

Joke- One day a man decided to get as close to God as he could. He thought climbing a mountain would be the best route to get there.

Once he reached the top of the mountain, he called out to God. To his amazement, God answered him loud and clear. With such an amazing opportunity to speak with God, he wanted to ask a few philosophical questions.

“God, how long is a million years to you?”

“It’s like a minute to you,” answered God.

“What does a million dollars mean to you?”

“It’s like a penny,” answered God.

The man replied, “Can I have a penny?”

The Lord answered, “In a minute.”

Ezekiel 47:1–5 (NIV) - The man brought me back to the entrance to 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. ²He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. ³As 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. ⁴He 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. ⁵He 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.

We find the prophet being told to step off the banks. If the story stopped there it wouldn't be much of a story at all.

But here's the thing, I'm afraid that much of the Body of Christ is content looking at the water from a distance. Not really willing to be obedient, not wanting to step in the realm of the unknown. Willing to stand on the banks and watch the move of God from what appears to them as a safe distance.

Much like when the people send Moses up the mountain when God actually wanted to talk with each one. God has always desired intimacy. In to me you see.

And I get it we can never be sure what we might encounter if we step off the banks of safety. For many the uncertainty can be troublesome.

Fear no doubt has a play in all that. Fear of the unknown. But you must remember church that. . . Perfect love casts out all fear.

I'm convinced that the more we learn to love the Lord and understand how much He loves us. . .fear leaves.

I realize that on the banks the ground is more firm. I know it even sounds good having the waves hit the banks from time to time. But understand that there is more excitement in the river.

The river speaks of progression.

Let's look at these verses a little closer verse 3

Ezekiel 47:3 (NIV) - ³As 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.

May I suggest that ankle deep water is like our first encounter with the Lord. We are excited to be a son or daughter, and we love the feel of the water between our toes. Just to feel the life-giving stream is exhilarating, but the problem is that many of us get stuck right there. We are content to stay where the water doesn't seem to out of control.

I want to motivate you today not to be content with the water at the ankles.

Jesus said I am the living water. And if the living water doesn't want us to simply be able to control where we are going and what we are doing.

John 3:8 (NIV): 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

This first step into the water is the starting point. There is little resistance to our steps because we are just learning how to hear the voice of God. So he gently calls us to go deeper.

You're in the water saved, you're a new man, but still struggling with some old man issues.

But understand church God is calling us to go deeper. There is always more revelation to be had. More things that God wants to use you for.

So, he asks us to move into deeper waters. That is where obedience comes in.

And let me just say this. The more obedient that God asks us to be. The deeper the water is going to seem. It will take us out of our comfort zone.

Our journey into the deeper things of God requires us to trust and obey the will and ways of God.

The first part of verse 4 - ⁴ He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep.

Knee deep water still isn't quite out of our comfort zone. We can still feel the water rushing past us, but we still seem to be able to control what is happening we can lean into the waves and remain standing.

Knee deep we begin to shift our attention to worship, prayer, and trusting Him more.

May I suggest church that there are also a great number in the Body of Christ that seem happy in the knee-deep water. They are feeling a rush of the spirit, but they can also still allow their will to be in control of the surrounding waves over Gods will

Then we get to the latter part of verse 4 – He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist.

Now he is in waist deep water. In waist deep water it is more difficult to keep your balance. This is bringing us to a place of trust.

You need to start to trust God more, pray more. Allow the spirit to have more control. It covers your loins, this is a place of reproduction. It's when you get to this place that you start to produce. People begin to see a change in the way you live.

Understand this church, the deeper you go the less flesh you see. The deeper you go the less control you have. The deeper you go the stronger the influence the rivers current has on your life.

And that is the problem we keep on trying to control ourselves in the waves.

Oh, you may now and again move with the waves, but then you plant your feet in the rivers bottom and try to hold your own. You

haven't yet learned to give Him all. There are still some areas of your life that you're not willing to release to God. But people around you are seeing a change none the less.

Then we get to verse 5 - ⁵He 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.

This is where you have no choice but to trust in God. You can no longer plant your feet on the bottom because they can't reach the bottom. All you can do is flow with the Spirit of God and allow it to take you where He desires, not where you desire. Your will becomes in alignment with His will.

You need to hear this church with ever measurement Ezekiel had to take the step. God will call you, the Spirit will prod you, but you need to be obedient to that call and step out.

And church here is the sad truth, many will be intimidated by the water. They think that they don't have the ability to swim in it. They aren't qualified to be out that far. But I'm here to let you know if God is calling you deeper, he will be there to help you. He will be your life guard always watching so that He can watch and co-labor with you.

When your out this deep the only thing you can do is trust in God. Depend on His leading. Listen for His voice. Because you can no longer do what God is calling you to do on your own.

It's here you realize it's not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit.

Remember Peter? Lord if that's you let me come. And he walked on the water. . .until he focused on the waves.

Listen if you focus on the waves instead of flowing with the Spirit you will never reach the place that God has called you too.

It's in this place that you can do nothing except go where the Spirit is taking you.

I know it's difficult. I know it seems uncertain and fearful, but He is helping you grow.

There comes a point in time that you need to step off the banks and into what God has called you into. The banks seem nice you feel the breeze of the Spirit as the winds blow. Every now and again the water even comes up high enough, so you can feel it's presence, but that is not where God planted you.

It's all about allowing God to be in complete control.

Ezekiel said that every time he was to go deeper that he was led through the water.

Hear this church as God calls you deeper He will lead you through. He is not going to take you out that far to let you drown. Just as He took Peter by the hand He will do the same for you.

I want to look today at one more application for this text today.

First, look at verse 1 once more. . .

The man brought me back to the entrance to 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.

He saw a river and it flowed from the Temple of God. This river that God is asking you to step into is from the Father Himself.

It came not just from the Temple but from the altar. The altar where sacrifice is made.

That is why we offer the sacrifice of praise. From the altar where the perfect sacrifice Christ gave His life so that we could have life. Is at the altar on our knees that we learn to depend on Him, trust in Him.

It originates from the altar. Your journey in God begins with prayer, is maintained through prayer, and increased with prayer.

From the temple the river flows. And Scripture tells us that you are the temple of God. You ought to have life flowing rivers coming out of you, because you have spent time at the altar. Rivers of grace, rivers of mercy, rivers of peace, rivers of joy ought to be flowing out from you.

Let me finish with this. . .look at it verses 6 - 12

Ezekiel 47:6–12 (NIV): He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7 When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. 8 He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. 9 Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. 10 Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. 11 But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 12 Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

Led me back to the banks where there were a great number of trees, flowed down into the Arabah where the Dead Sea enters.

He brings us back to the edge where there was once death and now has life.

Church the deeper you go with God the more life you have, the more life you can show others, and what was dead becomes alive again.

A life giving river flows from the Temple of God.

And here's the thing so often we want to contain the Spirit of God in the temple, but the deeper you go the more dependent you are on the Spirit and the more influence you can have in the culture so that you can bring life.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit in our life's to to allow the river to flow through us, so that the barren soil is given water and allows it to produce fruit.

Matthew 7:16 (NIV): By their fruit you will recognize them. By the way verse 20 also says by their fruit you will recognize them.

And what is fruit?

Galatians 5:22–25 (NIV): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Notice Galatians doesn't say fruits, but rather fruit.

Listen church it is imperative that we allow the Holy Spirit to flow out of our lives, for remember you are the temple of God, so that we can bring life to those who don't know Him.

John 7:38 (NIV): 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

There’s a song we sang years ago that said. . .

I’ve got a river of life flowing within me;
It makes the lame to walk and the blind to see.
It opens prison doors, sets the captives free.
I’ve got a river of life flowing within me.

Ok let me now close with this last thing. Notice each step was a 1000 cubits.

The number 1000 in Scripture means divine completeness and a Father’s glory.

It is for the Fathers glory we go swimming not settling. The deeper you go the complete you will feel, the more complete the task will become.

Paul said it this way when he wrote to his spiritual son Timothy. . .

2 Timothy 4:7–8 (NIV): 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

I still have some growing, some swimming to do, you to? Let’s go a little deeper together.