

Transforming our World – Part 1 - Transformation Series #7

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November 19, 2017

Text: Ezekiel 47:1-12

NOTES:

A. Introduction to Ezekiel

1. Ezekiel – the message: Ezekiel is a book of mystery, visions, dreams, apocalyptic language, hidden things.
2. Ezekiel – the prophet: He was a priest, a temporary of Jeremiah's.
 - a. He was shocked and horrified at Israel's capture but realized it was because of sin.
 - b. God prompted him to live out some of his sermons in unusual ways.
3. Ezekiel is important for us because it helps us see that God brings hope in the middle of our messes; it helps us understand God is merciful; it makes us realize that accountability is important.

B. Introduction to Ezekiel's vision

1. In Ezekiel's vision a "man" tours him around and explains things to him. Is this an angel? A Christophany (an appearance of Christ)?
2. The water in Ezekiel's vision reminds us of passages where Jesus connects Himself with water: John 4:10; John 7:37.
3. Topography of the land. In Ezekiel's vision there are three locations to keep in mind: The **Mediterranean Sea, Jerusalem** (elevated: 754 m. above sea level compared to Whistler B.C. 670 m.) and the **Dead Sea** (about 23 km. away, a salt lake 430 m. below sea level with no outflow so its waters are stagnant and dead).

C. The Vision: The water's starting point – Ezekiel 47:1,2

1. Water comes from the altar.
2. For us the mission starts here where we gather, grow, learn to serve and then go to neighbourhoods etc.
3. The mission is for each one of us and flows to places like Surrey, Tuktoyaktuk, Quebec, Guatemala, Thailand, St. Petersburg, India, etc.
4. It begins here also because the nations are coming to us. It is our church's plan to sponsor a refugee family for a year. (Contact the church if you're interested in helping with that project.)

D. The Vision: Increase of mission – Ezekiel 47:3-8

1. In Ezekiel's vision the water flow goes from ankle deep to a river that cannot be crossed – Ezekiel 47:3-5.
2. It flows down to the Dead Sea where the dead waters are healed by it – Ezekiel 47:8.
3. Water is often a symbol of the work of the Holy Spirit, which flows to the lowest places on earth with life transformation.
4. Don't minimize your small part (of prayer, giving, going) in this river.
5. Kingdom things tend to start small and grow, E.g: Jesus' transformation of a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands – Matthew 15:32-39; Jesus: "Give and it will be given to you..." Luke 6:38.

E. The Vision: This water brings life, abundance and healing – Ezekiel 47:8-12

1. The leaves of the trees along the banks of the living water river contain healing power.
2. When we're touched by the Spirit of God something dramatic happens within us.
3. This water flows great distances and across borders. E.g. students in an Estonian Bible school were without heat in their old submarine base campus on a windswept Baltic beach. But they refused to go home, carrying on despite the cold. Meanwhile a farmer in Sask. Had an abundance of snowmobile suits that he didn't need. In prayer, he felt impressed to send them to Estonia, which he did. They eventually reached that cold Estonian Bible school with one suit for every student.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do some believe the man in Ezekiel's vision is a Christophany?
2. Where does the water in Ezekiel's vision flow from? Centuries later, how does that starting point relate to us and our mission? How has the church been instrumental in helping you determine your life's mission?
3. In Ezekiel's vision the water height grew from ankle deep to an uncrossable river. With what other member of the trinity do we associate this flow of living water? How have you seen growth from small things (a thought, an idea, a prayer) to large results in your life? In the life of others?
4. How does the river in Ezekiel's vision affect the landscape and change what it encounters? What application and inspiration will you take for your life from the river in Ezekiel's vision?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, we need Your living water for ourselves first, so that we come spiritually alive. We present ourselves, as temples of Your presence, for a fresh anointing of Your Spirit's power so we can be vessels of Your living water to our homes, neighbourhoods, nation, and the world. Please grow small beginnings of prayer and friendship, hospitality and kindness, listening and witness into a river of Your life-giving, healing water, flowing from our lives to those whose lives we touch. Help us to be willing to go to the lowest, darkest places with Your living water. May our lives bring a little bit of heaven to earth. Amen.