

Ezekiel 47

Sunday 1/19/2014

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, I want to take one more week. I have received such a great response from the messages on spiritual growth over the last three weeks that we have talked about. Many of you, I think, have come to me or called me on the phone these last couple of weeks. You have really defined this next year for us. I was looking at it as a time where we just form a good balance and work on a lot of things. But so many of you have come to me and talked to me throughout the last couple of weeks, and you have claimed this year for your year of your own spiritual growth. I think by so many of you talking about that, you have pretty much set the course for what is really going to take place and what the Lord is going to do with us next year: the year of your spiritual growth. So I thought about it, and I had one more lesson I wanted to give you on this.

I want you to take and turn to Ezekiel 47. I want to show you another one of the greatest examples of this process of your spiritual growth in the Bible. You remember, so far we talked about, I laid out the seven stages of spiritual growth. I showed you how you can actually measure your own growth through the Bible by the things that you do and the way you deal with things. We went through that. I also showed you that there are five levels of maturity that you go through as you go through these seven stages. Everybody in this room today that is a member of this church, or at least you have been around here for a while, you all have entered in and you are somewhere in that process. Some may be a little farther along than others, but you are all headed in the right direction, and you are all moving along those lines.

Last week I took and showed you probably, I think, one of the greatest studies that you will ever find anywhere in the Bible about the aspect of the ministry and leadership built around the three families that make up any church, not just our church, but any church. When you see that and you understand what we talked about last week, it really puts things in a clear perspective for you and I think gives you a better understanding of where you are at. Today, I want to show you one more thing here, and I think that this will kind of pull it all together. I want you to go to Ezekiel chapter 47, and we will read it here in just a moment.

I. The Prophecy of Ezekiel

You have heard me say this many, many times: the eight greatest chapters in the Bible, I call them the definitive chapters on the Millennial reign of Christ, will be Ezekiel chapter 40 through Ezekiel chapter 48. Revelation chapter 20 is a great chapter on the Millennium, probably the greatest chapter in the New Testament. But when it comes to understanding the complete layout of what the Millennial reign of Christ is all about from a ground standpoint, from what God is doing, from a physical kingdom of heaven, Ezekiel 40 through 48 is without a doubt the greatest eight chapters in the Bible.

In a doctrinal sense, it is really a prophecy on the second coming of Christ. The first couple of chapters, the first 24 chapters, are really a message on Israel's spiritual condition. When you read Ezekiel chapter 1 through chapter 24, he is showing you clearly what Israel's spiritual condition

really is, which we all know is not very good. Then he switches and he starts to preach to the Gentile nations. He preaches to them about a judgment that is going to fall on them. Of course, we know that judgment is going to be the second coming of Christ.

In chapter 25, he goes after the Ammonites. In chapter 26, 27, and 28, he goes after Tyre. You have the story of the Prince of Tyre there. In 29 through 34, he goes after Egypt, and then he talks about the judgment going to fall on Assyria. In chapter 35 and 36, he talks about the destruction that is going to befall Edom. Then he changes direction, and now from 37, 38, 39, and 40, and on to the end, it becomes a great prophecy.

- Chapter 37 deals with the regathering of the nation of Israel. That is where you find the story about the dry bones. That will be Israel's regathering. It actually in our timeframe took place in 1918, came to fruition in 1948, and we are seeing it play itself out even today.
- Chapter 38 deals with the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation period.
- Chapter 39 deals with the second coming of Christ.
- Then in chapter 40 through chapter 48, we have the Millennial reign of Christ. Every detail is laid out for you.

Whether you know it or not, I just gave you an outline of the book of Ezekiel, but that is basically what you have.

II. The River of the Sanctuary

Chapter 47 deals with the river, the river of water that during the millennium will come forth out of the sanctuary where God's throne is, and it will move down into the desert and into the Dead Sea. When you study it on down there in 47, it finally goes into the Mediterranean Sea and it goes all through the earth. What that represents, we know that in the millennium Christ is on the throne and there is no need for preaching of the gospel anymore because Christ is on the throne. In fact, the Bible tells you that if anyone tries to preach the gospel, they are thrust through. They do not tolerate it because there is no reason to preach the gospel or preach about Christ anymore because the Bible says that He is sitting on the throne in Jerusalem and all the world knows who He is during that thousand-year reign. Water coming out of the throne is a great picture of Christ being to the ends of the earth, and it is tremendous. It is called the River of the Sanctuary in Zechariah chapter 14, which is another great chapter on the Second Coming, the living waters that come out of Jerusalem.

From an inspirational standpoint, it shows us the process of growing in the Holy Spirit of God and your life to get to the place where God wants you to be. I asked Danny to sing that song this morning, "There is a River," because that song was written and it is based on Ezekiel chapter 47. I want to come at it from a practical application of what it is really dealing with and showing you

how it applies to your own life. From a practical standpoint, it shows the process of you and I growing in the Holy Spirit of God through the Word of God every day.

III. Spiritual Growth: The Holy Spirit Getting More of You

We have talked a lot about spiritual growth, and I have showed you different levels and all the bottom line, but today I want you to understand the fundamental truth, and it is good that we end this series today on this message, because that is fundamentally what growing in the Lord is. It is not you getting more of the Holy Spirit of God. You know the Charismatics make such a big deal about you have got to get more of the Holy Spirit of God, and you have got to get the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They say you get some of the Holy Spirit when you get saved, but then at some point when you get the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then you get all of the Holy Spirit of God. You speak in tongues and do all the miracles and all that stuff. We know that is not true.

Spiritual growth is never, now listen to me very carefully, spiritual growth is never you getting more of the Holy Spirit of God. Spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit of God getting more of you. That is what growth is, and that is what your spiritual growth is. Your spiritual growth is a process that every day you get more of the Holy Spirit of God in the sense of Him getting more of you, and you grow more to be like Him.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

It goes without saying that the evidence of our walk with God in God's Spirit will be directly in proportion to your spiritual growth. That is just the way it is going to work. The Bible talks about that there are nine fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, and when you get into the Spirit and you start walking in the Spirit and you get to the point where the Spirit of God has all of you and you start yielding yourself to Him, you get the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit can be defined as the power of God in your life. Everybody wants the fruit of the Spirit. There are all kinds of Bible studies, and they all talk about getting the fruit of the Spirit, but everybody wants the power of God. But what you have to understand is that there is more to walking in the Spirit of God than just getting the power of God, because along with the power of God has to come the character of God. There will be no power of God in your life until you and I have the character of God in our lives. That is what makes the whole thing work, and that is what walking in the Spirit of God really is.

In the Bible, and most of you probably are already aware of this, water is likened to the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God. That is why when they wrote that song, "There is a River," it talks about the aspect of that river coming out of the throne of God likened to the day you got saved. I want to explain something about the Holy Spirit of God. There are two aspects to it that

you need to understand. Again, I know that you older folks understand this, but the price of learning is repetition, and you newer folks, you need to grasp this and understand it. When it comes to you and me as believers, there are two aspects of the Holy Spirit of God.

1. There is what we call the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. That is the day you got saved. The day you got saved, you got all of the Holy Spirit of God that there is. The Bible says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." The day you got saved, you got indwelt, and the Bible says you got sealed with the Holy Spirit of God. He is never going to leave you. You now are indwelt. He dwells inside you. Your body now is the temple, and He lives and reigns inside that temple.
2. There is another aspect to it, and that is the filling of the Holy Spirit of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit of God has to do with your soul. Truthfully, if you are saved this morning, your soul cannot sin. "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." Your flesh is not born of God, but your soul is. So your soul is sealed, and it is perfect, and that is where the Holy Spirit of God dwells. But we are still in this flesh, and we still have to try in this flesh, and the Bible says that there is nothing good in my flesh. We still in our flesh have to do what God wants us to do, which is ministry and the things of God. The way we do that is to every day get into the Word of God. Every day through prayer, through a process of spiritual growth, we allow the Holy Spirit of God to fill us more every day. We are already indwelt in our soul, but it is the members of our body that need to be filled. We get filled to the aspect that we are going to be and do what God wants us to do. That is a daily process. That is different than the infilling. The infilling is eternal. That is the day you got saved. That is your salvation. But the filling of the Holy Spirit of God, this is what I want to talk to you about this morning. I want to show you the example of this. It is a process.

It is why some of you come in here and you have problems in your life and you have struggles in your life. You hang around down here for three or four years, and pretty soon by some point in your life you have worked through your problems. You have got your issues behind you, and now you are doing everything that God wants you to do. It is no magical formula. It is simply you going through the process of the Spirit of God getting more of you every day and the world getting less of you.

In John chapter 4, and Danny spoke about it this morning, this great story of the Woman at the Well. A song talks about her, and it is found in John chapter 4 that she came to that well to get physical water. She came every day. She brought a pitcher with her to fill that pitcher up and take it home. That water that she was coming out of that physical well is such a great picture of how the world leaves us unsatisfied. She came and got water, but that water only satisfied her for a while, and every day she was empty in the morning, and she had to come back and get more of that water.

Jesus met her at the well. When you read the story, He asked her about her life, and she confesses that her life is pretty screwed up. Jesus, when He meets her there in John chapter 4, in verse 14, He says this:

John 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

That woman is a picture of an unsaved person. That woman is a picture of an unsaved person who every day tries to fill themselves up with the things of the world to make them feel satisfied. But it does not last. You can go out and buy something new, get a new car, go out and buy a new dress, go out and find a new boyfriend or a new girlfriend, and for a while your life is happy. But after a while you realize that it really does not satisfy. All those things that the world has cannot satisfy. That is what this woman is a picture of, coming to physical water to supply a physical need. But her need was not physical. Her need was spiritual. When the Lord said the water that I will give you to drink, it will turn into everlasting rivers of water, and you will never thirst again. When you study that story and you read it right there, at that point that water is a picture of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God that gives us eternal life. You know how it turned out. She got saved. She took all the spiritual water. She never goes back to that well again. In fact, she left her pitcher there on the well. She did not need it anymore. It is a picture of when we truly get saved, we leave the things of the world behind us.

There is another great example of water being a type of the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God all the way back in Genesis chapter 26 with the life of Isaac. I think we have talked a lot about being a leader and being a spiritual leader and a father in your family, and talked about how the fathers are the key to the family. I want to tell you, probably in the Old Testament, and you would not know this because it is not really flamboyant in his life, but I think probably in the Old Testament the greatest example of a father is Isaac. He is a tremendous example. When you saw in Genesis chapter 22 when Abraham wanted to offer him up, you see that he had total obedience to his father. When he finds a wife, we have talked about this in Genesis chapter 24, when he finds a wife, he goes through a biblical process to get the right woman in his life to be his helpmeet. He is the only one of the patriarchs that never gets out of the promised land. Everybody else gets messed up, goes to Egypt, goes here, goes there. He never does. He stays right where God put him, satisfied in the land that God gave him. I think he is a tremendous example.

There are three things that he does. When I speak to fathers about being the right kind of father and a spiritual leader, I have an extended thing on this. I am just going to give you the three points to show you how water is a type of this, but it is an incredible thing. You go to Genesis chapter 26.

3. The first thing it says about Isaac is he built an altar. That altar in the Bible that he built is a picture of his relationship with God. He worshipped at that altar. That is a picture for you and for me as a father that you have to be the spiritual leader of your home. You have to be the one that says, "We are going to church today." You have to be the one that says, "Okay, we are going to get into the Bible." You have to be the one who leads the way, and you do that because you built an altar. You build an altar. That altar is your own personal relationship that you have with Christ.
4. The second thing that he does, the Bible says that after he built an altar, he pitched his tent there. He built his family, the tent, he built his home on the altar that he built. That is a great

picture of you and me as a father getting our relationship with God right and then building our family on the foundation of the altar that we built in our life as a father. I do not even know what to tell you about that. I do not know of a greater example that is so easy to grasp.

5. The third thing he did, he built an altar and he pitched his tent. Then the third thing he did is he dug wells. Now, wells for water. In that chapter, it does not say he dug a well, he dug wells. In other words, to me, that represents the water or the Word of God. You build your own relationship with God, you build your family on it, and then you supply the water for your family. Notice it is wells. You have to dig a different well for every child you have. What well you give for this child will not work for this one. What works for this one and this one will not work for the third one or the fourth one or the fifth one. It will not work for your wife. It is wells, plural. He just did not dig one well. Not only are the wells plural for your family and your children, but you dig wells for other people that God is going to put in your life. That water in those wells, that water is always going to be a picture of the Holy Spirit of God in your life and the Word of God in your life that you have to grow through a process that I want to show you here in just a minute.

IV. The Stages of Spiritual Growth

After you are saved, the same Bible and Holy Spirit that saved you will be the same elements that God uses in your life to grow and mature you. It is just that simple. Your spiritual growth will be in stages, and we have already talked about that. I have showed you that in the last couple of weeks. In Ezekiel 47, now that you understand what this is all about here, not only doctrinally but from a practical standpoint, dealing with the water flowing out of the throne of God, we have now another great picture of that spiritual growth process in your life through the stages. I am going to tell you right now, almost everybody in this church, you are in this message someplace today. All of you are, really, I say it, most of you, all of you are. Every person here today, you can write your name someplace in what I am about to tell you.

Let us look at Ezekiel 47 and allow me if you would to read the first nine verses for you.

Ezekiel 47:1-9

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Now Father, help us today. Lord, this church is standing at a great point in time. We talked about the last couple of weeks that Lord, you have cleared the deck and you have prepared the way for the men and women in this church that want to move and grow spiritually to become everything that God wants them to be. Lord, you have touched so many of them because they have said to me that Lord, Bob, this is the year that I want to claim for my spiritual growth. I believe them. I believe that we are going to see men and women, dads, moms, families go to that next level because they want to be and do everything that God wants them to be. Help me to help them. Help the leaders of this church to be there to help them. Help us in everything that we do to try to give them, Father, all that they need to accomplish that. Help this message today. Bless me, bring me through it, and help me put all the pieces together in a proper way that will be edifying to these good people. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now look at verse 3. What you have here is a man with a measuring line in his hand. He measures, now we know the water is a type of the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God. He measures how far you get into the water, that is, the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God. This is a picture of your spiritual growth process. As you get deeper into the Word, the Word will get deeper into you. As you give yourself more to the Holy Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God will get more of you. It is just that simple. As we read through this passage, we will see a great picture develop here of how we ought to grow in the Spirit of God.

The first thing I want you to see is look at verse 2.

Ezekiel 47:2

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

Doctrinally, in the millennium you have what is called, this sanctuary is called the Holy Oblation. It is right in the middle of Jerusalem. Clarence Larkin in his book on Dispensational Truth, I never found anybody that wrote it out and drew it out better than he did. In fact, I put it

into my Bible. I have it in there, every chart that he put, I put in there so I would illustrate that. It is great stuff, great stuff. But what happens is this: that throne of God in the millennium, the water comes out of the right side of the throne, comes down into the Dead Sea, down from the Dead Sea through the desert, and then goes into the Mediterranean Sea.

Inspirationally, this water is a picture of Christ sitting on the right hand of God the Father. We know that the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 12:

Hebrews 10:12

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

That is where He is seated today. He is seated. Christ sits on the right hand of God, and this water issuing forth from the right side of the throne of God is a picture of God's Holy Spirit and His Word coming to us from Christ. Ephesians chapter 1 says that all blessings and praise God put in Christ. The only way you are going to get salvation is to get it from Christ. The only way you are going to get the blessings of God is from Christ. Everything is in Christ. God took everything that was good and righteous and put it in His Son. His Son sits on the right hand of the throne, and so when we get the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, and all the blessings of God, it is that picture, that river pictures that of it flowing down on the right side of that throne and coming down to us and us getting blessed for it.

When that water comes out and starts flowing, wherever it goes, it says in verse 9, it brings life. That is what the Bible does. That is what God did. That is what the job of the Holy Spirit of God does. That is what He wants to do through you and me. He wants to bring life to dead things, unsaved people. He wants you, everybody says, "We are going to have a party. What are you going to bring?" "Well, I will bring the chips. I will bring the pop. I will get the girls. I will do this. I will do that." No, what God wants you to bring to the party is life. He wants you to bring life.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

As you continue to grow spiritually, you get more filled, not indwelt. You have got all the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, eternally, spiritually, the day you got saved. But filling is a daily process. It is you getting farther into the Word of God and the Word of God getting farther into you. You will see it here as we come through in Ezekiel 47. It is a great picture of this process. This is a picture of a man moving deeper into the river of God, the Holy Spirit of God.

➤ 1.) The Ankles

Look at verse 3.

Ezekiel 47:3

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Now they are water to the ankles. That is a brand new baby Christian. That is somebody that just got saved. We say in the world, "What is the matter, you afraid to get your feet wet?" Well, I am saying to you, when you get saved, the first thing you need to do is get your feet wet. Start coming to church. You do not have to wade in over your head. You just start with where you are at. You start to get your feet wet. This moving into the Holy Spirit of God pictured by the water is the start of your spiritual growth process. You keep moving. This is the entry level. This is the entry level that will get you to ministry. God does not expect you to jump off the diving board into a hundred feet of water. He expects you to just start to do what you can do. This guy, when he starts to go in, the Lord measures him up to his ankles.

Ankles will represent your walk with God. It is the beginning of your walk with God. You sprain your ankle or break your ankle, you cannot walk very well. Ankles represent your walk with God in its most basic form. The Bible says that we that live in the spirit, Galatians 5, we shall also walk in the spirit. So many of you were at this point in your life at some point. You can identify with it. Many of you are there right now. You started coming to this church. You are getting dialed in. You are getting the Bible. I hear it all the time. People say, "I have come to your church for the last two or three months, and I have learned more Bible than I have going to that church I was going to in the last 10 years." I am just telling you, you are getting plugged in. You are seeing it. So many of you are right here. But all of us were here at one point in time. All of us started our spiritual walk and our growth with God. The ankles are the key to your walk. It is just that simple. A walk by faith as you move on through here that the water, fear to God, gets deeper and deeper. The Christian life is simply a walk into the spirit of God that gets deeper and deeper. It requires more faith with each level. But the ankles, the ankles, where He starts to measure you, that is where you start. That is where you start. But you do not stay there.

➤ 2.) The Knees

Look at verse 4.

Ezekiel 47:4

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

Now note the process. The Holy Spirit of God typified by the water flowing from God's throne. You and I get saved. We start to grow in the spirit of God. We start to get disciplined. Somebody starts to work with us, start coming to church. We start to get our feet wet. I have watched some of you go down to restart for the first time. I have watched some of you do this for the first time. Some of you are just playing volleyball for the first time, and you are a little apprehensive about it. People say a lot of times, "I am not a very good volleyball player." That is not the point. The point is not how good a volleyball player you are. The point is we want you with us so that the

atmosphere can be conducive to your spiritual growth. Of course, if you do not play, we will kick you out. But it is a thing where that is our main goal. We do not care about that.

The Holy Spirit of God starts flowing from God's throne. You get saved, and you start to get your feet wet, your ankles, but you keep moving. You keep growing. Now the water is up to your knees. The world says, "Come on in. The water is fine." I say to you, "Come on in. A life of serving God is great." I hate getting into the water. Confession time. I saw Jaws in 1975, never been in the ocean since. I will never go in the ocean. Did anybody see a couple of weeks ago, I thought that the waves were coming out, even where it was, the waves were coming in. There were people out here, about 30 of them playing. In the background, not 15 feet behind them, which looked like a 30-foot great white shark in the same area. Nobody even knew it was there. I do not even take a bath anymore. Showers are the only way I go.

I do not like getting in the water. I am one of those wimpy people when it comes to water. I do not care. I know I have been places where the water has been 90 degrees, and that is different. But you invite us over to everybody have a party someplace or when we baptize, I mean, I suck it up at that point. But I will tell you, I am the kind of guy that I go to your swimming pool. First thing I do is see how cold the water is with my foot. I thank God you have got those little steps going down, and I will get down there. It is all right, really. My ankle is up here. But when it starts to get past the knees and it gets up here and it is cold and you are not acclimated to it yet and to walk in and it starts to come over the back of your swimming trunks and get up your back. You know, I throw, I try everything. I rub water on me while I am standing there, and anybody, you smart guys who want to come up and splash me and throw water on me when I am in that stage of getting acclimated, I will kill you. I will kill you. I hate that. You are a deacon. You are fired before you even get out of the pool.

I walk in there, and I have learned over the years, honestly, I learned that the best way to do it is just to gut it up and go to the diving board and just jump in and one thing. It is like being killed. It is over before you know it. You come back up out of the water, and now you are okay. But I hate getting into the water. I hate that water coming up and coming up slowly, and it is cold, and you are going in there like this, and it is running up your legs, and you are trying to work it on your thing. Put a little on your back and on your head. But it never works. Best thing to do, folks, is jump in. I am telling you.

Now the knees. You see, you move in this thing inch by inch, foot by foot, and you get to the ankles, and then you get to the knees. I must say that this is the point when you get to the knees, spiritually speaking. This is where most Christians do not or will not go any farther. This is a good point. I want to talk about here for a minute. You people who work with people, disciple people, or you work in a counseling aspect of our church, you see this all the time. People come along, and they have got problems in their life, and they have got issues in their life. Maybe they have made a lot of bad choices. Maybe they have some addictions, maybe whatever. It does not matter. They start coming to church, and they like everybody. They like everything. They have fun. Then they start growing. You start to disciple them, and they get into the ankles. Ankles is fine. But when it gets up a little bit more, and you get in a little deeper, and you come to church a little more, and you learn more about what God expects of you, and you learn a little more about

this, a little more about this, a little more about that. Then you decide that you are not going to go any farther.

People refuse to, will refuse to grow past the point in their life because the knees is a tremendous point. We are going to talk about it here for a few minutes. But if the knees represents where you have now got to take personal responsibility and accountability for some things in your life, you do not have to do that at the ankles. But when you get to the knees, I am going to show you why in a moment. When you get to the knees, then it all changes.

Years ago, Barbara and I, I mean, this was years ago, we won a trip, a free trip to Hawaii. All expenses paid. That was when the lottery first came out, and Barb bought lottery tickets. I told her not to, but she did. She got, we won the lottery. No, we did not. We got into some contest, and we won it. We won a trip to Hawaii years ago. When was it? Kelly was in kindergarten. That tells you how long ago it was. But then she stayed in kindergarten for like five or six years, did she not? Anyway, we went to Hawaii. We had a hotel. I mean, it was, you know, you think it was a kind of a cheap thing. It was first class all the way. We stayed in a Holiday Inn or a thing right on Waikiki Beach. Every day you would go out there, and all day long people would be in the beach. But you know what you would see? Everybody would just be wading up and down. There were waders, 5,000 people wading. About 40 people were way out there where it was really the ocean. Everybody just wading up and down the shore, some to their ankles, some to their knees, just watching someone just pulling their pants up and walking up and down here, and some of them with shorts on with their gym shoes in their hands, just so they can say and they walk up in the ocean. I looked at that. When I put this message together years after that, I thought that back to that example. You know what? There are most Christians right there. They just wade through Christianity. They never get past the wading point. They just wade all of their lives. The waders of Christianity never get past their knees. They just wade along all the time in their life.

I personally think when you lay this out, when you get to that water up to your knees, I think that is a real turning point in your life. Have you ever noticed how there are about four or five places in the Bible where in a story, something changes about something, and spiritually, when you look at it, it is a picture of somebody really getting what God wants them to have? They are never going back to the world again. I think the knees are that way. I think that this is a turning point for every Christian, the knee, and how far you will go in the spirit of God as the water rises through the things in your life that God brings there in this growth process.

You know why that is? Because Philippians chapter 2, verse 10 says:

Philippians 2:10

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

See? It is a crucial point in your life. You get saved, you start, but you have to come to a point in your life. Everybody is through this process. I went through it. Everybody here has went through it. You get saved. You start coming to church. You get the water around your ankles, and it starts to come up a little bit. But when you get to a certain point in your life, you have to surrender it

all to Him, and you bow that knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of things in heaven and things in earth.

Do you know, have you ever known in the Bible, there are two verses that deal with your knees and your relationship with Christ? I do not know if you ever saw it. Most Christians come to this point, the knees, and they simply will not go any farther because they are not willing to bow their knee. Philippians chapter 2, verse 10 says every knee should bow. That is right now. Right now, if I can give you some good advice, no matter where you are at in your spiritual life, every knee wants some good advice. Grow to the place in your life that every knee, your knee should bow. That is right now. Philippians 2:10 is talking about this life. Right now in this life, you should by your own free will, by your love for God, through your growth of the Spirit, come to the place in your life that you realize that the world is worthless. It has nothing for you. Then you decide to give it all to Him. Right now in this life, you should bow, should bow your knee. That is now.

That a place is in Romans 14:11. Romans 14:11 deals with the judgment seat of Christ in verse 10. That verse says every knee will bow. You see, it is not about whether you will or you will not bow your knee. Right now, you should bow it, but some of God's people will not. But when you get to the judgment seat of Christ, everybody will. It is not a matter whether you will or you will not. It is just whether you will, you should, or you do it later at the judgment seat of Christ when you do not have a choice in it. But you will. That is incredible. That is incredible.

This point is where you will get opposition. Oh yeah, man, this is where you start to get opposition for your wanting to really serve God. You will. You will get it from your friends. You will get it from your very own family members. Maybe your mom or your dad or your in-laws. You will get it from maybe your husband or your wife. This is where you will begin at this point in your life when you start to really begin to bow your knee and put aside the things of this world and realize what Christ did for you, realize what He wants from you, and you are ready to bow that knee and say, "God, I am not ever going back to the world. I am going to go past this point, and I am going to grow to be everything that you want me to be." About that time, your family will say, "Now, Bob, it is okay to go to church, but let us not be a fanatic about it." See? Oh yeah, you will hear it. You will hear it all the time. "Well, now it is okay to go to church and listen to that preacher. But you know what? Now, he is not right in everything he says, and you just need to think for yourself." Sure, you do. "Now, you know what? It is great to go to church, but now you are not going to turn into one of those Bible thumpers, are you?" Not sure what a Bible thumper is. "Now, do not go overboard in this thing. Now, do not get in too deep over your head now."

Hey, let me tell you something. The devil will be more than willing to let you go to church and even profess Christianity as long as you never practice it. He will be more than willing to allow you to go to church and profess Christianity as long as you really do not do anything with it. Just do not get in too deep. Well, that is exactly what you are supposed to do. Have you ever noticed how unchristian a lot of advice that Christians give out really is when you put it up inside the Bible? You see, it is okay to go overboard on booze and become a drunk. It is all right to go overboard on gambling and have a gambling addiction. That is okay. It is okay to get overboard on this or that. But oh, do not go overboard on the Bible.

I had a lady one time years ago that came in to see me, and her son was on drugs. She was just all distraught. She says, "Can you help me?" He was a nice kid. I said, "Sure, I will help you." I got that kid. I worked with that kid. This was years ago. I worked with that kid and helped that kid. Got the kid started coming to church, gave up the drugs, gave up this, gave up that. Really got on fire for God. One of the best young men I had. Then the mother got mad at me. I asked her, I said, "What is the problem?" She says, "My boy is out of control. He is not the boy that I once knew. He is overdosing on the Bible." I said to her, "Ma'am, is he better than the boy that you did know? Would you rather have him overdosing on the drugs he was taking or overdosing on the Bible?" People are nuts. People are nuts.

I love to study human nature. Human nature is a study of my life. I love to study it. Human nature never lets you down. I never played a video game in my life. I know nothing about Call of Fortune or World of Fortune or War of Fortune or those things you guys play. I do not need that. I do not play Pac-Man. I do not play the little rocket ship. I do not need any of that stuff. I just love to study human nature. Every day I get rewarded. Every day it is like an incredible day.

I was watching last week. Talk about human nature. Have you ever heard the story of this last week of a girl that fell 300 feet off the cruise ship? She was drunk as a skunk on a cruise ship. They even have it on video. She is leaning over the thing. I guess she is throwing up. I do not know what she is doing, but she loses her balance. She falls over the crane. On the camera, you see her falling 200, 300 feet. She is up high, down into the water on the cruise ship. The camera caught it and set off an alarm, but she was in the water for an hour and a half before they found her. She was up at a party with her friends. She was drunk beyond belief, staggered over the thing to do whatever she was going to do, and fell in. They rescued her. I saw her face. She had two black eyes. Falling a couple hundred feet in the water, that is like falling on concrete. But God takes care of fools and drunkards, and she made it.

They interviewed her on one of the news programs, and she is standing there. Nice looking gal. Young, 25, 26. She is standing there along the seashore. She looks at the camera, and she says, "Yeah," she says, "I do not think I could ever go around the water ever again." I am saying to myself, "Oh, like it was the water that caused you to fall?" "I will not go around the water again, but I will go around the booze again." See? Human nature is incredible. She will never go back in the water, but she will still drink like a fish. Next time she will get hit with a truck, and then she will never cross the street again. See? God forbid, she falls out of a plane, and it is the ground. Then she says, "I will never fly again." See? Human nature loves to blame the problems on whatever is not the problem. This woman says, "Well, you got my boy overdosing on the Bible." Well, what is wrong with that? See? She says, "Well, I fell off the boat, and I was drunk as a skunk, and I am not ever going around the water again." Why do you not give up the booze? You never have to worry about falling off the boat again. I love it, man. Life. I think it is great.

People like that have stopped moving in that river years ago. They are just wading along. Wading in the water up to the knees. Hey, it is nice. "Oh, you are in the water. All right. You are going to church. Okay." And you are saved, and you have got the Holy Spirit of God, but you are not very far, and you are still in control of things, are you not? See how that works. There is no faith in your walk. You can see the bottom. You never allow yourself to get too far from shore. So if plan

A does not work for you, you can run back to plan B. Let me tell you something, folks. When it comes to God, there is no plan B. He only has plan A. That is all there is, but that is what the waders do. That is what they do.

➤ 3.) The Loins

Now look at verse 4, last part of that verse.

Ezekiel 47:4

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the loins.

Now you are waist high. Now you are getting out there. Now you are farther from shore. You went through the ankles. You went to the knees, and now you are to the loins. You see the process is all measured by a man with a line. I have watched many of you go through this exact same process.

Loins in the Bible will always represent a man's strength. We know that. Ephesians 6:14 says, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." In the Song of Solomon, it talks about Christ and a picture of Christ. It talks about His legs like pillars of marble and His loins like sockets of gold. When you get to this point, you find out that the strength is not just in your physical body, but it is your spiritual body. Now your thinking process has changed. You look at everything differently. You have a strong walk with God based on the truth of God that you let yourself walk into.

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

You see, you have a godly thinking process. Now look at this. The Christian at this point has learned or is beginning to learn to walk by faith and not by sight, because when you get to this point, you cannot see the bottom anymore. The farther you are out now, you are way out there. The current is getting a lot stronger in that old river. It can sweep you off your feet. You see, when you were on your ankles, you can still see the bottom, you are four or five inches deep. The knees, you can still see the bottom because you are only about two feet of water. But the loins, now you cannot see the bottom. Now you cannot see where the drop-offs are. Now you can get pulled up by the strong current, swept off your feet. Now you can trip over rocks, fall into a sinkhole, get caught in a stump. You cannot see. You do not have anything like a stick to prod your way along to keep you from stumbling. Now you are wading deeper into a fast-moving wide river. The farther you go, the deeper it gets. The more you lose control of your circumstances of your life.

I have not mentioned this yet, but I guess now would be the time to inject this. Look at verse 3. He brought me through the water to the ankles. Look at verse 4. He brought me through the waters to the knees. Look at the last part of verse 4. He brought me through the water to the loins. Two things here. First, there is a man leading you through these waters. That man is Jesus Christ. You are not out there all by yourself going through this. I know sometimes you think you are, but I am here to tell you, you are not. You are not. You never look at how far in you are or

how far from shore you are. The second thing you want to remember is you just keep your eyes on the man who is leading you into the water. Do not look around at how far you are out. Do not look at the current going by. Keep an eye on the guy who is telling you, "Keep on coming."

You know, that was Peter's problem when he got to walk on the water. He got out of that boat, and he started to walk on the water. As long as he kept his eyes on Christ, he could walk on the water. The moment he could not, he took his eyes off Christ, and he started to look at his circumstances around him. He began to sink. God is going to take you into that thing one inch at a time. He is going to measure that thing as you grow. You are going to come to the place where you have got to learn that you never lose your focus on the one who is bringing you through the water.

➤ 4.) Waters to Swim In

Now look at verse 5. Here is where you want to get.

Ezekiel 47:5

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Only the Lord, only the Lord would ask you to wade into a fast river to get in over your head in a river that you had no chance to get to the other side in the first place. I am telling you, this is a picture where you get to this point that the end of self, this is the picture of your Christian life. When you finally get to the place, you do not have control of your life anymore. This is a place that we all want to get, that you are at the end of self, the place of total surrender. This is a great picture of faith. God will allow you to get into impossible situations to show you that He is the one that is leading you. The reason why now the Lord would ask you to wade into a fast river is because He never intended for you to get to the other side in the first place. He intended for us to get into the spirit of God, the water, through a process, get totally filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and then through the flow of that spirit, take you where He wants you to go.

Now look at verse 5, "waters to swim in." Have you ever seen somebody swimming from a distance? You see somebody swimming from a distance. You cannot, all you see is their head. You are standing on the shore, and they are 300 yards out, and they are swimming. All you can see is their head. Because all the rest of their body is covered by the water.

1 Corinthians 11:3

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

When you get to the point in your life that you are spiritual and you are where God wants you to be, that the head, the head, the head of every man should be Christ. You get to that point in your life where you are filled with the spirit of God, that you are fully under God's control. When the world looks at you, all they see is your head, and your head is Christ. Oh, incredible story. Christ now the head of your life, total control of your life, total control of the circumstances of life. Now your life is unexplainable. Now your feet can no longer touch the bottom. Oh, it could

when you were at your ankles. It certainly could when you were at your knees, and it could when you were at your loins, but not now. Now you are off your feet. You are carried by the current of that river, the spirit of God. You now do not go where you want to go. You now go where the spirit of God wants you to go. You have given control of your life to the spirit of God. Now I think the world says you just go in with the flow, the spirit of God. That is the process, you see, of walking in the fellowship with Christ every day and growing in the spirit of God.

D.L. Moody, we talked about him a couple of weeks ago, a great preacher, great evangelist. He was holding meetings at a certain church for like three or four years, and people just getting saved all over the place. So they just had the last meeting, and the deacons all got together. Of course, not everybody liked it, just like not everybody likes stuff that goes on in any church, and they are sitting around there, and they start, "Okay, we need to set the dates and to see if we can get Moody to come back next year." One of the old deacons cropped up, and he said, "You know what? Why do we have to have Moody back again? Has Moody got a corner on the Holy Spirit of God?" One of the old deacons piped up and said, "No, I think it is the other way around. The Holy Spirit of God got the corner on Moody." That is what they want. The Holy Spirit of God wants to have the corner on you. He wants to have everything. He wants to have your life. You do not say where you go, the flow of God's spirit, because you are in over your head.

V. The End Result of Spiritual Growth

Enough of that. I want you to see the end result because the end result is incredible. I want you to see now the end result of your spiritual growth. I have showed it to you four or five different ways over the last couple of weeks. A lot of ways to measure your spiritual growth process in the Bible. So many of you have said this is going to be my year. I am claiming it. So let us look at the end result one more time. Before we do so, you keep in fresh in your mind the process. Holy Spirit of God comes from the right side of the throne of God. It is likened to the river in the millennium, the river of life. Some people will get into the ankles. Some people get into the knees. Some will get to the loins, and some will get all the way in and totally filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and all you can see is their head, and that head is Christ.

Now, let us look at the end result. When you get there, and some of you will, some of you already are, when we get there, here is what you have. Let us read verses 6 through 9 again.

Ezekiel 47:6-9

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Now, look at verse 6. I love this. This is, I like things like this. He got the guy way out here. Now He is bringing the guy back. When He brings the guy back, He shows him what He really is doing with all this. I call that, there will be a time in your life when God will pull you out and give you a great perspective on how far you have grown. There will be a time in your life where it is why I do it, every try to do it, replicate it every New Year's. I try to stop and preach messages that get us to reflect back and see where we have come from. Because in a year's time, you know, you have a lot of good things, you have some bad things, you have some stupid things, and it is easy to lose your focus. But you never want to lose your focus on where you are at and what God is doing. You are always going to have idiots. Wherever you have got light, you have got bugs. I do not know what to tell you. It is a thing where you want to always see what God is doing. So God in your life will stop, He will pull you back, and He will say, "Have you seen this?" That is what He is saying to this guy.

Now, look what He is saying here. Oh, I love this. I love this. "And He said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen this?" See, you have got to keep your perspective. In the midst of all the ministry and all that goes on and the people who make it and the people who do not and the people who like you and the people who do not like you, it is easy to get sidetracked. You have got to always stop back and let God say, "Do not forget about them. Forget about that. Forget about those idiots. Did you see this?"

➤ 1.) Many Trees (People)

Verse 7 says, so now He sees many trees along the bank on both sides. He never mentioned that before, did He? You see trees in the Bible are likened to people. A blind guy over there in Mark 8 one time, he says, Jesus healed his eyesight, and he says, "What do you see?" "I see men walk around like trees."

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Israel is likened to a fig tree. In the Bible, people are likened to trees. You see, when you get growing in God's spirit and you get to the place where you really are aware of what God is doing in your life and you really come to that point that the spirit of God has all of you that it can get, now you are more aware of the people that are around you that were there all the time. You just never noticed them before. Those trees just did not pop up. Those trees were there all the time. He just was so focused on getting in that water that he did not see the trees. Now that he got way out there, God pulls him back and he says, "Hast thou seen this?" And he said, "Wow, look at those trees."

This is the point in your life where you get to the point now where you see people for who they are. Many of you have got to this place in your life, and you are aware now of people around you than you were before. This is why some of you absolutely have grown to the place that as far as I am concerned as a pastor in this church, you are invaluable. You never miss an opportunity to be

there for somebody. You look for it because, and it was a time in your life when you never did. They were just people. You had your own problems, you were focused on your own things, but now it is all changed. You have got to the point where now you are out there, and you are out of control of your life, and God is saying, you are saying, "Wow, look at these people. Look at all these people that are around here."

This is why our two greatest growth times of the year are when we start volleyball and we start softball because we have people here that are aware of people. You know that we could care less who wins the softball games or the volleyball games. It does not matter that. We look at it as all the new people are going to come in who have problems, who have got heartaches, and you can look around you, you can see them, you can adopt a couple, you can take this guy in or this gal in, and you can bring them in. You know, before it was all about, "Watch me hit it over the fence," and unfortunately with many people it is still that way. All you want to do is look at me and what a great ball player I am. That is why when I pitch I have to tone it down a lot, see? But that is all people want. They want to say, "Look at me, look at what I am doing, look at this." You do not do that. You are not saying, "Look at me," you are looking around for the other person who was just like you before you found the living water. Oh, I am telling you. I am telling you, yeah, He will pull you back, and you will say, "Bob, hast thou seen this?" And I will say, "Well, Lord, I never looked at it that way before, but wow." That is spiritual insight, you see. That is the way it works.

➤ 2.) Healing Waters

Now look at verse 8.

Ezekiel 47:8

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

Now in the millennium, doctrinally, when this water comes out of God's throne on the right side, it goes down into the desert and into the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea comes alive, it gets healed. The desert, the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 35 verse 1, the desert springs forth and blooms like a rose. In other words, wherever this water goes, it brings life and it changes everything. There is a great truth, spiritually, for you and me. Based on an incredible picture of what our lives should be when we walk in God's Spirit and continue to grow and we simply get in this thing over our heads. We do not cause problems anymore. Now we look to solve problems. We look to heal situations now. We try to work it out, whatever we can do. We will take the word of God at this point, and we will try to heal scenarios and situations, we never make them worse.

You know, and you know this is true, some people, God's people, they live for conflict. They thrive on other people's issues. Their whole life is about keeping things stirred up. I know I talk about it a lot, and people probably get sick of hearing about it, but you know what, I will tell you, the worst and the greatest, everything has got a good side and a bad side. But I want to tell you something. The social media, Facebook, is one of the most satanic things you are ever going to get your hands on. Now I am not saying you should not be on it. I am not saying that at all. It is

like the internet. You can get all kinds of information and get a lot of bad information, but you have got to remember everything on the internet is true. But you know there are some people that are addicted to Facebook, just like some people are addicted to drugs. They cannot stay off that thing for an hour. People post on those things, some of the lewdest, stupidest stuff I have ever seen in my life. If I had some of the things going on in my life that those people have, I would not tell anybody about it. They actually think, "Well, it is on Facebook that nobody really sees it," but everybody on planet Earth sees it. The sons of God up on Jupiter see it. The people in hell probably got it on a big screen TV. They see it. But it is addictive because people have to have conflict. They have to get on there and see who is this and who is that, who is upset with who, and who is saying this and who is saying that. Man, is that all you have got in life? But that is the way it works today. People get addicted to pornography. People get addicted to drugs. People get addicted to gambling. And people get addicted to Facebook. I have seen it. You know, half the stuff I know that goes on is because somebody said, "I was on Facebook today," and I am thinking to myself, "Why would you even waste your time with that?" I mean, unless they videoed them shooting themselves, it would be really neat to watch. It would be something like that. It would be one thing. Just kidding.

I had a guy who was so screwed up one time, and his life was such a mess, he was an idiot. He called me on the phone one time, and he said, "Bob, I just want to know." I said, "I am going to go blow my brains out. I am going to commit suicide." I said, "Well, okay, but you better take two bullets." He was not a very good shot. But anyway, at this point, we do not cause problems. We solve issues. We will try to go to the source of any issue to heal it, not make it worse. But some people just want to keep the thing going. The mark of a Christian that is walking in the spirit of God is the fact that they always try to solve any problem and heal any situation. Many times you cannot. I understand that, but that is always your goal. I mean, honestly, come on. There should be absolutely nothing that two Christians cannot sit down and work out together if they are saved. But you will learn in time that some people need to have a problem to do what they want to do. So there is no fixing it, but it is just the way that it is.

➤ 3.) Abundant Life and Fish

Now look at verse 9.

Ezekiel 47:9

And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Did you ever notice this? Ever notice that when Jesus was on the earth, wherever He went, there was no death. Death was never in His presence, only life. He went to a funeral, person came back to life. When Lazarus died, he had been dead two days. The Lord shows up, "Lazarus, come forth." Little 12-year-old, there is a daughter down there. They said, "She is dead." He says, "Young maid, arise," and up she comes. There is not any place in the Bible where death ever stayed in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know why? There is no death in His presence. There is only life. When it comes to the child of God, really walking in the spirit of

God, wherever you go, whatever you do, it is going to bring life. That was the light of men. I do not know what to tell you. I mean, light and darkness, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." You can as a Christian have darkness in your life and have the light. Your life ought to be light that brings life to people in everything that you do. Solving problems, not causing them.

Now look at the last part of verse 9. "And there shall be a very great multitude of fish because the water shall come thither." There are the people you will bring to Christ through the process of walking in the spirit of God and getting that place in your life where God can control your life.

You know, when Billy Sunday died, in New York City, they laid his body out in Madison Square Garden. For two days, people were allowed to file by to pay their respects to Billy Sunday, who was one of the greatest evangelists and greatest preachers probably that the world has ever seen. An unsaved New York Times reporter who later got saved based on the event I am about to tell you about covered the death of Billy Sunday. For two days, he stood there while the line never broke, and people came by, and he recorded in the New York Times that he said that almost every person that came by said something similar to this: "I was saved by that man's preaching. I would be in hell today if it was not for the message that I heard him preach. He put my family back together. I was an alcoholic and hopelessly lost, and you know what? I got saved by his preaching." He said everybody that went through there almost without exception said to themselves or said to the person next to him where their life would be if it would not have been for the man that God sent them to preach the Word of God that changed their life.

Now I ask you a question. I ask Lee a question. You died this afternoon, and you and I laid in state somewhere, and people filed by. What would they say? People always drive me nuts with people. You know they want to look at somebody in a casket, and she would say, "She looks really nice." She looked dead to me. She looks herself. Who would she look like? "Well, he did a good job on her." You know, what would they say about you? "Well, he really, he was a great guy. He owed me money." Or what would they say about you? "You know, his life changed my life. Her life changed my life. We would not be where we are at without that person who told me about Christ." You see, great multitude of fishes. Great multitude of fishes. Oh, they will say, "He is a nice guy. He is a great guy. He was my great golf buddy. Oh, we hunted and we fished a lot." But it comes down to the impact that as a Christian we bring life to dead things.

Look at verse 9. "And everybody, everything shall live where the rivers cometh." As that river comes through the Dead Sea, it splits and goes out into the Mediterranean. From there it goes to the ends of the earth in verse 8. That is a picture of God taking your life through a process. You get into the point where Christ now becomes the head of your life. You get to the point where your life now is in His control and not yours. You get to the point where your life is now unexplainable. There is a multitude of fishes in your life that people of God has used to bring people to Christ. Dead things get life from you, and now God takes your life, your Spirit-filled life, and God will reach the world with it. That is the process. That is a picture of God taking you and me and our Spirit-filled life and going to the ends of the earth with it.

VI. The Choice

Last week I preached a message on the three families that make up the balance of any church. We talked about the three inner families that really were connected and how they represented the ones that really get the job done. Talked about the 12 tribes and how they camped and they were this center group and how that they basically were good people, but they never got as close as those three families that worked in the sanctuary and the tabernacle. Then we talked about the mixed multitude. I talked about the danger of hanging out with a mixed multitude, the outer camp people. I have told you all the time that life is about choices. We know that. This next year you will have to make some choices.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

You see that? Now I know we like to make the Christian life complicated. We do. A lot of times we like to make it as complicated as we can, but it is not. It is very simple. It is really simple. When you start laying this thing out, and next year, many of you claim that this is going to be the year of your spiritual growth. I will tell you something. It is real simple, and it is a real easy choice. This next year, you are either going to pitch your tent and hang out with a mixed multitude at the outermost part of the camp, or you are going to give your life to God, and you are going to grow up spiritually. He is going to take your life to the uttermost part of the world. "Uttermost" in the Bible, folks. You get to choose which one you are going to be with. You can be with the uttermost part of the camp, or you can let God take you to the uttermost part of the world. But it is your choice. You get to choose. It all is based on what you are willing to do with the Spirit of God in your life, how far you are willing to go. Ankles, knees, loins, water to swim in. Giving that a place in your life where that Holy Spirit of God sweeps you completely off your feet.

You know, they teach you in drowning classes. This is not classes on how to drown. This is classes on how to keep from drowning. That if you cannot swim and you fall into deep water like a river, the very best thing you can do is go as limp as you can, lay back and not fight it, and just lay back and you will float. It will keep your head up and go with that current till that current takes a turn or takes a bend, and you can get down to a place where you can get your feet up. That is the way they teach your survival. That is exactly what Christianity is. You relax. You enjoy the ride. You lay back. Let the current, the Spirit of God, take you where He wants you to go. All the world sees as you pass by through the current that God has taken you to the ends of the earth is your head. That head is Christ. Every head bowed and every eye closed. I hope it is.