 3. GOD RECOGNIZES OUR IMPERFECTIONS, BUT HE DOESN'T EXCUSE THEM

God has great mercy upon His people

- He will often relent if we simply remove our idols and worship Him (2 Chronicles 18:1-19:3)
- He has every right and ability to bring down wrath, but often does not

We must be adjusted to God for Him to respond

- It's not God who must adjust; we are the ones who must align with Him
- God will not hear or respond if He is overshadowed by idolatry

It is essential that we recognize His sovereignty

- God commands rulers and kingdoms
- God has promised certain things to us
- It is important to recall God's goodness, even in tough circumstances (1 Kings 17:8-24; 1 Corinthians 10:11)

#### 4. WE NEED TO GO TO GOD'S PERSON, GOD'S HISTORY, AND GOD'S WORD

God is a holy and unchanging God

- We need to remember that God never fails or falters
- We need to understand that nothing constitutes a crisis for God
- If God has been good in the past, He will continue to be good in the present crisis

The Word of God is His message to us

- Whatever God wants to reveal to us, He has revealed in the Bible
- We must turn to Scripture during a crisis for our solution (2 Peter 1:19)

#### 5. GOD HAS A WORD FOR YOU IN THE MIDST OF YOUR CRISIS

He has a "rhema" word

- God has a specific word for you found in Scripture
- Sometimes a passage will speak volumes to where you are (Joshua 1:3)
- You must be sensitive to the Spirit to know that God is speaking

**our mission field is not merely across the sea.  
it is across the street.**



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

God often uses sermons or messages just for you

- That feeling that a sermon was “just for you” may be God speaking to you
- The Bible is a general word to you, but there are specific words as well

## 6. THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD

We must have a “hands-off” attitude

- We need to hand things off to the Lord
- We often shoulder things that were meant for Him to bear

God asks us to go, but says He will fight

- When God fights, victory is assured (1 Kings 17:47)
- He doesn’t ask us to conquer things that only He can conquer

## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

### GETTING BEAT UP BY A CRISIS:

When you’re in a crisis, you can relate to how a boxer feels when he is getting battered. Sometimes a crisis feels like it’s beating you, punching you, and pummeling you from every angle. You can’t even see where the next punch is coming from, but sure enough it comes. You’re overwhelmed and over-matched, but the problem is that it seems like the referee is not stopping the match. You’re trapped in the crisis, but the whistle doesn’t come. That is how it feels like to be overwhelmed by a crisis situation.

### THE “RHEMA” WORD:

There is a difference between a general word and a specific word. The Bible gives us both. You can’t go to the Bible and ask it whether you should move to the East Coast or the West Coast, because the Bible, in general, doesn’t contain that answer. The Bible doesn’t give specific answers for things like which purchase to make or which schedule to follow. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to enlighten our minds and hearts and speak a specific word to us through the Bible as we read it. Perhaps there is a passage that you’ve read 200 times, but as the Spirit speaks to you, that passage takes on a new light and speaks to your specific need and situation. That is the difference between the general Word and the specific Word of God.

### PLAYING QUARTERBACK:

In a football game, when the quarterback hands the ball off to a running back, something amazing happens—all of the people chasing the quarterback start chasing the running back. When the quarterback had the football in his hands, the problem was his. But when he handed the ball off to the runner, the problem suddenly became the other guy’s problem. The burden of running and holding on to the ball became the burden of the next guy. Our problem is that we often want to hold on to the ball and bear the burdens when God is able and ready to be handed the ball. We’ve got to have a “hands-off” approach to this game we call life. Hand the ball off to God and stop holding on to it and getting tackled by life.

## BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

### THE TWO KINGDOMS:

(1 Kings 12) After a long history of a united kingdom of Israel ruled by Saul, David, and Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms. Israel was the kingdom of the north, spanning 10 tribes, and Judah was the southern kingdom, spanning the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam was the first king of the new Israel and Rehoboam was the first king of Judah. The northern kingdom was entirely run by bad kings for over 200 years, and fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. The southern kingdom of Judah had Jerusalem and was run by a mixture of good and bad kings for almost 350 years before falling to the Babylonians in 586 BC. Jehoshaphat was one of the good kings of Judah who reigned for 25 years early in the history of the southern kingdom.

### THE TEMPLE DEDICATION:

(2 Chronicles 6) King Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord and prayed over this place of worship for God’s people. King Jehoshaphat recalled this account, which was an important item. Solomon talked about the Lord going out from this place and fighting the battles for His people. God told Solomon He would maintain the cause of His people, and it was part of the very foundation of their worship of God. Jehoshaphat knew this prayer and dedication, and spoke to the Lord about the same thing and on the same terms. When they were being “invaded by the enemy,” it said God would defend them. Once again, it shows us that God will do as He promises.

**GO,** therefore



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

## DRIVING OUT THE ENEMIES OF GOD:

(Joshua 2) Rahab was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. She was neither a Jew nor a righteous woman, but her faith in the one true God earned much for her. Knowing that the God of the Israelites was the true God, she hid the spies who were scouting Jericho. Later in the story, as Joshua and the Israelites conquered Jericho (with the marching and horn-blowing), the wall crumbled, but not Rahab and her house. Even though her house was a part of the crumbled wall, her small part stayed intact because of her faithfulness. Rahab is a true story of faith and being on sure footing despite everything around her shaking and crumbling, which is why she is included in God's "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11.

## DAVID AND GOLIATH:

(1 Samuel 17) Many of us are very familiar with the story of David and Goliath. Israel was once again in a crisis. They were being threatened by a Philistine army that was not only powerful, but had Goliath at the front. Young David went to King Saul and accepted the challenge to fight Goliath. But David told Goliath that the battle belonged to the Lord. All throughout the Old Testament, God's people knew that the battle belonged not to the enemy, but to the Lord. When Jehoshaphat was speaking his words, he was standing in a long line of those who were confident not in Israel or their own military strength, but confident in the Lord's power and promise.

## SERMON LINES:

This message will help you encourage those who are either in a crisis, coming out of a crisis, or heading into the next crisis.

This message will also provide a needed reminder that one of the worst things we can do is pray and yet have God not hear us—not because He doesn't want to hear or can't hear, but because we're not adjusting to Him.

## QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

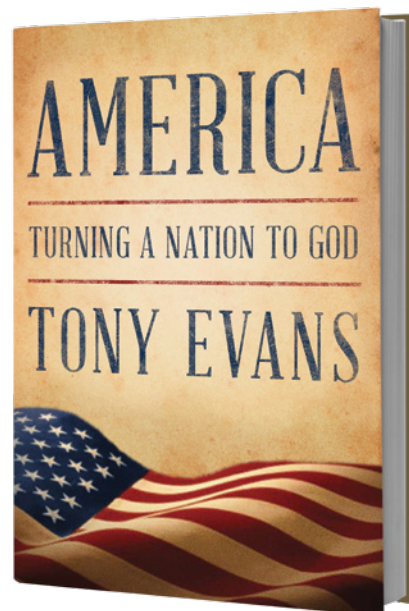
"God allows, creates, causes, and endorses overwhelming scenarios in our world so that we can discover Him."

"Your crisis is not the final word. It looks like the final word because you're being overwhelmed. It feels like the final word because you're afraid. You think it's the final word because you don't know what to do, but it's not the final word. The final word belongs to the Lord."

"Never let feelings sit in judgment over your faith; you must always let your faith sit in judgment over your feelings."

"When the enemy is coming, praise the Lord. When you're being overwhelmed, praise the Lord. When things don't look any better, praise the Lord. When you don't understand what you're going through, praise the Lord."

"Don't get too sophisticated to bless the name of the Lord. Praise Him in the morning, praise Him at noontime, and praise Him when the sun goes down. The problem is not yours, the battle is the Lord's."



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# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 5:

## A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY FOR REVIVAL

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Joel 2:12-17 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup> "Yet even now," declares the Lord,

"Return to Me with all your heart,

And with fasting, weeping and mourning;

<sup>13</sup> And rend your heart and not your garments."

Now return to the Lord your God,

For He is gracious and compassionate,

Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness

And relenting of evil.

<sup>14</sup> Who knows whether He will not turn and relent

And leave a blessing behind Him,

Even a grain offering and a drink offering

For the Lord your God?

<sup>15</sup> Blow a trumpet in Zion,

Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,

<sup>16</sup> Gather the people, sanctify the congregation,

Assemble the elders,

Gather the children and the nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom come out of his room

And the bride out of her bridal chamber.

<sup>17</sup> Let the priests, the Lord's ministers,

Weep between the porch and the altar,

And let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord,

And do not make Your inheritance a reproach,

A byword among the nations.

Why should they among the peoples say,

"Where is their God?"

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *A Solemn Assembly for Revival* is to learn that God controls all situations and often directly intervenes, and that we must recognize these interventions and respond to Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** We all want a great and historic movement of God in our lifetime, we want a change to our hearts and the heart of the church. Despite these desires that many of us have, perhaps we're not really serious about them. A revival needs a solemn assembly of God's people.

Solemn means that it's not a party atmosphere. A solemn assembly is one where the mood of the people and the tone of the event are serious, even deadly serious. When a revival needs

to come and God's people are in a solemn assembly, it's not a place for joking or halfhearted effort. When God is ready to speak, we had better be ready to listen.

In this day and time, there are many people who think that human beings are responsible for whatever happens, but we know that's not the case. The Lord is good and patient and is waiting for His time to return, and that will signal the end of the day of man. The passage reminds us that soon it will be the Day of the Lord.

We can all agree that we've wasted enough opportunities and enough of the Lord's time in our lives. The good news in all of this is that the Lord says He will not only restore us, He can also more than make up for our wasted time.

But to experience this restoration, God's people need a great returning to Him, because He alone can restore us and make the wrong things right. When God wants to move, it's a serious time and we had better be ready to make a serious response to the King. When we get our hearts and lives aligned with Him and wait for Him to move, then we can see a great revival sweep this land.

### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. GOD'S PEOPLE OFTEN FAIL TO REALIZE GOD IS MOVING

God manifests Himself through events

- Many times things like financial or medical setbacks are God's doing
- Even weather events can be used by God to get our attention

Physical events have spiritual meanings behind them

- Natural means can't fix spiritual issues (Joel 1:4-6, 15)
- A solemn assembly may be required

#### 2. YOU KNOW IT'S A DIVINE VISITATION WHEN THERE IS NO HUMAN SOLUTION

There is a difference between man's day and the Lord's Day

- The Lord has the solution to everything

**our mission field is not merely across the sea.  
it is across the street.**



# REVIVE US AGAIN

## SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

- If you're driven past normal answers, you need His answer

### Solemn assemblies aren't fun events

- A crisis calls for a solution, not humor
- Celebrations come after the solution has been found

### 3. A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY INVOLVES RETURNING TO GOD

The troubles we experience are often to force a return to God

- The locust invasion was a call to return to God (Joel 1:2-12)
- Seeking human strategies is missing the point

#### Repentance is crucial for returning to God

- Repentance is a complete turn-around
- A return happens both externally and internally
- Spiritual disciplines such as fasting display such a change

### 4. MEDITATE UPON THE SCRIPTURES AND BE HONEST BEFORE GOD

Not acknowledging something doesn't fix the problem

- We may not want to face God, but the problem still persists
- Instead of ignoring the issue, we should sound the alarm

#### When we return to God, He returns to us

- His returning to us is necessary for spiritual growth
- We must first be brutally honest and lay everything out on the table

### 5. GOD IS SLOW TO ANGER AND DESIRES TO WITHHOLD JUDGMENT

We can't always predict what He will do

- God is sovereign and doesn't fit into our categories (Exodus 4:24)
- Every situation will be different, but they all show His mercy (Jonah 3:10)

#### God is more than fair and gracious

- Many times in Scripture, He didn't give what was deserved
- He often restored things even better than before
- God can give back what the world has taken away (Joel 2:25)

### 6. TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

Many times we would like to go back in time and change things

- We need to go forward enjoying Him, not looking back
- Our best days are ahead if we follow the Lord

### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

#### LOCUSTS:

Every 17 years in Maryland, there is a huge invasion of locusts. There are literally hundreds of millions of them; people swat them, they cover cars, it is terrible when they invade. They live underground for 17 years, then come out in masses to mate and lay eggs for the next cycle. The locust invasion described in Joel would have decimated Israel's agrarian society and economy. A locust invasion in that kind of land would bring great trouble, and cause some people to die while forcing others to work even harder to try to restore everything.

#### HEART PROBLEMS:

The main function of the human heart is to pump blood throughout the body. A heart attack is a corrosion of the blood vessels that keep the blood from flowing properly. Everything in your body is banking on good blood flow. When parts of the body don't get the blood they need, they can die and become useless. The same is true in our spiritual lives. We need our very hearts to be pumped by the truth of Christ. We need Him to be the source of our health and our lives. God wants your heart, or the life-giving spiritual blood won't pump.

#### TAKING OUT THE TRASH:

A trash compactor doesn't eliminate the trash; it simply tries to make the pile manageable and compacts it so you can add more. But the garbage professionals remove it from your property and dispose of it. The garbage collector doesn't come knocking on your door looking for trash. He picks it up only after you put it out by the curb. When we return to Jesus, He fully removes all of our garbage. We just have to put it out there for Him. When we try to take care of it ourselves, all we do is try to compact it and manage it, which is not a good long-term solution.



# REVIVE US AGAIN

## SERMON OUTLINES

By DR. TONY EVANS

### THE FORECAST:

Meteorologists can give you weather patterns and conditions. They can tell you when a tornado is coming, or if one has already touched down somewhere. They can even predict some serious situations that will produce tornadoes and hurricanes, but they aren't always accurate. They watch and wait, and they try to warn us when conditions are threatening. Imagine God in His role as a perfectly accurate weatherman. He knows what the conditions are and what they will lead to. So He has already given us warnings because He doesn't want us to be blindsided by a storm.

### BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

#### THE "DAY OF THE LORD":

This is a biblical phrase used frequently throughout Scripture. The term indicates a time period when the purposes of God will be brought to completion. The Day of the Lord includes both judgment upon the earth and the salvation of many. This end-times "day" is almost certainly a time period associated with the return of Christ and is used frequently to speak of God's mighty power and involvement in the world.

#### GOD CHANGES HIS MIND:

Scripture makes it clear that God is constant and unchanging, but that doesn't mean He doesn't relent of His judgment and bring mercy instead. Scripture is full of instances where God decided to not bring the destruction or judgment He had warned of. We see this in the book of Jonah, in the story of Moses and Zipporah in Exodus 4, and in Exodus 32—all of which are cases where God decided not to bring catastrophe. Perhaps it is to explain God's change of mind—not as mankind forcing God to alter His will, but God demonstrating His mercy when someone repents. These stories are in Scripture for us to see His grace and slow-to-anger nature.

#### SERMON LINES:

This message will help you understand the need for a solemn time of repentance and seeking the Lord when He makes it clear that His people have turned from Him and are in great need of a return that brings revival and restoration.

### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"The Day of the Lord is when God decides to no longer let men call the shots. It is a time when He directly intervenes in the human situation in order to bring judgment and restoration."

"The solemn assembly works only if this is internally driven and not merely externally driven."

"I can't say what God is going to do in any given situation; all I can tell you is that He changes His mind concerning judgment when we repent and return to Him."

"Many of us have lost time, which is more precious than anything. Many would turn back the hands of time and do something differently if they could."



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# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 6:

## WHEN A NATION FORGETS GOD

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Genesis 11:1-9 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. <sup>2</sup> It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup> They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. <sup>4</sup> They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." <sup>5</sup> The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> The Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." <sup>8</sup> So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *When a Nation Forgets God* is to learn how to please God by obeying His instructions and understanding our constant and complete dependence upon Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** There is something we need to notice about our world and our country today. There has been so much change and it has come so rapidly in recent years that we often don't even stop and think about some of the side effects. As our nation moves forward with technology and progress, perhaps there is something happening that is dragging us farther and farther from our God.

We may feel like we are already familiar with the story of the Tower of Babel. But there is more lurking below the surface. On the surface, the events in this passage may not strike us as all that terrible, and we may be confused as to why God did what He did. The problem was not a building program, but the defiance of God and self-worship that got out of hand.

God had given very specific instructions to the human race on what they were meant to do (Genesis 9:1), but instead of following orders they tried to do just the opposite. There may not be a better example of attempts at human achievement than trying to build a legacy and a name for ourselves, and trying to put ourselves on the same level as God. The unfortunate truth is that entire countries as well as individuals continue to do the same thing.

But no matter how much mankind may achieve, it's never going to impress God or compare to His work. No matter what we do, the truth is that God still has to come down and stoop from His position just to notice our so-called great accomplishments. The truth is that if our accomplishments don't point to God, then we're really just building up an idol to ourselves.

Christ has given us great freedom, but freedom is terribly mishandled and misunderstood by society. Freedom doesn't mean we can run around doing whatever we want and getting away with it; true freedom is freedom from having to satisfy the world.

### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. MANY PEOPLE THINK THEY DON'T NEED A SAVIOR WHEN THEY HAVE SUCCESS

The need to appeal to God is diminished when you think you can do life by yourself

- People today want to be the source of their own success
- The American idea of the "self-made" man is contrary to Scripture

In their desire to be free of God, people want to erase the Creator/creature distinction

- But God is transcendent; He exists above and beyond His creation and is not to be confused with it.
- Independence is valued, but it's the wrong definition of independence

**our mission field is not merely across the sea.  
it is across the street.**



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

## 2. PURSUING UNITY, PEACE, AND PROSPERITY APART FROM GOD IS FOOLISH

A capital city doesn't replace God

- A government can't overpower God
- A religious façade doesn't make it acceptable

Humans can't reach the same level as God

- Getting physically closer to God does not guarantee the same in the heart
- Scripture says heaven will come to earth, not the other way around

## 3. NO MATTER WHAT WE DO, GOD STILL HAS TO COME DOWN

Scripture says God came down to the people of Babel; they did not come up to Him

- Perspective makes a big difference on how big something looks
- Impressing our fellow men doesn't equal impressing the Lord

Sometimes our bad plans lead God to intervene directly for our good

- God sees where our actions will lead us even when we don't see the end
- Our freedom is in God, not from God

## 4. FREEDOM IS A GOD-MADE IDEA, NOT A MAN-MADE ONE

Adam and Eve had freedom in the Garden of Eden

- They could roam freely—only one tree was off-limits (Genesis 2:15-17)
- The first mention of freedom in history is in the Bible

Freedom gives us choices, but choices still have consequences

- God gives us great freedom and tells us the consequences of our choices
- Ignorance is nonexistent, and is no excuse
- Satan comes to deceive and distort freedom

## 5. YOU'RE EITHER RULED BY GOD OR BY HIS EVIL IMITATOR

There is no equality to the Most High God

- Either God rules you, or a false idol rules you
- Distorted freedom leads to idolatry and enslavement to sin

Confusion in our lives is often related to our attempts at independence from God

- Mankind gives false and temporary relief, but God gives true relief
- God uses confusion to keep us from listening to the wrong voice
- God's will is going to be accomplished regardless of our response to Him

## 6. GOD DOESN'T ALLOW COMPETITION FROM HIS CREATION

Human beings have no business challenging or daring God

- Mankind has faith in their abilities, and they make gods of themselves
- God eventually exposes all false gods as just that: false!

God will allow success for a season, but it should not tempt us to elevate ourselves

- Countries and kingdoms get the idea that they can build on their success forever
- Anything mankind makes is simply a temporary kingdom
- We all eventually run out of gas and abilities—and we need to fall on God

## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

### TEENAGERS:

Teenagers want independence from their parents while still living with their parents and being totally dependent on them. They don't want their parents telling them what to do or where to go, but they do want you to pay the rent, buy them food, and put gas in the car. We think it is silly of teens to want independence while still being dependent, but that is often true of us as the children of God. We want independence from Him and don't want Him telling us what to do, but we are constantly dependent upon Him.

### SUPERMAN:

Muhammad Ali was on an airplane one time and wouldn't fasten his seat belt. The flight attendant came by multiple times and asked the former champ to please buckle his belt. After many unsuccessful attempts, she asked Ali one final time, but

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he said, "Superman don't need no seat belt." The flight attendant replied. "Superman don't need no airplane. Buckle your seat belt!" We aren't ever as great as we think we are.

### THE TITANIC:

One of the engineers who helped build the Titanic was famously quoted as saying that not even God could sink this great ocean liner. The iceberg that sank the Titanic had been there for a very long time, but the lookout couldn't see it because the man with the key to the crow's nest locker had walked away with the key, and the lookout's binoculars were locked away. The lesson from the Titanic is that God can use a key to sink a ship. Nobody is ever above God or unreachable by the Most High.

### BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

#### SHINAR:

(Genesis 11:2) The plain known as Shinar was an eastward journey for these people. Up until this point in Scripture to go eastward meant you were going away from the Lord, starting with Cain who went east of the Garden of Eden. This eastern plain of Shinar became a focal point of contention and rebellion against God. The site of the Tower of Babel indeed did become the kingdom of Babylon. Babylon is represented all throughout Scripture as an evil and defiant system against God. In Revelation 17–18 Babylon is fighting against God's instructions. The Tower of Babel is the beginning in a long and ultimately unsuccessful struggle for evil to defeat the Lord.

#### TRINITY:

(Genesis 1:26; 11:7) The "Us" in these passages seems to throw a lot of people off. But this is a statement that the entire Trinity is eternally existent. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all present and active in creation. This truth was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, but is critical to knowing about Jesus and the Trinitarian teachings of the New Testament (Matthew 28:19).

### BE FRUITFUL AND FILL THE EARTH:

(Genesis 9:1; 11:9) God gave specific instructions to the sons of Noah to spread out and fill the earth. Through the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) and history, we have a good understanding of how Shem, Japheth, and Ham spread out. Unfortunately,

many of these people decided in Genesis 11 to do just the opposite. Genesis 11 makes it clear that these people wanted to do the exact opposite of what God instructed them to do. They didn't want to fill the earth, but to settle down and make a capital city that displayed their power and defiance. This is why God scattered them and confused their language—and the people ended up fulfilling what God told them to do despite their disobedience.

### SERMON LINES:

This message will help you see the difference between man-made attempts at success and the true success of obeying God.

This message powerfully demonstrates what happens when proud, self-reliant people try to defy God and usurp His rightful rule in creation.

### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"I don't know if you've noticed, but the farther man has gone in technology, the more independent he has become."

"Everybody wants to make a name for himself because it signifies his importance. We like to associate with people who have a name because we can let their name rub off on us."

"Will you live by reason or revelation? Will you live by what God says or what the information tells you? Will you live by what everybody else thinks or by what God declares?"

"We wonder why there are so many problems in our lives, our families, and our churches, and the problem is freedom. The very thing we want is killing us. Freedom never means freedom from God and His instructions."

"There will come that time in life when you run out of gas and your high-flying self will cry out, 'O, God!'"

**GO,** therefore



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 7:

## WATER IN GOD'S HOUSE

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup> Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side. <sup>3</sup> When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. <sup>4</sup> Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins. <sup>5</sup> Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. <sup>6</sup> He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. <sup>9</sup> It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. <sup>10</sup> And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. <sup>11</sup> But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. <sup>12</sup> By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on *Water in God's House* is to learn how important the calling and the task of the church is as God's house. The church is where His manifest presence meets with His people and the Holy Spirit fills and

empowers them, so that God's grace can flow from the church into a society that is broken and bring about real change and restoration.

**INTRODUCTION:** We need churches that want to influence society for Christ, that want to see the blessings and works of God to overflow from the church into the city—the culture around us. But even though this may be a church's sincere desire, there are prerequisites we must meet as God's people, His church, if we are to see God's power flowing out from the church into the world.

The church, the house of God, can be compared to the White House. The White House and its resident has a lot to do with what's going on in the country; it has a lot of power to influence what is done in our society. So it is with the church, but in a much greater sense because the church's Resident is the almighty God of the universe. Many Christians understand that their bodies are the temple or house of God, but there is a corporate sense to this term as well.

A church that truly engages God in pure worship doesn't just mean a church that has good preaching or good worship. True worship of the Almighty is more than well-prepared sermons or catchy songs. These things are ingredients in good worship, but the key is experiencing and humbly approaching God.

Our American society is obsessed with entertainment. We want to be constantly entertained, whether it is television or a sporting event. We just want to experience the moment and say it was good. The problem is this attitude can creep into churches and worship services. A good worship service has nothing to do with entertainment.

We as believers need to realize that we are not the audience of a worship service—that role belongs to God. He is the audience! A worship service cannot be successful unless God is encountered and experienced, not just talked about. The difference between singing or hearing about God and actually experiencing Him is the difference between reading a book about the Grand Canyon and actually climbing down into the Grand Canyon.

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# REVIVE US AGAIN

## SERMON OUTLINES

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Our churches must experience true worship and let God flow and work through our midst. That is the only way God is going to move and flow through the midst of our society. The church is a group of flawed human beings, but we serve a special place and we are God's starting point to changing the world around us. It starts in the house of God—and we must be a part of it.

### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. GOD IS BIGGER THAN THE SUM TOTAL OF EVERYTHING HE MADE

God is greater than the universe

- God made everything we have, yet He is even more
- God is bigger than our minds can comprehend, so no building can contain Him

There will always be more of God than we can ever know

- We can't ever discover everything about God
- No matter what you know of God, Scripture reveals more

#### 2. CHURCHES ARE TO FULFILL THEIR DIVINE MANDATE

The church is God's house

- The church doesn't belong to an area or a denomination
- The church is where we experience God's reality—His manifest presence

The church has a higher purpose than entertainment

- The church is where we encounter God, not where we come to be entertained
- The audience for the service is the living God. It is His church (Matthew 16:18)

#### 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH IS TO EXPERIENCE GOD

The point is not to help us feel better

- We come to church to elevate God, not elevate ourselves
- The experience inside a church affects what happens outside

The point is not to get what you want out of it

- Coming just for the sermon or the music misses the point

- God inhabits the praises of His people, not activities to fill time (Psalm 22:3)
- An empty church building can't be a house of worship

#### 4. WE CAN'T EXPERIENCE GOD MORE IF WE DON'T GO FARTHER WITH HIM

Our relationship with God is made to grow

- You're not going to draw closer to God if you don't follow Him
- We're too satisfied with a trickle of water instead of a strong flow
- You can't stay still and experience God

If God hasn't blown your mind, you haven't followed Him far enough

- God says He will do "abundantly more" than we can even imagine (Ephesians 3:20)
- Sometimes we have to swim to where God wants us, not walk

#### 5. GOD IS COMING BACK FOR US

He is coming back, but we need to welcome Him

- God doesn't spend time where He's not welcomed
- He's not going to make anybody worship Him . . . yet
- God is waiting on us to do what we're supposed to do

We need to make a big deal over our big God

- We wouldn't keep a dignitary waiting, so why do we keep God waiting?
- God is looking for true worshipers (John 4:24)
- Everything and everyone will worship Christ one day (Philippians 2:10-11)

#### 6. GOD IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE FULL OF HIM

He wants people who are swimming in His depth

- He's not looking for surface-level followers
- He doesn't want a trickle of worship, but a submerged life of worship

He desires His followers to talk about Him

- Christians should not have to be begged to speak of God
- He wants committed disciples who are looking for Him

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# REVIVE US AGAIN

## SERMON OUTLINES

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### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

#### WHITE HOUSE:

The White House is far more than a residence. It symbolizes the person and the power that resides within its walls. The president inside the White House is a physical representation of the power and authority of the entire country. The church should be a house of God that represents the power and authority of an almighty God. We should spend a lot more time being concerned with what's going on inside God's house than what is going on inside the White House.

#### ENTERTAINMENT:

When you go to the movies, you're ready for a couple hours of entertainment. You're just a spectator, not a participant. Most people buy their concessions and settle into comfortable seats ready to have a fun night. After the film is over, they critique the movie, saying what they did or did not like about it. The problem is that too many believers go to church with a theater mindset. But in a worship service, we're not simply spectators. We're participants in the act of worshiping the one true God. What we see in a movie isn't real, just a professional performance put on by actors. May this never be said of those within the house of God.

#### JUST FLUFF:

Cotton candy is a sweet and delicious treat that many people enjoy as they go to a circus, carnival, fair, or sporting event. Cotton candy is tasty because it is pretty much just pure sugar. Its light and fluffy texture disappears quickly as it melts in your mouth or even your hand and you're left with nothing at all. Some folk come to church hoping to get some spiritual cotton candy. They want a quick, sweet taste and to say they got something, but it's just fluff that disappears quickly. We need spiritual substance and long-term change, not a church carnival full of cotton candy.

#### LEARNING TO SWIM:

When you train someone to swim, you have to begin with them in the shallow end of the pool. But eventually, the students have to leave the shallow end and put on display what they have learned. They have to leave the shallow end and swim to the deep end of the pool. Too many Christians who start in the shallow end of the faith stay there far too long. They don't

reach even a portion of their potential in the Lord. Start swimming with God and get out there and put your spiritual training to the test. You can't get where God wants you just by treading water in the shallow end of life.

#### FIREPLACE:

Fireplaces are small contained areas, but their heat has an effect on the house far beyond their immediate location. God wants our hearts and lives to be burning so deep and so hot for Him that it touches a large area around us for His cause. He wants our fires to be blazing hot, so that everywhere we go the wood gets enflamed by His Spirit.

### BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

#### TABERNACLE/TEMPLE:

(Exodus 26–30; 1 Kings 6–8; Ezra 3–6) The Israelites in the wilderness were instructed to build a traveling tabernacle for sacrifices and worship of God. It was made in such a way that it could be broken down and put back up, and was critical as the physical location of God's presence among His people. Solomon built a grand and permanent temple for the presence of God in Jerusalem. After this was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, Zerubbabel led a group to return home after captivity and rebuild the temple as the Israelites resettled their homeland. It was expanded under King Herod, and was finally destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Prophecy speaks of a third temple being rebuilt, and this is a key part of biblical prophecy.

#### DEAD SEA:

The Dead Sea is a unique body of water in Israel. It is the lowest point on earth, which means water flows into it but not out of it. Its water is so salty and chemical-laden that nothing can live in it. A person can float on top of the water because the salt content is so high. Absolutely no fish or wildlife can be sustained because of the unique makeup of the water. Sodom and Gomorrah were located at the south end of the Dead Sea, where there are large collections of salt formations, which would make sense in the story of Lot and his wife. This body of water played a unique role in biblical history and is frequently mentioned throughout Scripture.



# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

## SERMON LINES:

This message will help you understand and teach the truth that God's house purpose is not just the place where His people gather, but the place where His powerful, manifest presence lives among His people.

This message will also give you biblical content for teaching the truth that God wants His people to experience His reality, not just come into His building.

You will also understand that the greatness of the church lies in whether we are recognizing and experiencing the presence of almighty God.

## QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"For far too many Christians, a two-hour church service is like going to a two-hour movie."

"You know why the culture is dry and dead? Because there's no water coming out of the sanctuary!"

"The Lord of this universe is not just waiting on you to show up and sit down, but to worship Him. He's waiting on you to make a big deal about Him."

"The culture is not in the church, but we should be so hyped about what takes place in the church building that we are effective outside of the building."



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# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

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MESSAGE 8:

## ARE WE READY FOR REVIVAL?

**SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Matthew 3:1-12 (NASB)

Now in those days John the Baptist \*came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'" 4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 10 The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

**MESSAGE GOAL:** The goal of this message on Are We Ready for Revival? is to learn how to prepare our hearts and lives for revival, and to experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in new and life-changing ways.

**INTRODUCTION:** We talk a lot about revival in our churches, but too often we don't think about what it takes to get to the place where revival can take place. There must be preparation and changes in order to make the environment right for a movement of God.

Remember that true revival is a mighty movement of God, not something that mankind can control or dictate. Yet there are

certain things that must be in place for revival to break out. God is not going to force revival upon those who aren't ready and don't seek it or desire it.

A national revival of Great Awakening proportions is something that seems like it may never happen the way our country is currently going, and we know things must reverse course to bring spiritual change. But revival must also happen within our individual churches, because the church is where God brings His change to the world.

Revival can also come to our hearts and lives, but they must be aligned with the Lord. So many times, we see an issue and we think only about the symptoms rather than the problem. Too many believers today desperately want the Lord to bring revival and sweeping change into their lives, but they don't want to get in the right heart posture. They want the reward and the great things, but not the effort or dedication to arrive there.

We all must look inward and see if we are indeed ready for the Lord to bring a revival that is both corporate and personal. God is willing and able and He desires for His children to draw closer to Him, so if there is a problem in spiritual areas—the problem is with us, not Him.

### SERMON POINTS:

#### 1. BEFORE GOD BRINGS CHANGE, HE SHAKES THINGS UP

God's coming change is good news/bad news

- The bad news is that some things must be torn down
- The good news is something better is coming
- When God plants in new ground, great things result (Jeremiah 1:9-10)

Prophecy is a source for what is coming

- John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 40:3-4; Malachi 3:1; 4:4-6; Luke 1:16-17)
- Elijah gave us an Old Testament word on what would happen

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# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

## 2. FOR GOD TO COME DOWN, WE MUST GO DOWN

God's revival needs a landing path

- When we're proud and selfish, our hearts are like mountains (Romans 12:3)
- Elevated positions make landing impossible
- When we humble ourselves, our hearts are clear runways

To see the Kingdom of God, repentance is necessary

- The Kingdom of God is at hand, so the time is now (Matthew 3:2)
- We need experience with God's glory, not just knowledge of it
- Repentance is a complete change of course

## 3. WE MUST CHANGE OUR ACTIONS AND OUR MINDS

A mind change is not automatic with a behavior change

- A number of external things can force behavior change
- If the mind is not changed, behaviors can revert quickly to the old ways
- Your mind must agree with God's mind

A mind change usually requires a strong incentive

- John gives us a strong incentive—God's desire to invade earth with His Kingdom
- Repentance is not just behavioral, but mental as well
- We get a taste of it even here on earth

## 4. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IMPORTANT

This relationship determines how much you experience God

- The Holy Spirit gave birth to the church (Acts 2)
- The Holy Spirit often is portrayed with fire

Too many Christians don't have much of a relationship with the Spirit

- The Holy Spirit introduces us to more of God
- The Holy Spirit won't let us stay the same inside
- The Holy Spirit is a deposit and guarantee of more to come

## 5. BEING LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CRUCIAL

There is a big difference between Spirit-led and human-led

- The Holy Spirit is perfect and speaks for the Lord
- The human spirit doesn't have the final authority

We wouldn't understand the Bible correctly without the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word for us
- We may know general things, but the Spirit knows the specifics

## 6. ALWAYS DESIRE TO MEET AND EXPERIENCE THE LORD

We need more than a religious experience

- We need more from church and life
- God is preparing us for something, and we must be ready

God is waiting and ready for us

- We know He's there, but often don't change anything
- We can't be satisfied with "business as usual"

### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

#### LANDING AN AIRPLANE:

An airplane can't land just anywhere it wants. It needs a long, smooth surface for landing. Often, a plane will circle for a long period before landing. The same is true for the revival of God. He's circling and wanting to bring us something wonderful, but there's no place for Him to land, so He keeps circling. God is constantly circling in our lives and our situations, but we often refuse to give Him anywhere sufficient to land the plane. Our lives need to have a suitable place that is prepared for the landing of God's goodness.

#### BEING SET ON FIRE:

If you're on fire, you'll know it without a doubt. Not only will you be able to feel it, you're probably going to be doing something different if you're on fire. You would be acting differently than normal. Perhaps you would be running, screaming, or waving your arms, crying, but certainly not just standing still. People who have spiritual experiences and just act differently are one thing. They may jump and holler, but it may not be true and may not last. If the

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true fire of the Holy Spirit is upon you, it may cause you to become emotional and act differently. But that fire will also change you for good and for the long-term. That's what happens when you've been lit up by the Holy Spirit.

## BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

### INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD:

This was a period of about 400 years of silence, in terms of God speaking to or through His people, between the end of Malachi and the coming of John the Baptist and Christ. This was a time of great political upheaval and change in Israel. Daniel prophesied that there would be a string of successive kingdoms that would rule over the land, and it turned out to be true. The Old Testament closed during the Persian kingdom. The Greeks, Romans, and even a short and tumultuous time of independence ruled the land in this period. This was a time of a dwindling faith that was in desperate need of the good news of Christ.

### RETURN OF ELIJAH:

(Malachi 4; Luke 1) Elijah was one of the most godly and powerful figures in all of the Old Testament. Malachi, the final writer of the Old Testament, before the intertestamental period, wrote about the return of Elijah before the final days. Luke 1 describes John the Baptist as fulfilling this prophecy and coming like Elijah, who had to make difficult proclamations to a group of people who didn't want to hear them. Elijah was a man of vision whom God used before He did something mighty in the land, which is exactly what John the Baptist was to do before the appearance of Christ. Both the prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist were described as being the voice in the wilderness crying "make ready the way of the Lord."

### QUENCHING THE SPIRIT:

(1 Thessalonians 5:19) The word "quench" means simply to put out a fire. Once again, the idea of the Holy Spirit as a fire is in view here, and we are told to not let our human spirits quench or put out the work of the Spirit. God has placed His Spirit and His fire inside every believer, and we need to make sure not to put this fire out in ourselves or be a part of putting out the fire in someone else.

### SERMON LINES:

This message will help prepare your heart for true revival by a Holy Spirit-led change of mind in repentance. This message will also illuminate the elements of a changing of the mind in genuine repentance and lasting heart change that are prerequisites for revival.

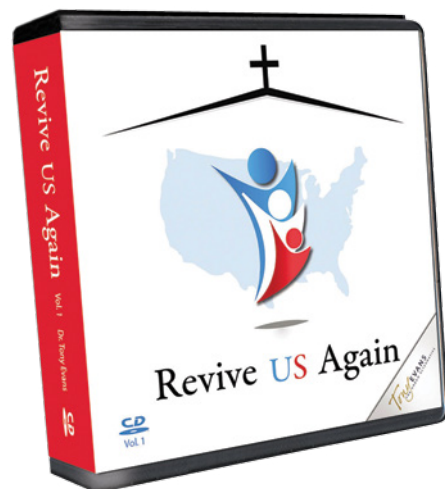
### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"We want God to visit our situation, circumstances, and bring revival. But we want that without a good path for Him."

"We can talk about Daniel, Jacob, Joshua, Ruth, Naomi, Rahab, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and we can tell the biblical story. But there's something different when He lands on your story."

"Whenever your mind and God's mind disagree, you must come to the conclusion that you're wrong."

"Our nation is saying 'God Bless America,' but we want Him to land on a road full of mountains and hills and valleys. That's not a landing—that's a crash."



**GO,** therefore



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*“You will be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*  
*Acts 1:8*

**That includes in our Jerusalem. In our Judea.  
In Baltimore. Dallas. Miami. Detroit.**

**Our society's problems are not solely our government's problem.  
It is the church's problem. It is our problem.**

The National Church Adopt-a-School Initiative equips churches to partner with schools to change our nation through a proven model of community impact programs.



“What Tony Evans is doing is not just commendable. It's absolutely necessary. It is a comprehensive answer to addressing the urgent and pressing issue in America.”

— Tony Dungy



[ChurchAdoptASchool.org](http://ChurchAdoptASchool.org)

*Rebuilding Communities  
Intentionally*

## A One-Day Training Initiative for Community Impact

### Public Schools Outreach

This six-hour workshop offers pastors and church leaders the building blocks for starting or enhancing the delivery of social services to urban youth and families. Participants will understand the process for adopting public schools and creating programs, including school-based mentoring, to meet the vast needs of public school youth and their families.

The core of the training involves:  
strengthening your capacity for ministry  
• strategic outreach blueprint • how to develop partner relations • resourcing the vision • reaching the lost