

# REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

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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## 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."

