



## Where the River Flows

### Message Notes, February 7, 2016

Ezekiel 47:1-12 includes our “River of Life” theme verse, “Where the river flows, everything will live” (v. 9).

Pastor Derrick Shields also emphasized verse 6, “Son of man, do you see this?” Are we seeing it? We also looked at Ezekiel 46:9, “When the people of the land come before the Lord at the appointed feasts, whoever enters by the north gate to worship is to go out the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate is to go out the north gate. No one is to return through the gate by which he entered, but each is to go out the opposite gate.”

They went out by a different gate than they came in. The point: When you come into the presence of the Lord, you should leave different than when you came in.

Three things about the river:

- Source
- Course
- Force

#### **Source: Where Does the River Start?**

It starts under the threshold of the temple. What is its source? There is no natural river there in Jerusalem!

See John 7:37-39, “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

Rivers of living water point to the Holy Spirit. The River is God. It starts in Jesus Christ himself. The source of this river never runs dry! In fact, the deeper this river gets, the more healing it provides. Our access to this source is Jesus’ work on the cross – not our own efforts, nothing we can build or make (as compared to previous temples)

#### **Course: Where Does the River Flow?**

It flows from near Jerusalem (2,600 feet above sea level) about 13 miles east to the Dead Sea (1,400 feet below sea level). This River starts high, and goes low. It flows to the people!

This is very much like the Gospel – it’s God’s idea of redemption, His work, for our salvation. God sent His Son to come low and meet us right where we are.

Between Jerusalem and Dead Sea is a barren land. Nothing can survive in the Dead Sea! Fed from north by the Jordan, the Dead Sea has no outlet! Sometimes we can feel like this too – we may feel like we



don't have an outlet.

### **Force: What Effect Does the River Have?**

This river transforms the barren land to one with trees bearing fruit! The Holy Spirit brings joy, peace, love and goodness our way. There is nothing negative in this river. Even when God disciplines us, He does so in love and He offers us forgiveness. This river transforms all that is around us! It gets deeper!

The river starts at just under the threshold. He measured and ended up ankle deep in the river. Going another 1,750 feet or 1/3 of a mile, he ends up being ankle deep. After another 1,750 feet he is now waist deep. After another 1,750 feet, he's in over his head; he can swim in it, but can't walk through it.

When ankle deep, we can still feel like we are in control. The deeper we get, the less in control we are. As it gets waist deep you might start getting a little nervous. The further from the temple, the more it's going down hill, the more momentum the water has, the less you can fight it.

Probably best to go with the flow – it gives life and irrigates the desert on either side.  
These trees don't produce just once a year, they produce fruit every month!  
The leaves don't wither; instead, they produce healing.  
The Dead Sea water becomes fresh – life comes where there was just death!

This is what happens to us as we are immersed into Holy Spirit. Derrick challenged us to stop trying to be in control, let Him take us where He will. Don't resist.

### **The Challenge of the River**

1) Where are we in the River? Some of us are not in the River yet ... some are lounging in the shallow end ... some are adults, but still playing in the kiddie pool. It's beautiful that the River includes an entry point for little children!

How deep are you? Are you still trying to stay in control and only in ankle deep? Are you waist deep? Further in, but still in control? Why do we hesitate to get in over our head?

We can trust this River. It is sent for our healing and brings us life. We need to go further than we ever have before. See Jeremiah 17:5-8.

2) What if we are in that low place and have a hard time with being in the River Derrick reminded us of the conversation Jesus had with the woman at the well recorded in John 4:13-14.

The longer we stay in the River, the more acclimated we will become to it – just like your body when diving into the water. Trust that the water is not meant to drown us!

3) What would happen if we would immerse ourselves in the River? What would this look like for you?

Pam Cowart shared in Crave this week about how in a mill all the individual spokes and things all get turned by the River. It's a picture of the power of the River at work, and a mystery how the water can do so much more than what we can do on our own.

Trust in Him. Let Him take you where He wants you to go.