

Message Five

Living the Christian Life by Enjoying the Flow of Life with the Ministry of Life out of and for the Magnificent House of God

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 47:1-12; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 9:11; 3:6, 9; 4:15; 3:2, 12

I. In order to live the Christian life, we need to enjoy the flow of life out of the house of God—Ezek. 47:1-12:

- A. God's ultimate move is His move in man to deify man by saturating man with all that He is in His life, nature, element, and essence for the glory, the expression, of God—2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.
- B. The water flows out from under the threshold—Ezek. 47:1:
 - 1. In order for the water to flow, there must be a threshold, an opening—cf. Psa. 81:10.
 - 2. If we draw closer to the Lord and have more contact with Him, there will be an opening that will allow the living water to flow out from the church—*Hymns*, #846.
- C. The flow is toward the east—Ezek. 47:1:
 - 1. The river of God flows in the direction of God's glory—cf. Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2.
 - 2. If everyone in the church seeks and cares for God's glory, the living water will flow out from the church—John 7:18; 1 Cor. 10:31.
- D. The water flows out from the right side of the house—Ezek. 47:1:
 - 1. In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place—cf. Heb. 1:3.
 - 2. The flow of life must have the preeminence within us, becoming the controlling factor in our living and work—Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b.
- E. The flowing is by the side of the altar, showing that we need the dealing of the cross and a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life—Ezek. 47:1.
- F. For the increase of the flow of life, we need to be measured by the Lord as the man of bronze—40:3; 47:2-5; Rev. 1:15; cf. John 7:37-39:
 - 1. To measure is to examine, test, judge, and possess; the four measurings of a thousand cubits, which is a complete unit (cf. Psa. 84:10), indicate that as creatures, we need to be thoroughly measured by the Lord so that He may take over and thoroughly possess our entire being (Isa. 6:1-8).
 - 2. The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes; the depth of the flow depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord—cf. 1 John 1:5, 7.
 - 3. The more we are measured by the Lord, the more we are restricted and limited by the flowing of the grace of life until eventually we are lost in and carried along by the flowing Triune God as a river in which to swim; in one sense we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free—Ezek. 47:4-6.
- G. The river causes everything to live; the flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle—vv. 7, 9-10, 12.
- H. The river waters the dry, parched land and heals the death waters; this watering and healing are for the purpose of producing life—v. 8:
 - 1. The river is unable to heal the swamps and marshes; a swamp or marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise and lukewarmness—v. 11; cf. Rev. 3:15-16.
 - 2. For the flow of life and for the church life, the Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness; by being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in; then everything shall live wherever the river comes.

II. Our enjoyment of Christ as the flow of life is for us to be sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders with the ministry of life for the marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God—2 Cor. 3:6:

- A. A minister of life is a sower who sows spiritual seeds:
1. In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul says to the Corinthians, “We have sown to you the spiritual things”; *the spiritual things* refers to spiritual seeds.
 2. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a spiritual seed is to impart life in, with, and out of our spirit; the Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race—Matt. 13:3, 37.
 3. In the Lord’s recovery we, as ministers of the new covenant, need to be sowers who impart life to grow and produce Christ in others.
- B. A minister of life is a planter who plants Christ into God’s people—1 Cor. 3:6:
1. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God’s life, are God’s cultivated land, God’s farm, in God’s new creation—v. 9.
 2. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit.
- C. A minister of life is a waterer who waters people with Christ; once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life—v. 6:
1. We may liken a waterer in God’s farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water; we should be a divine “irrigation system” with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God’s farm.
 2. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him so that we can be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life—John 4:14; 7:37-39.
- D. A minister of life is a begetter, a father, who imparts life to his children, whom he begets—1 Cor. 4:15:
1. To beget is to generate spiritual children, to bring them forth, through the impartation of life.
 2. We need to have the divine “life germ” in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God.
- E. A minister of life is a feeder; feeding is a matter of life; it differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge:
1. To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others (3:2); what the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers was milk, and it should have nourished them.
 2. The sound teaching of the apostles ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them—1 Tim. 1:10b; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9.
- F. A minister of life is a builder who builds with gold, silver, and precious stones:
1. Gold symbolizes God the Father in His divine nature, silver symbolizes Christ in His redemptive work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work (this is versus wood, which signifies the human nature; grass, which signifies man in the flesh; and stubble, which signifies lifelessness)—1 Cor. 3:12.
 2. Song of Songs portrays that in the proper church life, the perfected believers coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect Christ’s loving seekers by ministering the Triune God to them for their transformation by the Triune God’s attributes being wrought into them to become their virtues—1:10-11.
 3. This is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for the accomplishing of God’s eternal economy—1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 21:18-21.