

The River of Life

Ezekiel 47:1-2, *“In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw water flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side. The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. There I could see the water flowing out through the south side of the east gateway.”* In a vision, Ezekiel sees water gushing out from under the door of the temple, past the altar and all the way down to the sea. It’s like an ever deepening river that brings life, health and abundance wherever it flows. Maybe this is the single remedy to the world crisis! Jesus Himself used a river as a basis for His sermon to the woman at the well (**John 4:7-15**) – *“living water”*.

The **“river of life”** (the ever deepening stream of God’s glory) is a striking figure of divine blessing, flowing out of the life-giving ministry of the Holy Spirit. In Ezekiel, God dwells in the temple and an ever-increasing **river** of blessing flows out of His dwelling place and into other areas. In this present age, God dwells inside His people (**1 Corinthians 6:19**) therefore; the ‘river of life’ in us must flow out of us (His human temple) and into the lives of those around us. We are the chosen vessels through which divine blessings flow! But notice God’s glory must break out in the church first. It is only when the “glory” flows from *“underneath the threshold of the church door,”* and then out into the streets, that this prophecy can be fulfilled.

At Cornerstone, we’ve been experiencing a unique manifestation of God’s presence. Profound and yet distinct blessings have been visible. Therefore, from beneath the threshold of our church doors, the “water of life” must flow freely. There must be an out-pouring!

But not for our own benefit, because its meant to flow into the streets of Elmbridge and throughout the United Kingdom. According to this prophecy, the transformation of the land (this nation) will be due to God’s presence having increased immeasurably in His church. God intends to provide indisputable answers to modern society’s most perplexing problems through the outflow of the **“river of life”** (the Holy Spirit’s awesome ministry). In this passage, we see that even the dense salt waters of the Dead Sea can be sweetened so that fish will live in it (**verses 8-10**). Indeed, the “deadest” areas of our society can be transformed by the healing powers of the water of life.

Something deeply spiritual is happening. More and more of us are unwilling to settle for “that’s enough!” We know there must be more! A warrior spirit has risen within us, a genuine urge to conquer more territory for God. We sense that God has ‘broken out’! But we also know that God is after the great harvest of souls. For that reason, the gates of hell shall not prevail against His glorious church. God has got His eye on large cities. Yes, whole regions will be swept into His Kingdom. So now, more than ever, we should use our legal right to claim this district for the King of Kings by staking out our territory. In the past too many churches have been content to keep their faith contained within the four walls of their church buildings. However, for us it’s too late, the **river of life** has already begun to flow freely from under the threshold of Cornerstone’s doors. It’s a true out-pouring!

God Almighty has “broken out” like a torrent! And He is asking us to extend our faith beyond the boundaries of our congregational comfort zone (where we like to take refuge). The Lord is stirring us to meet the exact conditions that will allow His Holy Spirit to transform this nation. Hallelujah!

By faith, you must boldly step into the **river**, and be prepared to get wet! Without full immersion, you are of no use to God. It’s only **“the river”** that possess His divine life. That is, the healing power needed to restore dead places. Let’s now read **verses 3 to 12...**

Then the man went toward the east. He had a measuring line in his hand. He measured off 1,750 feet. He led me through water that was up to my ankles. Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. He led me through water that was up to my knees. Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. He led me through water that was up to my waist. Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. But now it was a river that I could not go across. The water had risen so high that it was deep enough to swim in. He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a large number of trees. They were on both sides of the river.

The man said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern territory. It goes down into the Arabah Valley. There it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into it, the water there becomes fresh. Large numbers of creatures will live where the river flows. It will have huge numbers of fish. This water flows there and makes the salt water fresh. So where the river flows everything will live. "People will stand along the shore to fish. From En Gedi all the way to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading fishnets. The Dead Sea will have many kinds of fish. They will be like the fish in the Mediterranean Sea. "But none of the swamps will have fresh water in them. They will stay salty. "Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not dry up. The trees will always have fruit on them. Every month they will bear fruit. The water from the temple will flow to them. Their fruit will be used for food. And their leaves will be used for healing."

Isn't it interesting that the **river** of God's **presence**, flowing from His sanctuary, actually grew deeper the further the prophet walked? Ezekiel finally ended up in water that was over his head, where he was unable to touch the bottom. At this point, he was in fact without control! The deeper you get into the river the less 'control' you have, but the more control He has! Notice also that the shallowest point is nearest the sanctuary (your comfort zone).

Four times the river is measured at increments of 1,000 cubits, and the river rises to ankle depth; then to the knees, to the waist, and finally to a depth too deep to cross. The prophet was brought through the "waters" three times at exactly the same distances, but the fourth time it became **"a river that could not be crossed."** Only then is he asked, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Until you are prepared to get wet (swim in the deep), the Holy Spirit will not show you anything. You must first hand over complete control and trust Him. This may be daunting, especially when the river is strong and the waters are deep, but it has to be done. Flowing with God takes courage and determination. You are not going to experience the healing power of the **river** of God unless you are strong and courageous. If you really want to witness the river reaching the Dead Sea you must first be soaked (saturated) in His glory. You must have submerged yourself fully in the deep torrent of the **river of life**. Nothing less will suffice!

Furthermore, you shall be able to observe a multitude of fish (souls) being gathered into the Kingdom of God (verse 10). God's **presence** transforms a dead environment where no fish are able to live into an environment of **"new life in Christ Jesus."** The dead salty waters are healed, becoming fresh "living water" to countless souls.

Verse 11, **"But it's swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt."** Swamps and marshes are those areas of land near the mouth of a river, or in this case, they may be the waters that only come up to our ankles or knees. Implying that those who do not venture out into the deep may become part of a "dead" environment. A place where the Holy Spirit does not venture!

Finally, all kinds of supernatural trees (agents of divine provision) line the banks of the **river** of life. Not only do their leaves not wither and their fruit not fall down, they produce fruit every month – bringing about abundant provision. More importantly, they have the power to miraculously heal (verse 12). But observe; their supernatural abilities are dependent

on one thing “...*Because their water flows from the sanctuary.*” It all starts with us releasing the **glory** from God’s house (allowing it to flow from under the threshold). The “living water” must flow through every boundary of this church, but also through the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our physical bodies! We are temples that are not meant to contain the glory, but rather, to let it flow from under the threshold of our lives, and into the lives of others. Trying to contain it will only serve to turn its “living water” into marshlands or swamp.

You must beware of swamps and mashes that hinder your personal relationship with God. These swamps and mashes prevent the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through you to others. When these swamps and mashes are built up over time, nothing living can grow in them. When you resist the working of the Holy Spirit in your life, you are like a swamp or mash. No life will flow from you and everything you touch cannot prosper. God has deliberately positioned you where you can become a channel for the **river of life** to flow, to proceed out of you and bring life to others around you. Ask yourself this, “...*Is your life full of swamps, mashes or a dead sea? Or ...is your life a flowing river or a still pond?*” And if you have not allowed the Holy Spirit to take control of your life, will you go before God today and ask Him to fill you with His Spirit and make you a **living river**? It is never too late to do so! Remember, you must experience an *infilling* as well as an *immersion*. Otherwise, you are not fully equipped to flow with the Holy Spirit.

Note, once you’ve been filled with God’s Spirit, and have decided to flow with the Him, you should get out of your comfort zone and dive into the deep where the current is strongest (being fully immersed). You need to let go of anything may cause you to sink. Many of you are carrying far too much baggage! You’ll never be able to swim in a strong torrent with the baggage of your past. God wants to use you mightily for the extension of His Kingdom. So all you need to do is venture out into the deep. Don’t be afraid! If necessary the Lord will walk on water to rescue you. You can’t drown with Jesus around!

Remember the story we examined last Sunday concerning Peter and the disciples in the boat? Well, I would rather be in the water needing rescued, than on the banks of the river caught up in the marshland. I sincerely desire that every one of us flow with the deep things of God. In the quick-stream of the **river of life**! Why? Because this is where we will see and experience the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit. It’s where true prosperity will manifest in your life (spirit, soul and body), and pour out into the lives of those around you. This is where you will find divine healing and true rest.

So why not come in – the water is great!