

## How to Survive a Tsunami

I am writing this on Friday morning after waking up to the horror of perhaps the worst earthquake in recorded history that has caused one of the worse tsunami effects as well. I am sure by the time you read these words, the tragic toll of lost lives and commerce has only escalated.

Just this morning I have dealt with two families going through “spiritual tsunamis” and need some help to stabilize and find solid ground. I see real similarities in the physical devastation and spiritual devastations. We have never been in more spiritual warfare for the Church, our families and individuals as we are right now. With that in mind, let us consider how to survive a tsunami.

### **1. Build barriers.**

After The Great Storm, also called “Isaac’s Storm” of Galveston in 1900, the town met and agreed to build a seawall. This was the worst natural disaster to ever hit the United States. Latest estimates mark the death toll of upwards to 10,000 casualties. The seawall is 10 miles long. It is approximately 17 feet high, and 16 feet thick at its base. Construction began in September 1902, and the initial segment was completed on July 29, 1904. Reporting in the aftermath of the 1983 Hurricane Alicia, the Corps of Engineers estimated that \$100 million in damage was avoided because of the seawall, not to mention more importantly, the lives saved.

Too often homes are established without barriers. We need barriers against the world to prevent moral decay. Nothing can disrupt a happy home faster than when a spouse loses interest in the things of the Lord, yea, even the Lord Himself. Jesus said, “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love*” (Revelation 2:4). A tsunami is the tidal wave caused by earthquakes. The wave that washed over much of Japan was over twenty feet tall and moving at the speed of a jet, which is approximately between five and six hundred miles per hour. Many a home and life are “washed away” in the fast moving tide of this world, because we foolishly think we are able to stand against its onslaught.

### **2. Assemble a survival pack.**

Those residents living in “The Ring of Fire,” i.e. those areas most likely to suffer from the effects of earthquakes, know how to assemble their survival packs. They load up on water, non-perishable products, canned goods and so on.

Without God’s survival pack, we won’t survive. We need the right nourishment. The Bible says, “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word*” (Psalm 119:9). “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*” (Psalm 119:11). Jesus said, “*...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4). We need the right attitude: “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee*”

(Isaiah 26:3). We need the right appetite: “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

(Matthew 6:33). We need a non-polluted water supply that will not run out: “*For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water*” (Jeremiah 2:13).

### **3. Have a planned evacuation route.**

It is good when a family knows the escape route from harm’s way. God knows the way: “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*” (I Corinthians 10:13). If we ignore God’s way and use our own humanistic instinct, we are setting ourselves up for failure: “*The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Proverbs 14: 11, 12). How sad when families are falling apart to see Christians waste time, effort and money on the counsel of the wicked. The Lord gives this warning: “*Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city*” (Ezekiel 11:2). He who made the sea and its mighty waves knows the path through as well as away from the harmful way, “*Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters*” (Isaiah 43:16).

### **4. Look for signs.**

If the sea suddenly recedes (draws back), leaving bare sand, this is a major warning sign that there is about to be a sudden surge of water inland. I saw a picture of a shoreline in Sri Lanka just before the destructive, massive tsunami struck. A deep receding took place on the shore just before the mighty punch from the ocean depths. Another tell-tale sign is when animal life heads for the hills. Before every tsunami, there is always an animal migration that takes place heading for the shoreline area.

When I see a person or family resign ministry, drop out of Sunday School, then Wednesday night, Sunday night and finally Sunday morning services, it is usually not long before the spiritual tsunami clobbers them. Often by the time this has taken place, I cannot reach them with the proverbial life preserver. “*He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*” (Proverb 29:1).

### **5. Don’t panic.**

When the common reaction to danger called “fight or flight” is placed into overdrive, this actually incapacitates

the one who needs to flee. This is when we need to trust the Lord, *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee"* (Psalm 56:3). *"...I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation"* (Isaiah 12:2).

**6. Go to high ground.**

Battles are won from the high ground. *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help"* (Psalm 121:1). God gave Lot and his family a way out of destruction when He said, *"And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"* (Genesis 19:17). Although Lot found safety, he remained in a worried state of mind, falling into the worst sin he had ever been involved in. The reason is given in our next point.

**7. Abandon hindrances that do not facilitate safety.**

The problem with Lot and his family is they escaped Sodom, but Sodom never escaped them. Experts of tsunami safety warn us to abandon unnecessary belongings. Save lives, not possessions. You will lose valuable time trying to retrieve things and belongings, hampering your escape. Grab your safety pack, something to keep you warm, your family and leave immediately. Lot's wife looked behind and was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot accepted the temporary comfort of alcoholic drink to aid his bothered heart and give him rest. Lot's daughters accepted the carnal thinking that their biological clocks would run out and broke the moral code that builds strong families and brought two cultures destined to wrong doing into the world, namely the Moabites and Ammonites.

May we all follow the admonition that says, *"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1).

**8. Hold to something stable or grab onto something that floats.**

If you cannot find a stationary structure, use a floating object as a raft to keep you above the water. Items that float such as tree trunks, doors, fishing equipment etc. may be in the water with you should you be caught in the tide of a tsunami.

Here's the promise for deliverance from spiritual tsunami: *"...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18). I was recently talking to a young man who, due to disappointments in the Church, decided to give up on this God-ordained institution. Nothing could be more dangerous. In this world of rushing wild waters, the Church is the only structure founded firm, having been bought with Jesus' blood. The church can keep your head above the waters if you are inundated. Its ministries act as rafts in the currents. They will carry you to safety.

-Pastor Pope-