

Sunday, September 28, 2025 - FLOW RIVER FLOW – Pastor John Henry Raskin

Have you ever been really thirsty? Imagine being on a hike, realizing you forgot your water, and finding a spring with fresh, gushing water. This is how the day I said yes to Jesus felt for me. I had been seeking something to refresh and satisfy me, and when I accepted Jesus, He flooded me with His Spirit, the River of Life.

Jesus Intends That There Be a 'Flow' of the Holy Spirit, like living water, in us and through us

In John 7:37-39, Jesus says, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” This refers to the Holy Spirit, which believers would receive.

Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel foretold the coming of the Messiah and the outpouring of God’s Spirit.

Joel 2:28-29 speaks of God pouring out His Spirit on all flesh, leading to prophecy, dreams, and visions.

Ezekiel’s vision of the Valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) symbolizes spiritual revival through the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 47:1-6 describes a river flowing from the temple beginning shallow and growing into a deep flowing river, symbolizing the Holy Spirit’s life-giving power.

This river can be experienced at different levels of submission:

Staying on the bank = never receiving the offer of Salvation

Stepping in Ankle-deep = receiving the initial presence of the Holy Spirit at salvation

Wading in Knee-deep = beginning to pray and minister with the Holy Spirit

Moving Waist-deep = allowing the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Submerged Over your head = fully submitted to the Holy Spirit.

Living Water Brings Life

Wherever the river flows, everything will live (**Ezekiel 47:9**). This living water can bring life to all, including those who are spiritually dead or stagnant. It can lead to the salvation of loved ones and the transformation of lives.

Revelation 22:1-5 describes a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. This vision represents our glorious destination, where we will reign forever with God.

As believers, we are the rivers of Living Water that flow toward a glorious future. Let us be fully surrendered to God’s will, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and draw all people out of darkness and into the Kingdom’s glorious light.

FLOW RIVER FLOW

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been thirsty... I mean like really thirsty... like so thirsty that your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth thirsty?

I remember going on a hike when I was younger.

I thought I had put a couple of bottles of water in my backpack but when I was about 5 miles in, I reached for them and realized that I had forgotten to pack them.

I was already thirsty and knew that minimally, I had five miles to go to get back to my car where I had an emergency bottle of water.

Fortunately, I knew that about three miles in the direction I was going there was a spring with fresh water and so I decided to forge on ahead.

By the time I reached the spring I was in that parched condition where if I didn't get something to drink, I thought I was going to die.

As it was April, the snowmelt had just begun and when I reached the spring, I found it to be gushing like a river.

I had no canteen, so I knelt down to the edge of what was now a pretty deep flow of crystal clear, mountain water, cupped my hands, and drank.

I remember that incredible feeling of the cool, clear water entering my dusty dry mouth. That was one of the most memorable and amazing feelings I can remember from my youth.

The day I said yes to Jesus was like that for me.

I had been, for many of my adult years, desperately seeking something that would refresh me, satisfy me.

I believed in God, but I never knew how thirsty I was for Him until He flooded me with his Spirit, the River of Life.

Jesus Intends That There Be a 'Flow' of the Holy Spirit, Like Living Water, in Us and Through Us

Jesus words in the Gospel of John...

John 7:37-39

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Today we're going to look back at prophecy that points to Jesus, and forward, if you will, towards prophecy that is the culmination of the completed work of the Cross.

Prophets including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Micah, Zechariah, Hosea, Malachi and Samuel in the Old Testament, and John the Baptist in the New Testament, foretold of the coming of Messiah.

There were two others, however, Ezekiel and Joel, who spoke most prophetically about the coming of the Church Age as the outpouring of God's Spirit on His people.

Notice that in the Scripture we just read, Jesus says “He who believes in me, AS THE SCRIPTURE HAS SAID, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

Interestingly, (and those that have studied the Bible intensely will back me up on this), there is no direct scripture in the Old Testament that says that out of the heart of one who believes in Messiah, will flow rivers of living water.

Some truths that we know about God and His plan come from direct quotes of Scripture.

Other truths about God are known because we put the pieces of the puzzle together from different parts of Scripture.

This way of studying God’s truth is called systematic theology.

We know from John’s Gospel, the verses we just read, that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would “flow” from within believers. If Jesus said it, you know it is true. He also said “as the scripture has said”, so let’s dig in.

First, let’s look at the Prophet Joel’s words which relate directly to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, which continues through today.

Joel 2:28-29

**28 “And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.**

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Imagine this outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the refreshing living water coming from a pitcher which is Christ.

Now, let's turn back to the Prophet Ezekiel's vision when he sees the Valley of dry bones raised to life by God's "ruach", His "pneuema", His breath, the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 37 of Ezekiel we see a vast Valley of dry bones.

This vision represented apostate Israel in a state of spiritual death and hopelessness.

In their idolatry and still reeling from captivity in Babylon, the nation seemed beyond any hope of restoration.

The Holy Spirit urged Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones and the Holy Spirit cause the bones to knit together and grow flesh and live, raised to life as a mighty army of the Lord.

As all scripture from "In the beginning" in Genesis to "Amen" at the end of Revelation is all about Jesus and His Mission to create a new humanity,

it is not unreasonable to assume that this vision also relates to us before we believed in Jesus.

We were dry bones, hopelessly lost in sin and worldly idolatry, until God's "ruach", His breath, the Holy Spirit. revived and refreshed us in Christ Jesus.

Now let's look at a scripture from later in the book of Ezekiel and another vision that I believe relates most specifically to Jesus' statement about who we are in Him as rivers of Living Water.

Beginning in chapter 40, Ezekiel has a vision that God brings him up to a high mountain in Jerusalem where he meets a man who is described as having the appearance of bronze.

This man shows him a very specific blueprint of the New Temple that is to be rebuilt after the captivity in Babylon,

where the Glory of the Lord that had left when the people went into captivity would return and live with the people forever.

It is interesting to note that the Temple that is described in Ezekiel was never built in Jerusalem nor any time since.

This leads me to believe that the temple that is being described in Ezekiel's vision, where the Prince and His people will live forever is an analogy of the current age and the age to come.

I should explain why I believe that...

Now we are the agents of Christ on earth through the indwelling of His Spirit "a mighty Army from dry bones".

The new temple to be built is the new earth where we will live forever with Him physically when He returns.

Let's look at this scripture describing what explains Jesus Living Water statement concerning Ezekiel's finished temple.

Ezekiel 47:1-6

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

Now let's stop there for a moment. This man who may actually be a Christophany, a pre-Incarnate appearance of Jesus, or an Angel, asks Ezekiel if “he had seen this”, meaning does he understand.

This is very likely the living water which Jesus referred to when He referred to the Old Testament scripture that foretold it in the Gospel of John.

That would make sense since He said that He was the Temple that was going to be destroyed and raised up in three days, and the apostle Paul tells us that we are temples of the living God in which the Holy Spirit dwells...

Therefore, it makes sense to follow that analogy that the waters that come from the threshold of the temple whose door is facing east would be the rivers of living water that come from those who would believe in Christ.

The east is the direction where we were banished from the garden of Eden.

Those that are still lost in the world's darkness would be coming from the east to the temple. We are the living water that flows out from that temple.

The Holy Spirit's Living Water imparts Life to all that it touches.

One interpretation of Ezekiel's Vision Shows That This Water Can Be Received (or Not) at Five Levels

- 1. Staying on the bank = never receiving the offer of Salvation**
- 2. Stepping in Ankle-deep = receiving the initial presence of the Holy Spirit at salvation**
- 3. Wading in Knee-deep = beginning to pray and minister with the Holy Spirit**
- 4. Moving Waist-deep = allowing the baptism of the Holy Spirit**
- 5. Submerged Over your head = fully submitted to the Holy Spirit.**

To explain, these are levels of submission to the Holy Spirit.

The early Church, full of this vibrant, life-giving water, brought life everywhere it went. Do we?

An intellectualized Gospel brings people in ankle-deep at best.

The religious obedience approach may bring us in as far as knee-deep, and certainly God can use that...

But the overwhelming life of the Spirit is found in those like the Bible's writers who were "carried along by the Holy Spirit".

That is, where we are fully submitted to God's will and purpose, baptized and filled with the Spirit, fully yielded and following the Spirit perpetually and in real time.

That should be the goal for all of us.

That is how we are conformed into the image of Jesus, fully surrendered to the will of our Father as He was.

Ezekiel's vision continues...

Ezekiel 47:7-12

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They

will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”

All that is spiritually dead or stagnant can be made alive by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 9 tells us that “Where the river [of God’s Spirit] flows, everything will live.”

Verse 8 says... “When it empties into the [dead] sea, the water there becomes fresh.” All that is now stagnant, stale, and lifeless can be brought to fresh and vibrant life by the river of the Holy Spirit that flows out of believers.

Do you have a loved one who has yet to receive their salvation? I do. Let this verse give us hope...

Verse 9 says “Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.” As we see in the Book of Acts with 3,000 souls coming to faith at Pentecost! “Swarms” come to the Lord when the living water is flowing.

Look at verse 10 “Fishermen will stand along the shore.” — Jesus wants to make Spirit-filled people into effective “fishers of men.”

...and “The fish will be of many kinds.” — Don’t limit your vision. The living water can bring life to “many kinds” of people — Muslims, Hindus, atheists, unbelievers of every sort. Plenty of fish will end up in God's nets as the harvest of souls is drawn in.

Verse 11 - “But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh.” — This is a warning to us not to let the living waters stagnate. Keep your

spiritual life alive, fresh, and vibrant. Keep praying for others, praying for revival and steeping yourself in God's Word daily.

Verse 12 says "Fruit trees of all kinds ... will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them."

Do you want to bear fruit? The fruit of souls won?

The fruit of disciples growing in God? The fruit of lives dramatically changed?

To do that we must wade into the Holy Spirit's waters over our head.

Yield ourselves totally to God's flow.

Let those waters within you flow to others.

Remember that "Where the river flows everything will live".

Now let's jump ahead to the end of the Book of Revelation or more properly "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" as it is truly known...

The Angel who refuses John's worship shows him the vision of our glorious destination...

Revelation 22:1-5

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall

see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

As we are all heading for that glorious day which no man knows let us do our utmost, empowered by the Spirit of God to draw all people out of the darkness of this world and into the Kingdoms glorious light.

We who believe are those whom Jesus foretold. May we be the generation from whom rivers of Living Water flow toward a glorious future when all will be made right.

Let's pray...