

REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 6:

WHEN A NATION FORGETS GOD

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

¹ Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ² It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ 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. ⁴ 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." ⁵ The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹ 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





REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

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!'"