**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Stop Enduring Religion |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | John 7:37-39 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1882 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. John 7:37-39
      1. In verse 38, "out of his belly" is referring to his inner most being.
      2. The background for this passage of Scripture:
         1. The Jews had many ceremonies and feasts, but one feast that outdid them all when it came to joy, hilarity, and festivity.
            1. It has been said that if someone has not seen the Feast of the Tabernacles, then they do not know what rejoicing in hilarity truly is.
         2. The Feast of the Tabernacles was a great feast that the Jewish people would perform.
            1. At the climax of this feast, the priest would go down to the Pool of Siloam and fill a golden pitcher with water.
            2. He would bring the water back, and the people would follow him.

They would be leaping, dancing, and praising.

* + - * 1. The priest would pour the water out at the altar.

As he did this, all hilarity would break forth.

* + - 1. As Jesus watched this ceremony, He saw the people's joy, hilarity, dancing, and praising.
      2. Jesus who was normally quiet, could contain Himself no more.
         1. Matthew 12:19
         2. The Bible says that He stood and literally shouted, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*."

John 37:7

* 1. Jesus saw the ceremony.
     1. The people were chanting from Scripture.
        1. They were chanting, “*With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation*.”
           1. Isaiah 12:3
        2. Jesus Christ Himself is that well of salvation.
           1. Every Old Testament ceremony and feast prophesied about the Lord Jesus.

All of it portrayed and pictured the Lord Jesus.

* + 1. Jesus, the very Water of Life, was right in their midst; and they paid Him no attention.
       1. They didn’t even understand Him.
       2. They were going through their ritual and going on with their religion, but in the midst of it all was Jesus.
  1. Jesus knew that after all of their rejoicing, they would go back to their homes and it would all be a memory.
     1. They would go back to their old heartaches, tears, fears, faults, and failures.
     2. It would only be a religious exercise, only a ritual that gave joy for a moment but would not last.
  2. John 7:37
     1. Jesus was saying that it is time to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
  3. Most people don't need religion.
     1. We have enough religion.
     2. We need a personal and a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
     3. We need true salvation with joy.
  4. Matthew 11:28
  5. John 7:37-38
     1. Jesus was talking about more than salvation.
        1. He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, whom we receive when we believe on the Lord Jesus.
           1. Then there will be in us a well of water springing up unto eternal life.
  6. Is there in you a satisfaction because you have drunk deeply of Jesus?
     1. But more than a satisfaction, are you being a blessing?
     2. Is your life overflowing with blessing?
  7. Many people are trying to find “the answer”.
     1. Some think that the answer is intellectual.
        1. They think they just need to learn more facts or more theology.
        2. They go from church to church with their heads getting fuller and their hearts getting emptier.
           1. But they know the answer is not intellectual.
     2. Some think that the answer is in activity.
        1. They think they just need to do more and work harder.
        2. They think a busy Christian is a happy Christian.
     3. Some think that the answer is emotional.
        1. They think that if they have some great emotional experience, then that would be the answer.
           1. For a while, they may have an ecstasy, but tomorrow they only have a memory.
           2. It takes more and more to get back into that state of emotionalism.
           3. So, they try to get back to that state of emotionalism they were once in.
     4. The Pharisee thinks the answer is in the way that he lives, primarily in the things that he does not do.
        1. So, the proud Pharisee becomes a bitter, hard Pharisee.
        2. He has religion, but he doesn't have reality.
  8. Many today do not know that they have religion.
  9. In today's message, we will look at how to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
     1. It’s time we understand what the great heart of Jesus longed for in John 7.

1. understand the subjects
   1. Jesus was speaking to thirsty people.
      1. John 7:37
      2. Are you thirsty, or are you simply satisfied?
   2. There are not a lot of thirsty people today.
      1. There are people who come to church on Sunday morning like they have done God a favor, but they don't come seeking God.
         1. They don't come with a burning thirst.
      2. Some might have a shallow thirst.
         1. Those who have a shallow thirst will get a shallow satisfaction.
      3. Many are not thirsty at all.
         1. They are filled with the stagnant waters of self-love and worldliness.
   3. We have all of God we want.
      1. It's not our job to persuade God to fill us.
         1. He wants to fill us.
            1. Matthew 5:6
      2. If you do not have any more, then it is because you do not want any more.
         1. It is not because God has neglected you; you have neglected God.
   4. If you are not thirsty:
      1. You need to analyze your life.
      2. You need to pray that God will help you get things in order.
      3. You need to pray that God will help you see reality.
      4. You need to pray that God will give you the big picture.
      5. You need to pray that God will grant you a burning thirst.
         1. You need to be done with religion and thirst for that which is real.
2. understand the source
   1. John 7:37
      1. Jesus was talking of Himself.
   2. We come to the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. We do not come to religion.
      2. We do not come to rituals.
      3. We do not come to rules.
      4. We do not come to resolve.
      5. We do not even clean up our lives and then ask the Lord to fill us.
         1. This is one of the biggest mistakes we make.
         2. Sometimes we get the idea that we want more of God.
            1. We want the fullness of the Spirit.
            2. We want the Living Water.
            3. We want that reality.
            4. We think if we can just clean up our lives, get right, pray enough, study enough, or work enough, then we will be a candidate for a blessing.

That is works’ righteousness, and we will never make it.

It is like a man in quicksand.

The more he struggles, the deeper he sinks.

* 1. Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness.
     1. We do not work our way to the Way; He is the Way.
     2. We cannot live right until we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
        1. If we could do all of those things in order to be filled, then why would we need to be filled anyway?
  2. It is grace; come to Jesus.
     1. Don't wait until you are better.
     2. Don't wait until you are stronger.
     3. Bring to Him your weakness, your fears, your failures, and your heartaches; bring it all to Jesus.
        1. This is not saying to come clinging to your sin.
        2. This is not saying to come to Him and, at the same time, intend to cling to Satan and this world.
           1. Let go of everything, and come to Jesus.
  3. The source is Jesus Christ Himself.

1. understand the secret
   1. John 7:37
      1. We drink by faith.
   2. John 7:38
      1. We drink into Christ.
         1. We appropriate, or assimilate, Jesus by faith.
   3. The problem today is that many people say they are thirsty and that Christ is the answer, but they never take what He promises.
      1. Somehow it gets into the head but never gets down in the heart.
         1. It is never appropriated.
   4. We must appropriate (drink) that which God has for us, and we do it by faith.
      1. Drinking is not passive; it is active.
      2. There comes a time when we take the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.
         1. We claim all that He has for us and believe in Him.
   5. Suppose a person has been in the desert for several days.
      1. He is perishing for water, and he knows that he needs water.
         1. No one has to explain to him what water is.
         2. No one has to tell him that he is thirsty.
      2. Suppose someone comes to him with a glass of lifesaving, life-sustaining water.
         1. What would he pay for that water?
            1. Price would not be an object.

If he has it, he’ll pay it.

All that a man has, he will give for his life.

That is the mark of a thirsty man.

When someone is truly thirsty, price is not an object.

* + - * 1. The water of life that Jesus gives is absolutely free, and it costs everything.

We have to give everything to Jesus, yet it is absolutely free.

* + 1. Suppose the man in the desert does not drink the water offered to him.
       1. He looks at it and studies it, but he will not drink it.
       2. Why would he not, by faith and obedience, appropriate that which is offered to him?
          1. People come to church on Sunday morning with no intention of doing what the minister asks them to do.

They just come, sit, and watch.

* 1. There comes a time when we need to drink.
     1. We need to believe Him and say, “My heart is thirsty for the blessing. I will receive the Lord Jesus. I take Him now. I take Him by faith.”
        1. We appropriate.
        2. We assimilate.
        3. We believe.
        4. We receive.

1. understand the supply
   1. John 7:38
      1. Not only will there be an income, there will also be an outflow.
         1. There will spring up in us a river of revival and a river of blessing.
      2. Jesus was quoting Scripture here.
         1. Jesus was referring to a number of verses found in Ezekiel 47.
      3. When someone is saved and filled with the Spirit, their life will overflow with joy, praise, testimony, and service.
   2. The average Christian is not the normal Christian.
      1. We will find the normal Christian in the Bible.
      2. We will find the average Christian on Sunday morning in church.
   3. A normal Christian:
      1. One who has stopped enduring religion and has started to enjoy salvation.
      2. One who is having his own needs met and is meeting the needs of others.
         1. He has not become merely a reservoir, but he has become a river.
   4. Ezekial 47:1
      1. This is a vision that Ezekiel saw.
      2. The house that he is talking about is the temple of God.
         1. The Old Testament temple was a picture and a prophecy of the believer today.
            1. The Bible says that we are temples of God.
         2. In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people.
         3. In the New Testament, God has a people for His temple.
         4. The Old Testament temple is a picture of things to come and of spiritual things.
   5. The mysterious source of this river.
      1. It is coming out of the temple and flows past the altar.
         1. The altar speaks of Christ crucified.
      2. If we want that river of living water to flow out of us, then it will forever flow past the altar (past the cross).
         1. The cross is a gigantic "I" that has been crossed out.
            1. No longer I, but Christ.
   6. The marked course of this river.
      1. Ezekiel 47:2-6
      2. The river keeps getting wider and deeper, and it has no tributaries.
         1. It just keeps rising.
            1. First the water is ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, and then it engulfs and overwhelms.
      3. “*Hast thou seen this*?”
         1. Is there a river of revival flowing out of you?
         2. We will never get more of the Spirit, but He needs to get more of us.
   7. The mighty force of this river.
      1. Ezekiel 47:7-8
         1. John saw the temple and saw a river come up and flow past the altar.
         2. The river flowed down through the desert and to the Dead Sea.
         3. There will be life where there was once death when the river begins to flow out of us.
      2. Ezekiel 47:10
         1. There will be as many fish in the Dead Sea as there are in the Mediterranean.
         2. There will be life where this is death.
         3. There will be success where there was failure.
            1. Many want to be fishers of men, but we are fishing in deadened waters.

The problem is not with the Dead Sea but with us.

We have not poured into it a river of living water.

* + - 1. There will be fruitfulness where there was barrenness.
         1. Ezekiel 47:12
         2. Is your life a fruitful life or a barren life?

Galatians 5:22-23 speaks of the fruits of the Spirit.

* + - * 1. Is there a river flowing out of you that causes fruitfulness where there was once barrenness?
      1. There will be health where there was once sickness.
         1. Ezekiel 47:12
         2. This old, sick, and deadly world needs life.

It needs the fruit of the Spirit.

It needs healing.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. The Lord Jesus said that if you thirst, then come to Him and drink, and you will be satisfied.
      1. John 7:37
      2. But more than that, there will be in you a river of living water.
         1. Where there was death, there will be life.
         2. Where there was failure, there will be success.
         3. Where there was barrenness, there will be fruit.
         4. Where there was sickness, there will be health.
   2. Stop enduring religion, and start enjoying salvation.
   3. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   4. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16