

Waters To Swim In

Ezekiel 47:1-5 (KJV)

1 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 from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

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.

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.

4 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 were to the loins.

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.

Acts 7:37-39

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Our reading today comes from the writing of Ezekiel, one of the great prophets of the Old Testament.

Ezekiel's call from God

Ezekiel 2:1-2

1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

Ezekiel was a man who was Spirit led.

- His ministry is a visionary and powerful ministry.
- He was a priest living with the Jewish exiles in Babylon after the taking of Judah and Jerusalem by Babylon, around 580-600 B.C.

Ezekiel's visions and prophecies were powerful and vivid.

- He was among the thousands of young men deported from Judah to Babylon when King Jeroiakim surrendered.
- Until those tragic days, Ezekiel was being trained for the priesthood.
- But during the exile in Babylon, God called Ezekiel to be His prophet during one of Israel's darkest times.

In our reading, God is showing Ezekiel a vision and in that vision the House of God or Heaven if you will. And from under the door of that house, or Heaven if you will, a bit of water is flowing from under the threshold of that building.

Then a man or more probably an angel begins measuring.

- 1,000 cubits.
- A cubit is about 18 inches or 1.5 ft.

As he walked this approximately 1500 feet or the length of 5 football fields, the water began to get deeper.

- In fact, it was now to his ankles.

So then the angel measures out another 1500 ft.

- And this time the water is to his knees.

Then the angel measures out another 1500 ft.

- And the water is now to his waste.

Then the angel measures out another 1500 ft.

- And the water has now become a river that was so high that he could go no further.

It was at this point that Ezekiel makes an observation about the water at that point.

- He says, “It was water to swim in”.

In other words, it was deep enough that you could get out there and frolic a bit.

- Your feet wouldn’t touch the bottom.
- You could float around suspended by the buoyancy of the water at this point.
- No more trudging around
- And this water was a river
- It was moving
- It was going somewhere
- It had direction
- And it was deep enough that wherever it was going, it could take you with it.

But if we were to read further into the text and look further into Ezekiel’s vision, we would see that this was no ordinary river.

- It was a river of healing water.
- Whatever this water touched was healed.

This water that Ezekiel was wading through as he was led by the angel was a realm of the miraculous that few get to experience.

- It represented the amazing power of God and his desire to touch and heal those who would enter into His presence.

Imagine of you will what Ezekiel was thinking when this angel says to him, “follow me I want to show you something and walks the length of 5 football fields in order to show him that the water was now risen to his ankles.”

- I can imagine along that walk, he was thinking, “Big deal. Why am I walking in this slop”?
- “I’m walking and walking and walking and all I see is water barely coming over my toes.”
- “There’s nothing here to see!”
- “This thing isn’t going anywhere!”
- “There’s not much to look at here!”

And when he finally gets to where the angel wants to take him, the angel says “Come on, I want to show you something else” and he measures out another 1500 ft.

So Ezekiel begins walking again.

- Maybe he’s getting a bit tired now.
- But he notices as he continues walking that the water is getting a little bit deeper. And when he walks the full length of another 5 football fields, he realizes the water is getting up to his knees.

But then the angel starts walking again and so Ezekiel now more interested in what God was trying to show him begins to follow and he walks another 5 football fields and now the water is to his waist.

- It’s getting harder to walk now.
- It’s not as easy as it was when the water was just to his ankles, but he keeps on pushing.
- He keeps on wading.
- He is moving a bit slower than he was before half because the water is getting deeper and half because he’s getting tired from all the walking.
- And as he reaches the end of the final 1500 ft., he realizes the water is all the way to his chest and it has reached a point that he cannot walk any further.

It’s here after the long walk.

- It’s here after all the following

- It's here after all the drudgery and monotony and constant leading of the heavenly presence that he realizes that he is in something that could be some fun.

He says, "It was water to swim in".

- It was a place where my feet could come off of the ground.
- I was in something that was deeper than I was tall.

You know I wonder sometimes how many people God begins to lead into his blessings only for them to stop somewhere short of where He is taking them.

- I wonder how many times I've seen people be led of God's Spirit who started walking with Him but only made it to ankle deep water.

The walk was just too long.

- The sacrifice of time and energy was just not worth the distance it was going to require for them to get to where God wanted to take them.

God has water for them to swim in.

- He has a blessing that is going to sweep them off of their feet.
- He's got something for them that they never in their life thought they were going to see, but they stop somewhere between the threshold and ankle deep waters.
- Or maybe they hang on a little longer and they land somewhere between the ankle and the knee-deep waters.

But their relationship with God never does reach the level of depth that His Spirit is trying to take them.

- Some folks are satisfied with an ankle deep presence of God in their life.
- Others take it a step further, but then settle on a knee-deep relationship.
- We need to understand today that God never intended for any of us to settle on a knee-deep relationship with Him.

He took it all the way to the Cross on His end.

- How far are we willing to take it on our end?
- He bankrupt Heaven
- How much are we willing to sacrifice?

I wonder sometimes how far God would take some of us if we would only let Him take us the whole distance.

At what point do we reach the place where God would like to take us ultimately?

- Are we still wading around trying to get to the next place of victory in our lives?
- Or have we settled for something less than the promise of something better?
- Have we reached the waters to swim in yet?

Have we really reached that place of spiritual maturity or have we only settled for something deeper than were we were before?

- “I’m not where I’m supposed to be but thank God I’m not where I used to be!”
- There’s a bit of truth to that statement, but understand, that can’t be our attitude when it comes to our walk with God.
- Our attitude has to be, “What’s next!”
- “Where do we go from here Lord?”
- “What would you have me learn today Lord?”

I love where we are at right now.

- I love what God has been doing around here.

- I'm so thankful for what we've seen so far.
- But I'm convinced we're not swimming yet.
- I know there is a deeper place He wants to take us to.
- Beyond a shadow of a doubt I believe He wants to take this church to a place where it knocks us off our feet and carries us to a whole new dimension of His will.

We're not going to settle for second best.

- We're not going to level off at the ankle or the knee.
- We are going to keep moving forward into his will and into his presence until we are at that place where we are not standing on our own two feet any longer but suspended and carried by His purpose in our lives and in this church.

Do you ever wonder sometimes where your life and walk with God would be if only you wouldn't have been satisfied with stopping somewhere short along the way?

- Where would my life have been if I would have said, "yes" to God the first time he reached out to me?
- What a difference it would have made if I wouldn't have settled for what I settled for in Him.

One man said, "Compromise is a word found only in the vocabulary of those who have no will to fight."

- Where is your grit?
- Where is your hunger to know more of God?
- Where is your desire to see the miraculous?
- Where is your willingness to go deeper in His will for your life?

Have you settled for second best in your walk with Him?

- Have you stopped somewhere between where He wants to take you and where you are willing to go?

I am convinced today that God want's to take your relationship with Him to the realm of the miraculous.

- I believe He wants to take you out deeper and show you some things you've never seen before.
- For some of us that means our sins being remitted in baptism.
- For others of us that means receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost the way they did in the Bible.
- For still others it means a life that has been truly changed and transformed by the power of God.
- Some of us need God to come into our lives and do a spiritual surgery if you will and get rid of some of the spiritual cancer we've allowed to be in our lives.
- Some of us need deliverance from our addictions.
- Some of us need to be set free from the hold of sin in our lives.