

FORWARD

Moving Beyond our Flesh

Jesus also spoke of a River of Life

John 7:37-38 ESV On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' "

There is a Life-giving flow from the Spirit of God that God wants to release into our life.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have **life** and have it abundantly.

- The "ZOE" life is spiritual life. It is the flow of Life that comes from our devotion to God.
- Notice, Jesus said, (John 7:38) "**as the scripture has said**". Jesus did not give the OT reference to us but perhaps he was referring this Life-Giving River that flows out of the presence of God.
 - Ezekiel saw it: Eze. 47:6-9 LIV He told me to keep in mind what I had seen, then led me back along the bank. **7** And now, to my surprise, many trees were growing on both sides of the river! **8** He told me: "This river flows east through the desert and the Jordan Valley to the Dead Sea, where it will **heal** the salty waters and make them **fresh** and **pure**. **9** Everything touching the water of this river shall live. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will be healed. **Wherever this water flows, everything will live.**
 - Zechariah saw it: Zechariah 14:8 LIV **Life-giving waters** will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously both in winter and in summer.
 - John saw it: Revelation 22:1 NKJV 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.

This River is both Symbolic and Literal!

- there is a life-giving river that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb and purifies and heals at the same time.

Ezekiel was led into the water: Ankle Deep; Knee Deep; Waist Deep and over his head deep!

The River:

Great Encouragement: Everything we need to live in victory, has been given to us by God.

2 Peter 1:3 NLT His **divine power** has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

THE FLESH:

Moving forward beyond a life controlled by the Flesh

Romans 8:5-9 NIV Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what **the flesh desires**; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what **the Spirit desires**. **6** The mind governed by the flesh is **death**, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mind governed by the flesh is **hostile to God**; it **does not submit** to God's law, nor can it do so. **8** Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. **9** You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you...

The Flesh is that part of you that fights against your devotion and the decisions you make to please God.

EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING IN THEIR LIFE, THAT IF IT WAS NOT THERE ANY LONGER, LIFE WOULD BE BETTER!

The Mind that is Governed by the Flesh (ruled; led by; controlled)

- 1) Death – the flesh is our old sinful nature that causes obstructions to the flow of Life.
- 2) Hostility: “Hostile toward God”
- 3) Rebellion: The Flesh “it **does not submit** to God... nor can it do so”

Three Main Areas Flesh Controlled Blockage:

1) Addictions

Kris McFadden, president and CEO of the Teen Challenge Training Center Pennsylvania, says “Painkillers are your new gateway drug,” McFadden says. “Oxycodone, Vicodin, Percocet, hydrocodone . . . prescriptions aren’t illegal; they’re not a ‘bad thing.’ But they’re still narcotics and people, good people, can find themselves unexpectedly addicted.”

2) Anger

a) Paul says the flesh is hostile toward God.

b) Example: Moses (Numbers 20)

- i) Setting: traveling with 1 million Israelites through the wilderness and they cannot find water for their children and the livestock. The people are blaming Moses once again.

Numbers 20:5 NLT Why did you make us leave Egypt and bring us here to this terrible place? This land has no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates, and no water to drink!”

The terrible place of God’s testing! God was teaching them to trust him as their source.

- ii) God told Moses to SPEAK to the rock!

vv, 10-11 Listen, you rebels!” he shouted. “**Must we** bring you water from this rock?” **11** Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff, and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

Moses failed the test and it cost him everything! He would not be able to lead the Nation into the Promise.

Why: Because Moses got in the Flesh and Made it about Himself.

NT Fulfillment:

1 Corinthians 10:2-6 NIV They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3** They all ate the same spiritual food **4** and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. **6** Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Here it is again... The river that flows from Christ Jesus... If you are thirsty --- drink!

Most of them never made into the Promised Land.

These are our examples:

- ❖ Do not be idolaters
- ❖ Don't engage in sexual immorality
- ❖ Do not grumble (v.10)

Notice grumbling was lumped together with Idolatry and Immorality!

(10,11) And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. **11** These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.

Just as painkiller is a gateway drug to severe drug usage like heroin and others.

Grumbling is a gateway sin that leads us to more serious sinful behavior.

3) Depression

Depression and discouragement is a sure sign that you have a blockage somewhere!

Craig Groeschel: You Cannot Change What You Are Willing to Tolerate.

Get in the River

1) Start Loving God Better.

Matthew 22:36-38 NIV "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 **This is the first and greatest commandment.**

2) Manage Your Mind with the Spirit's Help.

a) The Spirit's power is the antidote the will of the flesh

Romans 8:6-9 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but **the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.** 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. 9 **You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit,**

b) Get a Spirit governed mindset!

- i) Set your Mind on what the Spirit Desires: Rom 8:5 "... those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what **the Spirit desires.**"

Because "... the mind governed by the Spirit is filled with life and peace".

- ii) What does the Spirit desire?

- (1) Gal. 5 teaches us what the flesh desires and what the spirit desires

Gal 5:17 ESV For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

(a) The Flesh (v. 20): sexual immorality, idolatry, strife, jealousy, anger, divisions, envy, drunkenness

(b) The Spirit (v. 22,23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

- (2) Meditation is good Medicine

Choose one or two of these Desired Fruits of the Spirit and Wade into It!

- 3) Go Deeper with some Life-Giving Relationships.

Find some friends and take off the mask!

James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed..."

- a) We go to God to get forgiveness, but we go to God's people to get healed.
- b) Life change happens best in relationships!