

'Revival-the Glory Is Gone'

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer preaches about the need for revival and the importance of seeking moral change, separation from the world, and a deeper relationship with God.

Scripture: Psalm 85:1

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Revival"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the urgent need for revival in the church and society, lamenting the absence of God's glory and the moral decline of the land. He reflects on Psalm 85, highlighting the historical context of God's favor and the necessity for repentance and spiritual renewal. Tozer critiques the superficial understanding of revival as merely a pleasant experience without true moral change, urging believers to seek genuine transformation through God's mercy. He calls for a return to holiness, joy, and a deep hunger for God's Word, while recognizing the challenges posed by societal distractions and spiritual apathy. Ultimately, Tozer encourages individuals to pursue personal revival, emphasizing that true change begins within each believer.

Transcript

Revival, the Glory is Gone

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

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This is the first of two talks. The one this morning and one next Sunday morning, following and completing it, though each talk will be complete in itself. If you miss one you would still have received the advantages or benefits of a complete sermon. The 85th Psalm, the prayer of the man of God for revival among his people. Now, and tonight incidentally, I want to give the second of two sermons on how to cultivate the Spirit's companionship. And we're expecting a fine crowd. We hope that you can be present. The 85th Psalm describes conditions, verses one, two, and three. Lord, Thou hast been favorable unto our land. Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people. Thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath and Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.

Now, that apparently is a description of a time which has been, when God has been favorable and the people had been removed because of God's displeasure, but brought back again because of His mercy. And some historic period gone by, under Judges or Ezra or Nehemiah is described here, when God was favorable to his people. But verse four says quite bluntly that the need has arrived again. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. It seems that they had gotten into a place where they needed again this same resurgence of spiritual life which they had had under Moses or the judges or under Nehemiah. And they knew that God was going to have to use strong measures to bring them where they should be.

And the next verse draws hope. Verse four draws hope from the past. And that is the habit, the way the mind works, that we draw hope from the past. Actually, we ought to draw hope from the Word. That is, if God made a promise, we ought to believe the promise if we had no historic proof that He had ever fulfilled it in the past. That would be faith in God without any confirmatory historic proofs, but apparently, we don't work like that. And our minds need the collateral help that historic proof brings. So, we remember the past; Thou hast been favorable in times gone by to Thy people. Thou hast turned our captivity. Thou hast blessed Thy people in Thy land. And now Lord, we need help again. And we draw mercies from the fact, or draw hope from the fact of Thy mercies of the past and believe that Thou who didst turn our people in days gone by, will turn Thy people again. That seems to be the logic of the prayer. And in verse five, they're living under a shadow. Wilt Thou be angry with us forever? Wilt Thou draw out thine anger to all generations? So, there seems to be an admission that there has been a long displeasure of God upon the people. And then in verse seven, or verse six he says, wilt Thou not revive us again?

You know, I've been hearing everywhere I go that word "revival." I just got a letter yesterday saying we're going to have a meeting at such and such a lunch hour and we want to discuss how we can have revival in the city of Chicago. And wherever you go, you'll run into men who are talking about revival. There is a feeling I believe that revival is a sort of a fragrant wind that blows in over us and marvelously quickens us and helps us like an oxygen tent to a sick man, and leaves us about where it found us. There is no moral change. There is no cross-bearing and no separation from the world and no death to our evil natures and no restitution and no straightening out with people with whom we've quarreled. No getting right with God anywhere, but simply a revival. And we want that benign, fragrant breeze to blow so bad that we're willing to spend hours on our knees in gatherings praying for revival.

Well, I don't know whether I can go along with this at all or not. I can't see how it can possibly be scriptural because I remember a man who once lay on his face, because the armies of Israel were being defeated. And he was praying, O God, what's happened that we have been sent in headlong flight and our people have been defeated. And God said, don't lie there on your face Joshua and pray for revival. Get up, there's a cursed thing in the camp. And if you will get up and find that cursed thing and get rid of it, why I'll go before your armies as I did before, and there will be no difficulty. And you can cut down your time in prayer, if you will get up and get rid of the accursed thing. So they got up, brought the tribes before them and they found Achan and his golden wedge and goodish Babylonish garment. And they grabbed up some stones under Mose's direction and they wrought capital punishment upon Achan and his tribe. And then the next day they went out to the battle and won. God is not to be coaxed into doing that which is in violation of His laws. And when we are in accord with His laws, we can get on with a great deal less coaxing and spend a lot more time thanking and praising.

Well, there's a lot of revival praying that isn't going to do any good, and I, for my part, don't like to waste anything. I've wasted so much money and I've wasted so many years, and I've wasted so much nerve

energy in my day. And I've wasted so much time and so much of everything that I don't want to waste anything more. I don't even want to waste a prayer. So there is no new reason in the world, no use, for us to get on our knees and pray for God to send or blow a divine breath over us and quickened us when it's obvious that we're not going to go along with God in the thing. We're living so that His shadow lies upon us and there's a coldness upon our hearts. So therefore, we think to break that down and literally storm heaven by violence and get God to do which God has sworn He would never do, and avoid doing the thing that we have been commanded to do.

Well, the man says, show us Thy mercy, O God, show us Thy mercy. And my brethren, if ever there was a time when we needed to be constantly saying, O God, be merciful unto us, be merciful unto us. In these modern times we're taught to, we believe in Christ and that settles it, and after that we're not to pray for mercy at all. I think that the old Catholic Church and some of the old brethren of days gone by may have carried it too far in other direction, but we're certainly going too far in our direction. They were always begging for mercy, but apparently never quite sure whether they got it or not. But nowadays, they say ask for mercy and then believe you have it and get up and go on from there. Well, that's good and it's true, but it isn't true enough and it doesn't go far enough. The fact is, I need the mercy of God on me every day I live.

When I get up in the morning and begin to say in my heart, Let Jesus Christ be praised, I need the mercy of God to make that prayer acceptable. And when I get on my knees to ask God for anything, I need to be bathed in mercy and supported with mercy and upheld with mercy and, and, and that I need to roll and turn in mercy like a gear in oil. I need to have mercy underneath me as the hard earth upon which I can walk and is the atmosphere that I can breathe and the sun to shine on me to give me light and warmth, and all the help I need. I need the mercy of God. Show us Thy mercy is verse seven, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. And every church ought to be thus praying, God, show us Thy mercy. Have mercy upon us, O God. David said in one place, have mercy upon me and hear my prayer. Why even his prayers had to be bathed in mercy. And the holiest thing a man can do has to have the mercy of God underneath it or it will amount to nothing at all.

And he said in verse nine, that glory may dwell in our land. Now, woe and alas for you and me, for we have not seen the glory in our land. We know only one kind of glory, the vulgar glory of the world, its coarse tastes and its low amusements and its sights and its noises. And God's people always ignore it and tolerate it. The glory is not in our land.

And I heard the other day on an interview or somewhere that, or read it that there are a thousand juvenile gangs in Brooklyn alone. One thousand gangs that do everything from mugging people, that is, grabbing them and beating them up and stealing their money-to murder. And you heard, you read yesterday of the two-hour siege that was laid to the, by young people to the prison, or to the palace at Atlanta where the governor lived? Well, those are only samples. Thank God for all the fine young people there are. Thank God for all these young people that sit along here; will never we'll never know these things. Thank God for all of them.

But nevertheless, our country knows little of the glory that our fathers knew, the glory that our fathers knew. There is a preacher of the gospel, so I understand, who either has given or is going to give a talk-and what do you suppose the subject of his talk is? The theology of jazz! He is the man who won \$32,000 on "Ask Me an Easy Question" for \$64,000 here the other day. And he knew more about jazz, I would be willing to wager a plug nickel, than he did about the Holy Ghost, or that he did about his Bible.

And he is going to give a talk on the theology of jazz.

Well, sir, I know a good teacher to teach the theology of jazz, Brother. If you would rather have somebody teach the theology of jazz and teach that tough when you got Wednesday night on the teleological and ontological arguments for the existence of God? I'll tell you where you can get a teacher. There are artists of the past who have painted him with a long tail and horns and spiked feet. The devil is the best teacher for the theology of jazz. And yet there are those who are so intimately stupid and so spiritually blind, that they have accepted all of this and nervous, sexually inspired communists, fostered business that's going on in our country as being the very way of God itself; as been geared to the times and as being a part of the total picture of the gospel of Christ.

Well, my brethren, the glory is not in our land, of that, I'm sure. The coarse amusements and sights and noises that are heard everywhere; the pipings and peepings and rattlings and gutturals and the grinding and, and jumping that is said to be music. My brethren, the Holy Ghost isn't in it. Such things as that are not heard in heaven. You will hear them in hell, certainly, a lot of that'll be heard in hell. And those who go to that place of fire and everlasting remorse, may be able in the midst of self-accusation and self-hatred and everlasting sorrow, to beat to their hot hands together, and grind and roll. They wouldn't be doing it for Jesus. There's no jumping for Jesus nor grinding for the gospel. My brethren, that is hell taking over and coming in, smelling of brimstone into the house of God, and saying, now, let us, let us be religious for the time being. And so, we'll get the support and the applause of these blind saint-lets, half in and half out of the Kingdom, afraid to get all the way in for fear of what it will cost them and afraid to stay out through fear they will perish in hell. And so, hanging halfway in the ropes between yes and no, between the gospel and the world, between heaven and hell? They grin and applaud while Satan claps his bony hands and grinds and rolls the gospel.

Oh, my brother, the glory is not in our land. The glory has departed, and it's not in our land. O God, in mercy let the glory come back again. The Christians are pushed around and their conveniences are never sought. Always they're ignored and tolerated, except for their votes, of course, and for what they can do by way of a financial lift. Everybody comes to them that wants a little financial help, because they're supposed to be a generous people, and God bless them, they are. But they're helping to support an infinite number of things that were never inspired by God. They're helping to fumigate trees that were never planted by our Father in heaven. And the axe lies now at the root of those same trees, and there'll be a mighty crash in the forest when they go down, never to arise again.

Well, the poor church is forced to get along and beg nickels. The people of God, the church of God, will always have to take second best; always, or third or tenth best. What we do is always bound to be amateurism, always, because we can't do, we don't have the money. The money goes to the world. And the church of Jesus Christ struggles along the best that it can.

O God, where is the glory? Where is the glory? The glory is absent. Times have been when Christians were so zealous that they changed the life of communities, the whole life of communities. There was a missionary who went into a certain Island or set of islands, and they said about him when he went in, there wasn't a Christian, and when he left there wasn't a pagan. It was John Payton, the great Englishman.

My brethren, there have been evangelists in days gone by who have gone into cities, and when they went in, there was hardly a crowd in any church. And when they left there wasn't a man in any saloon. When the gambling dens closed up, and their chagrined and frustrated leaders left town. And the gospel of Christ

came and overflowed and purified like Ezekiel's river, even the little towns. But that day seems to be over now. Meetings come and sweep over and get the headlines and leave the town right where it found them before. There isn't one less man in a theater, not one less woman in the saloon, not one less young man in a gambling den, not one fewer person at the racetrack, not one fewer divorce, not one change for the best, or the better. But they've had a huge time. My brethren, the glory is not in the land and oh, that God might bring it back to us again, again.

When our habits, when habits and moral standards and the things that we're amused by are elevated habits when habits and moral standards, and the things that we're amused by are elevated and changed and some say, there goes Tozer. He's against amusements and entertainment. I am not. I think that there are some things you can't always be under strain. The old philosopher said that if you don't unstring your bow, it'll soon weaken. They used to pull that bow and bend it. And then of course, tie it. And if they kept it like that all the time, it would slowly change its structure so that it had no more zing in it. But when they weren't using their bow, they took the cord off of it and let it go straight. So said the philosophers of old. The bow that is always bent will soon lose its power. And we human beings have to have some diversions. We've got to have them. You can't always be thinking on holy thoughts and you can't always be straining after highest things and you can't always be carrying upon your heart the thoughts of the glory leaving the land and the woe entering. You can't always be deadly serious. If you are, you'll die. There has to be diversion.

One fella said sarcastically about me, he said, Tozer believes in amusements. He's a marvelous checker player. He meant that to be sarcastic, and I think I've played one game in the last year. But my brethren, diversion is one thing. But the whole country has gone wild for diversion. Instead of having 95% serious talks of God and life and death and heaven and hell and our work and our serious obligations and 5% diversion, we've changed it until it's 95% diversion and five stingy percent to think about serious things. I believe that if God revives His people as we'd like to see it, that we'll have it changed. We'll have a changed percentage, as they say percentage-wise, an expression I thoroughly detest, but at least know you know what I mean? I believe it'll change us percentage-wise.

Well, you say, now Brother Tozer, here you go again. What do you want us to be? What do you want us to be? What kind of people do you think we should be? And if this church should be revived again, if there should come a rejuvenation, a resurgence of spiritual life, an upper rushing of spiritual power, what would we be like? What would we be like? Well, I want to describe it. I want to describe this church, if we could have what I'm talking about and praying about and hoping for. I would I would want such an act and work of God among us as would make us a clean people, a people that are pure and holy.

Now, is anybody here going to get up and object to that? Is there anybody here that is ready to say, I can't go along with the pastor that our people ought to be a holy people, a truer people, so good that nobody can make an accusation stick. Anybody here that will get up and say, Mr. Tozer, I don't believe in that? That's fanaticism. That's extremism. Surely, you don't expect us to be a people so morally clean and pure and holy and so good that nobody can charge us honestly and make an accusation stick, that we can get up and say about our present and future lives as Jesus did? Which one of you charges me with sin, our past? God knows. We like to talk about that only with hushed voices, because the blood of Christ had to cleanse us from that.

But our present and our future, anybody going to get up and say, I object, sir, Mr. Chairman, I stand to object to this motion, that the people of this church ought to be a clean people, a pure a holy people,

capable of good works again. My concept for us is that we'd be a loving, kind, charitable people, forgiving and big-hearted and tight-mouthed about each other's faults, mine and yours. Anybody going to get up and say, Mr. Chairman, I beg permission to make a speech against that. I don't want to see our people as forgiving, big-hearted, kind, charitable people ready to overlook people's faults and tight-mouthed about things they hear. I don't want a church like that.

Well, there's no church like that in hell, brother. There is no church like that, I think anywhere but where the blood flows and the Spirit of God has unhindered right of way. That's my concept of what a church ought to be. Do you think it's extreme if I say that I want our people to be a glad, joyous people, filled with heavenly joy? Not mere pleasantries, not mere, not mere hand shaking, not mere cordiality. Why, cordiality is something you can learn from books. You can go to any library. These ushers of ours can go to any library and take down a book on how to be an usher. Just how to stand and how to smile and how to comb their hair, if any, and just how to do it.

Why, you can learn that. And they teach that to kids when they're selling in the stores, and they teach that to girls behind the counters in 10-cent stores. They teach that to Fuller Brush salesman, and radio announcers learn that. Cordiality, congeniality, the magnetic handshake and the flashing smile and the toothy grin; all that my brother can be right along, and go along with a church that has no power and no purity and no presence of God and no worship. The church that is headed not for heaven but for hell, And yet they can be a social crowd, learning to be jovial and friendly. And yet if you want real joviality and real back slapping congeniality, don't go to any church, go to a lodge, or go to some group, where men meet in smoke-filled rooms and tell off-colored stories. There's a place to find real congeniality brother. They'll make you feel that you're a part of the outfit and you belong.

That isn't what I'm talking about at all. The man who wrote "How to win friends and influence people" died the other day. He left behind him that book, and if that's what we wanted, why we could afford to put on the campaign and you would pay for it. You'd pay for anything I suggest, I found that out. That's the reason I wanted to be most prayerful and cautious before I ever commit to anything because you're so fine and generous. But you'd pay for books so that all might read how we might be jovial, congenial, affable, amiable, and all those long words ending in el. And when you had it, you wouldn't have anything at all.

But I believe that the people of God are to be a glad people. A joyous people, glad with a heavenly joy. Not mere pleasantries, but glad with a heavenly joy. I think of that man {Paris} Reidhead that preached here for us. Why, maybe most of you, I think very few of you know him personally. You only heard him preach and you enjoyed him a lot; hearing him last Spring. But you ought to know the man in person. You ought to go around with the man. He's one of the happiest men I ever met my life. He's joyful to the point of tears; happy and yet he can say a witticism and, and turn a funny remark that will bring you the house down with laughter. And yet he's no clown, no comedian, no humorist, but a serious-minded man, full of the Holy Ghost, and one of the happiest men I've ever met.

The happiness that man has is not the happiness of this world at all. It isn't the happiness of conviviality nor congeniality. It is the happiness that God brought out of the tomb when He raised His Son from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. It is the joy of the new creation living in a man's heart who belongs to that new creation, down here in the old creation. That's what I mean, a happy people, people that you don't have to grind and roll in order to get them worked up to joy, but whose hearts are alive with the joy of God. Oh, brother, that's something else altogether.

Are you're voting against that if we were to take a vote this morning and I were to put the question and say, would we have all those in favor of our people being a glad people, joyous with heavenly joy and radiant with the Holy Ghost? All in favor say aye. Would we get a unanimous vote or would there be some who say that's fanaticism? All right, then I can see this people to be an eager and enthusiastic people. Excuse us for having my conference here. But an eager, enthusiastic people; now that's what I like. Not a worked-up people, but an eager, enthusiastic people.

Against that, my brother? If you're against that, I don't know where to put you. I believe God's people ought to be enthusiastic. And I believe that if we were as spiritually enthusiastic as we ought to be, that we could send out one, two dollars for every one we're sending to missions, and we could send out two missionaries for every one we've sent out. And we could win two souls forever to one we're winning. And we could hit the city just twice as hard as we are hitting it.

And then, hungry Bible devouring people. That's five. Anybody here going to get up and vote against that? Did you read your chapter? You say, all right, very good, sir. But a hungry, Bible-devouring people that delights in the law of the Lord. I might pass on this little word to you and keep it anonymous, so not to embarrass anybody. But I've had a lot of conferences over the past weeks with people who come to see me. And I regret to say that almost all of them are persons that are either in very great spiritual trouble, or else are actually mentally and nervously going to pieces, or in danger of it.

But the other day, I had another kind of visitor. A lady asked whether she might come to see me a few minutes before the prayer meeting, and I said, Sure, run upstairs and we'll have a word together. So, she came up. And she told me a wonderful, heart-engaging story, the story of her spiritual life, being brought up in a home where everybody was strait-laced and careful; and where she ran with only religious and the best people, and never committed wrongs or did anything at all that she shouldn't be ashamed of. But that all this time, out in the eastern city, even in the Alliance, and all this time did not know what it was to have the Holy Ghost inside her bosom. It was all external, right and good and scriptural and according to the law of Moses and the prophets and the New Testament. But now she said, and the tears ran down her face. Now, the Holy Ghost has come. There's new light inside. This Bible has become a new book and she held it in her two hands. This Bible has become a new book to me now. It's wonderful. Now, that woman is modest and she'd hesitate to get up and say it herself, but I'm giving her testimony for her. Now, I want to ask you, can anybody can hug this Bible and say the Holy Ghost has made this for the first time, a new living book to me. Does anybody object to that? Would anybody rise and say, I don't believe in that. I object, sir, and I vote against it. I don't believe there is.

Then, I believe that we could become a generous people. Great grace should be upon us all and that we could give freely, more freely than ever, all of our wealth to the Lord. Anybody object to that? I think not. And then a reproducing people, the people who will win people to God, that can win souls. Anybody object? I think not. Now, that's what I mean. O God, if glory should return to our land?

Well, I don't know that glory will ever return to America. I don't know. There are two sinister forces of work tearing America to pieces, two sinister forces. I don't say much about them in public. I do not want to get a reputation any more than I have for being a radical or extremist. And these are partly political, so I do not discuss them. But there are two sinister forces that are working to tear America to pieces: brainwashing a whole population. Brainwashing, by midst of books and magazine, by the use of books and magazines and television and radio and all this. Brainwashing and conditioning psychologically a generation for the coming of communism, or Catholicism or the Antichrist.

So, I don't know whether America can ever raise her head again. She's bleeding to death. And whether she'll survive as a Christian nation, another generation, I do not know. But revival can come on three levels. It can come on the community level, which would be our land. It can come on the church level, which would be our church. It can come on the individual personal level, which would be you or me or you and me.

So next Sunday, in the morning, I want to forget America, and I even want to forget this church. And I want to talk as one man to another one. How can you have a personal revival? How can you have a resurgence of Pentecostal life surging up within you and show you how you can have, not next year, not next week, but now. I hope you'll be here and that you'll pray for me in the meantime.

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