

# Start Weeping Before You Go to Church

by Brad Allen

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to repent and seek God's revival in their lives, highlighting the reasons for weeping in the church and the importance of prayer and the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 38:38

**Scripture:** Joel 2:12-15, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Weeping"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the current state of America, particularly focusing on the rising fuel prices and the subsequent increase in the cost of living. He observes that people are becoming more desperate, trying to consume more and go into debt. The preacher also mentions a TV ad that exemplifies the desire for instant gratification and material possessions. He emphasizes the need for church members to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to weep before coming to church, as he believes that America is facing judgment due to open rebellion, immorality, and a collapse of moral foundations.

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## Transcript

Good morning, dear people. It's a delight to be here. For these past nine years, I have been preaching spiritual awakening conferences around the nation.

I would ask you to pray. Nancy and I will be leaving in a week. I'll be preaching in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

And I would ask you to pray for these places where I'll be. This preaching in Montana is going to be kind of a new experience. I'll be preaching in Montana in a cowboy camp meeting under a big tent.

That ought to be interesting. This has been a wonderful journey these past nine years. I never dreamed, never could have dreamed, that I'd be in the places where I've been.

I've preached, I believe, I have it on the computer, I think I have preached 95 of these spiritual awakening conferences in 17 different states and in Scotland. It's been a glorious journey. This is a brand new message.

I never preached it. And after I finish, you may say, well, I wish you hadn't. The title of the message this morning, Start Weeping Before You Get to Church.

I want you to turn to the book of Joel, the book of Joel chapter 2. I want to give just a slight introduction before I start reading the Scripture, just to set the stage for you. The time of Joel the prophet was a terrible time in the life of Israel. Horrible time.

Everything, everything that you could name was going downhill. In fact, Joel mentions it, I believe, three times in his little book that the neighbors of Israel, the pagan neighbors, they were going by and saying to Israel, where is your God? If your God is so wonderful, where is your God? Where is he? Immorality was rampant in the life of Israel. The nation had forgotten God.

That wasn't bad enough. A horrible, horrible invasion of locusts had swept into the nation of Israel and had eaten everything. All of the crops were gone.

It hadn't rained. Everything was burned up. And Joel comes along in chapter 2, beginning in verse 12.

Let's read. Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. And he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing, grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion. Declare a holy fast. Call a sacred assembly.

Gather the people. Consecrate the assembly. Bring together the elders.

Gather the children, even those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Note this verse.

Let the priest, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let the priest, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. In this day and time, under Jesus Christ, all of us are priests unto God.

And I believe that it is time for us to start weeping. Rather than weeping from the front porch of the church to the altar, I think I would suggest this morning that we start weeping before we leave home. It's time for believers in America to begin weeping.

I'm tired of people. I'm tired of people going by our churches in America and saying, Where is your God? I'm tired of turning on the television and hearing people say, Where is your God? Where is your God? Look at our nation today. The two largest churches in America today, the two largest, one, Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas.

They average about 47,000 people that worship. Almost every place I go, in every state, wherever I go in the nation to preach, there will be at least one person come up to me and say, Oh, my favorite preacher, have you heard Joel Osteen? I said, Yes. He's not a preacher.

He's a motivational speaker, dear people. He never mentions sin. He never mentions Christ on the cross.

He never mentions being saved. He's a motivational speaker. The other large church, it's now the largest church in America, and it just started on March 1st of this year, is Oprah Winfrey's church, New Earth Movement.

By the Internet, on March 1st, 2008, they had their first Internet broadcast. They had 300,000. Two weeks later, they had 2 million people tuned in.

You know what Oprah Winfrey's church believes? The New Earth Movement. Here are some of the things. Who you are requires no belief.

Second, heaven is not a location. It is a realm of consciousness. Third, the man on the cross is only an image.

The man on the cross is every man and woman. Four, my mind is God's. I am very holy.

Five, my holiness is my salvation. Sixth belief, my salvation comes from me. Seventh, let me remember there is no sin.

The eighth belief, do not make the pathetic error of clinging to the old rugged cross. Those are the two largest churches in America. People are flocking to them.

It is time for us to start weeping before we even get to church. We're living in a day when people will believe anything. Anything in the world.

Greg Frizzell, who is director of the Office of Spiritual Awakening at our Oklahoma Baptist Convention, in his latest book, I just finished reading it. It's not out yet, but he sent me a copy. Tremendous book.

Iceberg Dead Ahead. In this book, Greg Frizzell said, something huge is coming, and God's people are dangerously unresponsive and unprepared. A truer sentence has never been written.

Something huge is coming, and the church in America is unprepared and totally unresponsive to it. It would be so much easier, so much easier for us just to keep our heads buried in the sand, keep on just pushing our little programs, singing our songs, giving a few dollars, and just hope everything's going to work out. It's going to be fine.

This morning, very, very hope shortly, I want to give you eight reasons why we need to start weeping before we ever get to church. Reason number one, we must weep before we get to church because of the collapse of our nation's moral foundations. Dear people, this moral collapse that I'm talking about is not just happening out there in the world.

It's happening in the church. It has invaded the church. It is epidemic.

Men and women living together has increased in the last 10 years in our nation, living together without getting married, it has increased by 500% in the last 10 years. We have murdered, we have murdered 50 million babies in America by abortion because they are unwanted or they're inconvenient. That's what the Nazis did during World War II.

The moral collapse of our nation is terrible. One-third of the men in churches in America, one-third of the men in churches in America are addicted to pornography, one-third. Homosexuality is rampant.

We have become a society given over to depravity and perversion. Sometime go and read the first chapter of Romans. You need to read it and study it.

Gambling has become epidemic. No longer do you have to go to Las Vegas. Just go up 81 Highway.

Go anywhere in Oklahoma. Pretty soon there's going to be an Indian casino on every block in Oklahoma. It's become epidemic.

And Christians do all kinds of word games about the gambling and the lottery and all of this. All kinds of word games trying to satisfy their conscience and they say things, what, all the money is going to education. Listen to the Apostle Paul and Jesus himself.

Jesus said many leaders are going to show up with forged identities claiming I am Christ the Messiah. They will deceive a lot of people. Nation will fight nation.

Ruler fight ruler over and over again. Famines and earthquakes will occur in various places. This is nothing compared to what is coming.

They're going to throw you to the wolves and kill you. Everyone hating you because you carry my name. And then going from bad to worse, it's going to be dog eat dog, everyone at each other's throat, everyone hating each other.

And then the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy, he said as the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money hungry, self-promoting, stuck up, profane, disobedient to parents, crude, coarse, dog eat dog, unbending, slanderers, impulsively wild, savage, cynical, treacherous, ruthless, bloated windbags, addicted to lust, allergic to God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. The people of our nation are in a frenzy. We're on the front porch, dear people, of a terrible time in America.

Have you noticed the price of fuel at the gas pump? Do you know what that's causing? The price of everything, food, everything is going up. People are beginning to suffer, and they're going to suffer more and more and more. And people are in a frenzy trying to buy more, eat more, consume more, go in debt more.

I was watching yesterday, you might have seen it, a popular TV ad that's on television right now. It tells the whole story. A wife walks in and tells her husband, well, our old TV went out.

We need a new TV. And he jumps up, and he runs to the store, and here are all these widescreen plasma TVs, and he's just looking at the big wall of them, and he sits down over here, calls on his cell phone, calling his credit card company to see how much money he can spend, and then the song comes on. The song comes on.

I want it all. I want it all. And I want it now.

That's us. We want it all. And we want it now.

It's time for us to begin weeping before we get to church. Isaiah put it very succinctly. Isaiah said, Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.

Second reason, we must weep before we get to church, because we've lost our fear of God and our respect for the church. Do you realize that in one generation, one generation, the church in America has gone from having a strong public influence to being the only group in America that it is fashionable to mock and slander? You just listen on television. They slander the church.

They slander Christianity. But no, we can't say a word against the Muslims. That's not politically correct.

It's fashionable today to slander the church. Muslims today are more respected in America than the churches. We've lost our fear of God.

No one in church even considers living in the fear of God. There was a day in America when we highly respected the clergy, but that day is long gone today, and now a church member would as soon cuss the pastor as consulting. It's time to weep.

It's time to weep before we even get to church, much less weep from the front porch to the altar. Third reason. We must weep before we get to church because the church people are getting older and older and older.

In evangelical churches in America, listen to this, in evangelical churches in America, three out of every four young people abandon the church when they leave home. Three out of every four. They just quit.

Now, if you are in the fifth grade through the twelfth grade here this morning, would you stand up just real quick? The fifth grade through the twelfth grade. Some in the balcony, some in the balcony. Here's the fifth grade through the twelfth grade.

Statistically, you count these off, you count them off, and three out of every four of these young people will quit the church when they leave home. That's what's happening in America today. I pray that you're not part of that group.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Larger and larger numbers of voters in our nation, they go to the polls to vote in America today with no biblical foundation, no biblical values, so they just elect anyone and anything that premises them whatever they need.

In Canada and Holland today, it is against the law, churches cannot say one word against homosexuality or they will be arrested. Secular education, the media, music, Hollywood, television are so aligned against God and biblical truth. In a large number of colleges and universities across our nation, our young people are taught in colleges and universities to be anti-American, hate the church, revise history, and laugh at creation, and you mark it down, whoever or whatever controls the minds of our young people will soon control the nation.

As the age of the church gets older and older in America, and it has, the people in the church are getting older and older, soon the church will disappear in America. You made a statement in class. What was your statement about closing churches? President of our Southern Baptist Convention said, by 2030, there will be half the number of Southern Baptist churches in our nation than there are right now.

Doors closing. What would happen? What would happen if suddenly, suddenly without any warning, everyone in your church, now it's my church, I'm a member here now again, what would happen in our church if everyone over the age of 50 just suddenly disappeared? If you are 49 years of age or younger, stand up right now. If you're 49 or younger, in 10 to 15 years, this is First Baptist Church Duncan, unless revival comes.

In 10 to 15 years, this will be the Sunday morning attendance in First Baptist Church. Thank you. The church is getting older and older.

Unless there is great revival, unless there is great revival, the churches are dying. But then people, they come up to me, and they say, oh, but Brad, Brad, we'll just get more members. We'll win more people to

Jesus Christ.

Well, there's only one thing wrong with that. It's not happening. It's going the other way.

Last year, baptisms were their lowest in Baptist churches in Oklahoma in the last 50 years. Last year, the Southern Baptist Convention, baptisms were down. They were their lowest in several years.

By and large, baptisms in Southern Baptist churches are getting to where they are biological baptisms. That means we're just baptizing our own kids, and that's about it. That's about all.

There are 48,000 Southern Baptist churches in our nation. Last year, 48,000, 10,000 Southern Baptist churches reported zero baptisms. Zero.

None. None. We've got to begin to weep.

We need to weep before we ever get to church. We need to weep and weep and weep. The fourth reason.

We need to weep before we get to church because our churches are going downhill. Did you realize North America is the only continent on earth where the church is not growing? Every other continent, the church is exploding. 30% of all churches in America will close their doors in the next 15 years by statistics.

30%. Churches are declining, declining, declining. 70% of Southern Baptist churches are declining.

Declining, going down, going down. And this is at the same time, the same time we're having evangelism programs, promotion, growth message, methods, ministerial training, prayer ministries. We're having new worship styles.

We're trying everything in the world to get the church to grow, but we're declining. Look at attendance ratios. Here's a church over here someplace.

They have 1,500 members, 300 of them in attendance. Another church, 600 members and 75 in attendance. Churches are declining.

They're going downhill. This is a day for revival. It is a day for weeping.

We need to weep before we ever get to church. Let the priests who minister at the altars weep from the front porch to the altar. Fifth reason, we need to weep before we get to church because we're not reaching anyone.

Old Vance Habner, that old preacher, he's been in glory for several years now. Old Vance Habner once said, churches today are not fishers of men. Churches today are just keepers of the aquarium swapping a few fish.

Sometimes I think in cities and towns where there's more than one Baptist church, they ought to make a rule. I know this is not Baptist. I realize that.

But they ought to make a rule that once you join a Baptist church in a certain town, you can't move your membership to another. You have to stay where you are and settle your problems. People just move over here.

Well, I'm not happy there. I'm going to move over here and I'm going to try this. Well, no, I'm going to try.

Churches today just shifting corpse from one morgue to another. Today, most people, a lot of people go to conferences and conventions just to eat, gossip, and shop. You ought to be weeping.

Weeping. It's time to weep. I've never told this story anywhere, anytime.

Never have. I don't know why. It makes me sad.

I don't want to be misunderstood. The first book I wrote, *Catch the Wind*, on this glorious, wonderful revival on the island of Lewis off the west coast of Scotland. Four years ago, I called the Baptist building.

I got permission. I got permission to go up and set up a table at the state evangelism conference, which that year was at First Baptist Church, Moore, to set up a table out in the hallway, you know, to make my books available, to sell my books. I had them there.

I had sheets there with the price of the book and everything. Now, I've been all over this nation. I've made my books available at all of these churches where I go.

Never had a problem one in churches. Never a problem. Never.

I go to the Oklahoma Evangelism Conference, and in two hours, in two hours, I sold two books and had eight stolen. I got so sad, so sad. I just boxed up my books after two hours and came home.

I thought, Lord, Lord, Lord. We need revival. Whoever stole them, I just hope they're ready.

Those we do baptize, they're usually gone in a few months. In the last 25 years, more books have been written on prayer, revival, and spiritual awakening than in the previous 100 years. But the more we read and study revival, the less people we're reaching, the farther we're getting from revival.

Something has got to happen. It's time for us to start weeping in repentance. Six.

We need to start weeping before we leave home because the churches of America have almost completely abandoned prayer meeting. In the Bible and in church history, where there was no great prevailing church prayer, you will always find a church with no revival. None.

There has to be prevailing prayer. And along with abandoning prayer, our churches today are abandoning special times of revival or spiritual awakening. It's time for us to weep and weep and weep.

Seven. We need to weep before we get to church because our churches are filled with unregenerate church members and saved members who are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, I know he was talking about all churches of all kinds.

Years ago, Billy Graham once said that he thought 75% of the church members in America were lost. Think what that means. Look at our church.

Look at this church. I was pastor here for 17 years. Naturally, I won't call out any names, but there were people that in the 17 years that I thought they were here, their names were on the roll.

They were members of this church in 17 years. I never saw them. And that's still true today.

Church members who never come, who never worship, never sing, never attend, never do anything. Why? It's because they've never been saved. Never.

I am a strong proponent of once saved, always saved. I believe that once you're born again of the Spirit of God that you're saved forever and you can never lose it. But that doctrine can cause a multitude of trouble in the lives of people who think, I'll just join the church and I can do what I want to.

I don't ever have to come because I'm saved forever. No, no. And then church members who've been born again, but they're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

All across this nation, I say this in churches, the greatest need I see in churches today in America is for the members in those churches to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the greatest need I see. How can a saved person who's not filled with the Spirit, how do they operate in the church? How can they do God's work? How do they know what to do or when to do it or how to speak? We don't have to wonder why there's so much trouble in the church in America, why there's this bickering and fussing and fighting and gossiping and rumor.

It's because church members who are not filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Number eight, glory. Last one.

We need to start weeping before we get to church, dear people, because the biblical keys of judgment are on the horizon. Those things that are in the Bible that speaks of judgment coming. First, there's open rebellion in spite of God's blessings.

God has blessed America abundantly. But in America, there's open rebellion to that blessing. That's a key to the judgment of God.

Second, there are churches that are spiritually weak and powerless to turn the tide of evil. We're just fast on the heels of England and Scotland. England and Scotland, those two nations that were the bulwark of great revival, wonderful, and you go today to England and Scotland, and it is tragic.

I've preached in Scotland. I've been there. These great, magnificent church buildings, beautiful, big things, and nobody in them.

They're gone. They're dead, dead, dead. Then the collapse of our moral and family life.

Then we have the elections of immoral and anti-Christian leaders, the explosion of political and religious scandals, and there is an alarming rise in natural and human-caused disasters. That's one of the keys to judgment in the world. In the Old Testament and the New Testament, there are several words that are translated, weep.

These words mean to bemoan, to mourn, to drip, to overflow, to sob, to wail aloud, to lament. We have lost the ability and the desire to do any of these. No one ever weeps in church anymore.

How many of you here this morning can remember way back, and you remember people weeping in church? Lift your hand. We never see anyone weep anymore. We've lost the ability, and we've lost the desire.

We never weep over the lostness of our family, of our friends. We never weep over the condition of the church. We've lost the will to weep.

Can the condition of our world be turned around? Can our churches be turned around? Is there any hope? Oh, you bet. You bet. Great revival can come.

And revival is coming to America one of these days. I don't know when. I hope I live to see it.

Listen to the Scripture. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Dear people, weep over your individual sins. Weep over church sins. Weep over indifference.

Weep over your coldness. Weep over your turmoil. Weep.

Weep because you can't weep. Start weeping before you ever get to church. In the 1950s, there were two men, preachers, who were good, good friends, Billy Graham and Chuck Templeton.

Chuck Templeton was pastor of one of Toronto, Canada's leading churches. These two men, Billy Graham and Chuck Templeton, started the Youth for Christ movement. They were instrumental in getting it started, everything.

Chuck Templeton and Billy Graham, they worked together, close friends, and Chuck Templeton was a powerful preacher. And then, suddenly, he resigned his church, quit preaching, and rejected his faith. Just quit.

Through the years, Chuck Templeton managed two of Canada's leading newspapers, and he became extremely wealthy. In later years, he wrote a book entitled, Farewell to God, My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith. When he was 83 years of age, a man named Lee Strobel interviewed Chuck Templeton.

He talked to him about a lot of things, Chuck Templeton defended his agnostic view, his rejection of a God who claimed to be loved, but allowed suffering in the world. And toward the end of the interview, Lee Strobel looked at Chuck Templeton, this 83-year-old man, and he asked Templeton, he said, How do you feel about Jesus? He said, instantly, the old man softened. And he began to speak in glowing terms of Jesus.

He said, In my view, he's the most important human being who has ever existed. And then, he said, Chuck Templeton began to weep. And he said, I miss him.

I miss him. Lee Strobel said then, Chuck Templeton's eyes flooded with tears, and he began to sob. I miss him.

Do you miss him? Just think about it. Toward the end of their journeys, Billy Graham has found Jesus to be his most prized possession. Chuck Templeton weeps because he left him years ago.

We need to weep before we ever get to church. Weep and weep. If we don't learn how, our churches will die.

Would you bow in prayer? Because of the message this morning, my first invitation would be for you, if you know Jesus Christ, to come during the invitation this morning to the altar to weep and to pray in repentance. To weep and to weep and to weep. Oh God, help us to weep.

You're here, and you look back across your life, and you say, a lot of things I could have done differently. I could have been more steadfast. I could have been more faithful.

I could have done this. Could you come and just weep and pray? Weep from the front porch to the altar. Would you do that? You're here this morning, and perhaps you've never been saved.

You can be. You can be born again. Life changed totally.

Jesus Christ can come in and possess your life, forgive your sin. Would you come this morning and accept him? You're here this morning, and you'd like to come and join the fellowship of this church by letter, by statement. I invite you to do that.

But, oh, church member, you're a member of this church. Would you come and start weeping? Start weeping at the altar in revival, awakening. We're going to sing.

And as we stand to sing, you just come. Come right now. Take up thy cross and follow me.

I heard my.

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