

Ezek 47:1 (NIV), The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar.

Ezek 47:2 (NIV), He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

Ezek 47:3 (NIV), As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep.

Ezek 47:4 (NIV), He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist.

Ezek 47:5 (NIV), He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in--a river that no one could cross.

Ezek 47:6 (NIV), He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river.

26-47-01 --The River of God, Part One

Pentecost, Holy Spirit, water, revival, evangelism, healing

Ezek 47:1-6

When God's blessing is flowing, learn to *get carried away* with it!

### **INTRODUCTION:** (text as the Scripture reading)

--Every culture has sayings that capture and pass on its ancient wisdom. We have many of these: "*beauty's only skin deep*" - "*many hands make light work*" - "*actions speak louder than words*." Some are exhortations: "*put your money where your mouth is*" - "*don't put all your eggs in one basket*." These sayings warn us about taking risks: "*better safe than sorry*" - "*fools rush in where angels fear to tread*." Or, sometimes they urge us to take risks: "*hitch your wagon to a star*" - "*he who hesitates is lost*" - "*nothing ventured, nothing gained*."

--Pentecost season: *fine*, if we keep the Holy Spirit safely locked up in Acts 2, BUT let Him loose among us to do again what He did on the Day of Pentecost or down through revival history, and wise cultural sayings start popping into our minds: "*keep a level head*" - "*keep both feet on the ground*" - "*don't get carried away*."

--Title = the *Holy Spirit*. This River is moving in the world today. Worldly wisdom says, "*Be careful: you might get carried away!*" As we look at this text, divine wisdom says: **HOM.idea**. We need to learn 1<sup>st</sup> to get carried away with....

### **I. The Source of the River, v.1-2**

- A. The quality of something is found by examining its source -- Many religious ideas and words don't come from the true God [patient's prayer book spoke of our "*inner divinity*." Its source? pantheism: "*We are God! Remembering who we are is the goal of spirituality*."]
  - B. In Ezekiel's vision, the source of the River is the temple:
    1. A holy place of meeting (two important concepts!)
      - a. Our *holy* Creator wants to meet with us (we can be holy)
      - b. Meeting with God is special, a *holy* event: set apart.
    2. An exclusive place of worship: ("*no other gods before Me*")
    3. A place of higher ground, from which God's blessings flow
 

[pantheism says: "*We bless ourselves by opening up to our divinity*." -- the truth says, "*It takes water flowing from a higher place to a lower one to get power*..." whether it's the old mill stone tumbled by a wooden water wheel in a river or the mighty generators spinning at the base of a dam]
  - C. God's ultimate desire & design for His temple: *Incarnation*...
    - a. Jesus was called *Immanuel* ("*God with us*")-- John 1:14a (YLT),  
And the Word became flesh, and *did tabernacle* among us...

- b. Jesus had water to offer the Samaritan woman at the well-- John 4:10, Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."
- c. When Jesus is invited into our hearts, we become the temple of God (this is God's ultimate temple plan!)-- 1 Cor 3:16-17. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

**TRANS:** Ezekiel's vision: God's temple is the source of the River. Our Lord Jesus Christ broke the fountains open in His Incarnation. IT WASN'T ONLY BLOOD FLOWING FROM HIS WOUNDED SIDE ON THE CROSS BUT WATER. When the living presence of Christ is in our lives, we become temples of the Holy Spirit. But He won't be bottled up! God wants that River of the Holy Spirit to flow out from us to a spiritually thirsty world. Divine wisdom is that when God's blessing is flowing, learn to get carried away with it! Get carried away with the source, but also...

## II. The Course of the River, v.3-5

### A. We can both love and fear water:

1. First of all, we love and need water for...
  - a. comfort (to cool off) [sweat cools our bodies; oceans cool Earth]
  - b. cleanliness (to wash off dirt and mop up messes)
  - c. health (to ward off illness: not just to quench thirst, but to stay alive and well!) [Pre-term laboring teen: "I don't drink water." -- Our medical answer to her: "You do now! Carry a water bottle!"]
2. We also can be fearful of water [warnings we're raised on]:
  - a. Drink water with caution: "The brook looks clear, but what went in it upstream?" [invisible microbes causing bloody diarrhea?]
  - b. Stay out of the rain: "You'll get pneumonia, or hit by lightning!"
  - c. Don't go wading there: "There might be broken glass, or snakes!"
  - d. Stay out of the deep water: "You'll get swept away and drowned!"

B. IN THE SAME WAY, though we love and need God for spiritual health, cleansing and blessing, we can also be afraid of Him (not with godly, but fleshly fear: "What if God takes over?")

1. HE WANT TO! Our striving for control brings bondage, yet releasing control to God brings freedom and salvation-- Mark 8:35, For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever

- loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.
2. The growing flow of the river pictures progress in the Holy Spirit, with God guiding us at each new depth out of fear, into blessed experience-- v.3-4, "led me through water" (x3)
- C. Where are you at? What's been your comfort level with God?
- a. Just a trickle (new birth, being "born again" by the Holy Spirit): Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? (to the woman at the well-- John 4:13-14, Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.")
  - b. "ankle-deep" (obedience: "Follow Me!" means to walk in the will of Christ, to step into "the way of the Lord")-- John 14:15-16. "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- "Are you a disciple? Have you decided to follow Jesus?"
  - c. "knee-deep" (prayer life: not few minutes in the shallows, but going deeper to "Sweet Hour of Prayer" or a 10-day prayer meeting? Ready for Pentecost? for intercessory prayer?
  - d. "up to the waist" [At the Jordan, Jesus walked out to meet John to be baptized, initiating His ministry] (service: at waist-level God now has more of you; you feel the pull of the current, to go where He wants you to go, to speak what He wants you to say.)--Acts 1:8, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
  - e. "deep enough to swim in" (our full consecration to Him; His full control of us) [swimming in a river, the current literally carries us away] -- instead of fighting His powerful moving Spirit, we need to..."Let go and let God! Go with the flow!"

**CONCLUSION:** v.6a, "Son of man, do you see this?" God's question: "Do you see how much deeper I want you to go?" [Ezekiel allowed himself to be led out into this water to experience its growing depths first-hand. Will we?] Never be afraid of releasing control to God: When God's blessing is flowing, learn to get carried away with it! Get carried away with the source (living presence of God in you), get carried away with the course (growing depth of control God has over you) and get carried away with the force! (what God wants to accomplish by the flow of this River).... (*next week's message*).