

REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 5:

A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY FOR REVIVAL

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

¹² "Yet even now," declares the Lord,
"Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
¹³ 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.
¹⁴ 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?
¹⁵ Blow a trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,
¹⁶ 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.
¹⁷ 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.**



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- 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.



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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."



our society's problem
is not solely our *government's* problem.
it is **the church's** problem.
it is *our* problem.

