



The River of Life
Message Notes, June 17, 2018
Ezekiel 47:1-12

Ezekiel 47:1-12 is a vision God gives the prophet of the fullness of life that will come with the new covenant (through Jesus' death and resurrection). Here's an overview of the key elements of this vision.

The Significance of the Temple: The river flows out from the temple – the primary place of God's presence among the Hebrew people; their most sacred place of worship and connection with Yahweh.

The Meaning of the River: It quite simply (but deeply) represents the very life of God that flows in and through His people (individually and corporately).

The Path of the River: From the temple → into the Araba (desert) → to the sea (Dead Sea). It flows from God's dwelling (the temple); *He* is the source of life! Flowing out into the dry, desolate, lifeless places – the Arabia desert and the Dead Sea – salty and loaded with minerals unable to sustain life because it has no outlet.

"And everywhere the river flows, everything will live." Fish flourish and trees grow with rich fruit and healing leaves.

The Various Depths of the River: Ankle-deep, knee-deep, waist-deep, over one's head. The strong sense is that God calls us (individually *and* as a church) to move ever deeper into the waters of His life, where we can't see the bottom, we can't touch, we aren't in control, we have to surrender and trust in Him. Faith and spiritual life flourish in the deep waters.

The Key to Life: It's not just where God's water of life is, but rather where it flows. It is a river, not a lake. If we try to hold onto His life for ourselves (again – individually or as a church), His river becomes stagnant and lifeless (just like the Dead Sea that has no outlet). This is why last week's message that we must always maintain an "outward focus" is so important to our vision as a church. We want to be a river people!.\

At CCC, we have the perpetual symbol of our water feature out front (with the text of Ezekiel 47:9 inscribed). The soft, ever-flowing (**ankle deep**) trickle is a steady reminder of the flow of the life of God in and through us. The Mississippi River begins way up in Minnesota with a slow trickle and becomes a mighty river. How much greater is the source of "our" river, our ever-loving Creator! His life is an unstoppable force. We are invited to be His tributaries in the world.

Pastor Derrick showed a joyous picture of a **waist-deep** baptism in our outside baptismal (where the water feature trickle flows). This picture captures the wonder of new life and transformation that comes when we wade deeper into the waters of faith and surrender.

John 7:37-38 gives us another image of the river of God's life "flowing out from our inmost being" where His Spirit dwells within us. The Greek word here is *koilia* – "from the womb." His life wells up within us in this deep inmost place, and as it grows *in* us, it flows *from* us to others, giving birth to new things – in us,



in our church, and in our world. We fear surrendering to the deep waters of God's Spirit in and through us, but we will not drown! He will uphold us, direct us and empower us.

There is an art piece on the wall as you enter the sanctuary (right center doorway). It is a creative silhouette of a man and a depiction of "the river" flowing in and through him (capturing the essence of the John 7 verse above).

Lastly, Derrick read Revelation 22:1-2, the depiction of our final destiny as God establishes His final reign on the earth. There too is described a river – "The River of Life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb down the middle of the great city street, and on each side are the tree of life bearing rich fruit and healing leaves." This is God's purpose and glory – the redemption and restoration of the earth and all His people.

Key question: Are we willing to go in over our heads into His river of life?