

REVIVE US AGAIN

SERMON OUTLINES

BY DR. TONY EVANS

MESSAGE 7:

WATER IN GOD'S HOUSE

SUGGESTED PASSAGE: Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NASB)

¹ Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar. ² He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side. ³ When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. ⁶ He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. ⁹ It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. ¹⁰ And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹² By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

MESSAGE GOAL: The goal of this message on *Water in God's House* is to learn how important the calling and the task of the church is as God's house. The church is where His manifest presence meets with His people and the Holy Spirit fills and

empowers them, so that God's grace can flow from the church into a society that is broken and bring about real change and restoration.

INTRODUCTION: We need churches that want to influence society for Christ, that want to see the blessings and works of God to overflow from the church into the city—the culture around us. But even though this may be a church's sincere desire, there are prerequisites we must meet as God's people, His church, if we are to see God's power flowing out from the church into the world.

The church, the house of God, can be compared to the White House. The White House and its resident has a lot to do with what's going on in the country; it has a lot of power to influence what is done in our society. So it is with the church, but in a much greater sense because the church's Resident is the almighty God of the universe. Many Christians understand that their bodies are the temple or house of God, but there is a corporate sense to this term as well.

A church that truly engages God in pure worship doesn't just mean a church that has good preaching or good worship. True worship of the Almighty is more than well-prepared sermons or catchy songs. These things are ingredients in good worship, but the key is experiencing and humbly approaching God.

Our American society is obsessed with entertainment. We want to be constantly entertained, whether it is television or a sporting event. We just want to experience the moment and say it was good. The problem is this attitude can creep into churches and worship services. A good worship service has nothing to do with entertainment.

We as believers need to realize that we are not the audience of a worship service—that role belongs to God. He is the audience! A worship service cannot be successful unless God is encountered and experienced, not just talked about. The difference between singing or hearing about God and actually experiencing Him is the difference between reading a book about the Grand Canyon and actually climbing down into the Grand Canyon.

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Our churches must experience true worship and let God flow and work through our midst. That is the only way God is going to move and flow through the midst of our society. The church is a group of flawed human beings, but we serve a special place and we are God's starting point to changing the world around us. It starts in the house of God—and we must be a part of it.

SERMON POINTS:

1. GOD IS BIGGER THAN THE SUM TOTAL OF EVERYTHING HE MADE

God is greater than the universe

- God made everything we have, yet He is even more
- God is bigger than our minds can comprehend, so no building can contain Him

There will always be more of God than we can ever know

- We can't ever discover everything about God
- No matter what you know of God, Scripture reveals more

2. CHURCHES ARE TO FULFILL THEIR DIVINE MANDATE

The church is God's house

- The church doesn't belong to an area or a denomination
- The church is where we experience God's reality—His manifest presence

The church has a higher purpose than entertainment

- The church is where we encounter God, not where we come to be entertained
- The audience for the service is the living God. It is His church (Matthew 16:18)

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH IS TO EXPERIENCE GOD

The point is not to help us feel better

- We come to church to elevate God, not elevate ourselves
- The experience inside a church affects what happens outside

The point is not to get what you want out of it

- Coming just for the sermon or the music misses the point

- God inhabits the praises of His people, not activities to fill time (Psalm 22:3)
- An empty church building can't be a house of worship

4. WE CAN'T EXPERIENCE GOD MORE IF WE DON'T GO FARTHER WITH HIM

Our relationship with God is made to grow

- You're not going to draw closer to God if you don't follow Him
- We're too satisfied with a trickle of water instead of a strong flow
- You can't stay still and experience God

If God hasn't blown your mind, you haven't followed Him far enough

- God says He will do "abundantly more" than we can even imagine (Ephesians 3:20)
- Sometimes we have to swim to where God wants us, not walk

5. GOD IS COMING BACK FOR US

He is coming back, but we need to welcome Him

- God doesn't spend time where He's not welcomed
- He's not going to make anybody worship Him . . . yet
- God is waiting on us to do what we're supposed to do

We need to make a big deal over our big God

- We wouldn't keep a dignitary waiting, so why do we keep God waiting?
- God is looking for true worshipers (John 4:24)
- Everything and everyone will worship Christ one day (Philippians 2:10-11)

6. GOD IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE FULL OF HIM

He wants people who are swimming in His depth

- He's not looking for surface-level followers
- He doesn't want a trickle of worship, but a submerged life of worship

He desires His followers to talk about Him

- Christians should not have to be begged to speak of God
- He wants committed disciples who are looking for Him

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SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

WHITE HOUSE:

The White House is far more than a residence. It symbolizes the person and the power that resides within its walls. The president inside the White House is a physical representation of the power and authority of the entire country. The church should be a house of God that represents the power and authority of an almighty God. We should spend a lot more time being concerned with what's going on inside God's house than what is going on inside the White House.

ENTERTAINMENT:

When you go to the movies, you're ready for a couple hours of entertainment. You're just a spectator, not a participant. Most people buy their concessions and settle into comfortable seats ready to have a fun night. After the film is over, they critique the movie, saying what they did or did not like about it. The problem is that too many believers go to church with a theater mindset. But in a worship service, we're not simply spectators. We're participants in the act of worshiping the one true God. What we see in a movie isn't real, just a professional performance put on by actors. May this never be said of those within the house of God.

JUST FLUFF:

Cotton candy is a sweet and delicious treat that many people enjoy as they go to a circus, carnival, fair, or sporting event. Cotton candy is tasty because it is pretty much just pure sugar. Its light and fluffy texture disappears quickly as it melts in your mouth or even your hand and you're left with nothing at all. Some folk come to church hoping to get some spiritual cotton candy. They want a quick, sweet taste and to say they got something, but it's just fluff that disappears quickly. We need spiritual substance and long-term change, not a church carnival full of cotton candy.

LEARNING TO SWIM:

When you train someone to swim, you have to begin with them in the shallow end of the pool. But eventually, the students have to leave the shallow end and put on display what they have learned. They have to leave the shallow end and swim to the deep end of the pool. Too many Christians who start in the shallow end of the faith stay there far too long. They don't

reach even a portion of their potential in the Lord. Start swimming with God and get out there and put your spiritual training to the test. You can't get where God wants you just by treading water in the shallow end of life.

FIREPLACE:

Fireplaces are small contained areas, but their heat has an effect on the house far beyond their immediate location. God wants our hearts and lives to be burning so deep and so hot for Him that it touches a large area around us for His cause. He wants our fires to be blazing hot, so that everywhere we go the wood gets enflamed by His Spirit.

BACKGROUND BIBLICAL HISTORY AND CULTURE:

TABERNACLE/TEMPLE:

(Exodus 26–30; 1 Kings 6–8; Ezra 3–6) The Israelites in the wilderness were instructed to build a traveling tabernacle for sacrifices and worship of God. It was made in such a way that it could be broken down and put back up, and was critical as the physical location of God's presence among His people. Solomon built a grand and permanent temple for the presence of God in Jerusalem. After this was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, Zerubbabel led a group to return home after captivity and rebuild the temple as the Israelites resettled their homeland. It was expanded under King Herod, and was finally destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Prophecy speaks of a third temple being rebuilt, and this is a key part of biblical prophecy.

DEAD SEA:

The Dead Sea is a unique body of water in Israel. It is the lowest point on earth, which means water flows into it but not out of it. Its water is so salty and chemical-laden that nothing can live in it. A person can float on top of the water because the salt content is so high. Absolutely no fish or wildlife can be sustained because of the unique makeup of the water. Sodom and Gomorrah were located at the south end of the Dead Sea, where there are large collections of salt formations, which would make sense in the story of Lot and his wife. This body of water played a unique role in biblical history and is frequently mentioned throughout Scripture.

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SERMON LINES:

This message will help you understand and teach the truth that God's house purpose is not just the place where His people gather, but the place where His powerful, manifest presence lives among His people.

This message will also give you biblical content for teaching the truth that God wants His people to experience His reality, not just come into His building.

You will also understand that the greatness of the church lies in whether we are recognizing and experiencing the presence of almighty God.

QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"For far too many Christians, a two-hour church service is like going to a two-hour movie."

"You know why the culture is dry and dead? Because there's no water coming out of the sanctuary!"

"The Lord of this universe is not just waiting on you to show up and sit down, but to worship Him. He's waiting on you to make a big deal about Him."

"The culture is not in the church, but we should be so hyped about what takes place in the church building that we are effective outside of the building."



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