

K-045 Streams of Life

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the need for deeper spiritual engagement and the abandonment of self-centeredness to experience the life-giving waters of God.

Duration: 43:43

Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1, 1 Corinthians 14:26

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a deep and abundant source of spiritual nourishment. He compares a meager source of water to a puddle that quickly dries up when demands are made. The speaker highlights the need for believers to come to the door of the temple of God and allow the waters of life to lead and do God's work. He encourages the audience to seek a greater measure of the Holy Spirit in their lives, not only for their own sake but also to bring glory to God and make Him known in the earth.

Transcript

Precious Lord, we call upon you in your capacity as Redeemer especially, because you have a talent and a profound and divine ability to redeem. And how we ask, my God, that you would redeem this time and this day, that you would charge it so full of heavenly content. Precious God, that you would speak so to this people, that this would be such an event in the life of this congregation, such a shaking if need be.

My God, that it will not only be long remembered, it will be written into their very life and practice and walk. We just ask largely, Lord, let this, let this not be a mere service. Come and just unfold your great heart.

Come and speak to us with the urgency, my God, that is part of your understanding. You see our condition and our need. You see the things that have settled upon us, my God, as dross.

You see the lackluster quality of our lives, the ordinariness of it. We ask you, precious God, to breathe upon us such a measure of your spirit that we might be changed. Not for our own sake only, but especially for yours.

That your name might be hallowed in the earth, that you might be made known as you are by a people who know you, who serve you, and who are walking with you, precious God, in integrity and in truth by the spirit. Bless now this time and use this piece of dust and speak to this people through it. And we'll thank

you and praise you for the occasion which you yourself have given for Jesus' sake.

In his holy name we pray. Amen. If you'll turn with me to Ezekiel, the 47th chapter, we'll read a familiar episode that begins with the words, 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. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward and led me about by the way unto the other gate by the way that looketh eastward, and behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits and brought me through the waters.

The waters were to the ankles. 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 that were to the loins. And afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that could not pass over. For the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? And he brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Amen. Well, I don't know how conscious you are about the waters of life.

I don't know how conscious you are about water. It's a commodity that I never much questioned or considered. Having my origin in New York City and found something that was always convenient and accessible by the turning on of a tap.

But our life in northern Minnesota has given us a new perspective. We've just come out of a drought. I don't know that we have yet really come out of it, but we've learned to understand why the farmers turn their faces toward heaven and what rain means and what water means.

The Lord had something to say to us when we first came up to northern Minnesota, and I want you to know that it has nothing to do with natural choosing. It's entirely a supernatural matter of how God led a band of souls to this place and the diversity of the composition of our little community. Most of us are from New York, from Brooklyn.

Some of us are non-Jewish. None of us but one or two have any kind of farm background, so this was a novel, unique kind of experience. It was rather a curiosity to find that the Mississippi River was only a stone's throw from our own location, the headwaters of the Mississippi River.

And if I'm not mistaken, I think it's an Indian name for something like the spirit of life. And it bubbles out of Itasca Park right out of the soil, just a brook, a stream that you can take off your shoes and tiptoe across, and that pure water of life emanating there finds its way and courses its way through the heart of the nation and out into the sea. And the Lord said that our own community life was going to be something like that, that out of the grit, the intensity, and the reality of our life together, people who don't go home after a service but are home, who face each other day in and day out in every circumstance and posture of life, that all of this grit, all of this earthiness was somehow the material through which the life itself would be purified and bubble forth, and it would course forth and out, and through the heart of a nation out to the sea and out to the nations.

And so we're beginning to experience something of the first installments, the first fulfillment of this description of our life. And though we're small in number and our budget is minuscule, shoestring, we're more of a joke than any kind of formidable ministry. And if you come up to see us, you'll be guaranteed a disappointment, naturally and physically speaking.

And yet some expression of the life that God has developed is going forth into such recent places as Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Egypt, Israel, Yugoslavia, and countries like that, as well as here in our own country, a water of life, pure, crystal clear, deep, life-giving. We need again to be brought to this place, to the door of this temple. Again he brought me unto the door of the house, and waters issued out from under.

Twice that phrase is spoken in the first verse. It came down from under. And I'm not any kind of sophisticated biblical exegete, but I would just intuit and sense that that phrase, down from under, has a certain kind of aura, a suggestion of suffering.

It has something to do with difficulty, with strain, with complex and conditions of life. Down from under. I don't think that the waters of life ever come from any other source than that.

If our life is glib, casual, superficial, comfortable, it's not likely either issuing from these waters, nor is it likely to be a vessel through which the waters themselves come to others. It's uniquely and always and characteristically down from under. And something has settled upon us.

I don't have a word for it. I went from Sunday school class to Sunday school class this morning just to catch the sense, the atmosphere of what you're about, and what shall I say? It's good. It's intelligent, and it's well-meaning, and it's concerned, and yet nevertheless it could all be subsumed under one word.

It's yet church. How shall I say that? I'll have to express what that means, because church is a glorious word in its original meaning, but somehow in the Sunday form that we have come to give it in modern times, it's something less than God's original intention. It's something much more casual, much less intense, much more superficial.

I got the sense sitting in the Sunday school class that there were people there who were merely students. They were listening to something instructive and important, and yet they were free to accept or reject it, to walk in or to walk out, not just physically but spiritually, so to speak. They were not in any kind of authentic or intensive relationship that I could glean, other than the kind of relationship that characterizes that of most people with their pastors or teachers, which is to say that their lives are yet lived unto themselves and by themselves and for themselves, though they may condescend on a Sunday to sit in a room and listen.

That kind of condition will never bring forth the waters of life that come out from under, from the door of the temple, and I think that there's a man in our midst this morning who has a measuring rod who wants to show us a thousand cubits more. I'm not too familiar with the symbolism of numbers, but thousand signifies to me an ultimate measure, and I wonder how many of us have understood that there's a man with such a rod who's always beckoning us an ultimate measure further than where we are. How many of us even have a stomach for that which is ultimate? The very word is alien and strange to our ears, and all that the word ultimate connotes.

It simply is too radical a word for our modern vocabulary. We much rather and are much more comfortable with things that are tentative, maybe if and but things that pertain to convenience, things that are to be measured by reason or circumstance. Well, I'll see, but things that are ultimate imply a kind of demand for which our life has not prepared us.

Oh dear children, I'm just a kind of a bundle of frustration up here this morning. I don't know how to speak to you intelligently. I just, I want to breathe something more than just explain something.

That's what it's going to take because we have so missed the apostolic glory of God. What we're about is so much less than the glory of his intention. The world is so much with us.

It has imposed upon us its thought, its mode, its lifestyle, that we have become something like religionists rather than the carriers of this great water of life that is only available to those who are ultimate. There's always a measure more than where we have gone. Always a thousand cubits more to those who are only in ankle deep.

And I think that these places that are described in this chapter are symbolic and significant and surely every one of us in this room this morning is in one of these places. Very few of us are in the last. Very few of us desire to be in that place because it's the place of utter and reckless and final abandonment where there's no standing on one's own feet.

You're swept in and you're swept beyond yourself by the forces of the water which are beyond your own containing or directing. How many of us are willing so to let go? If we're fishermen, we've already had the kind of experience of walking in with wading boots into a fast-moving stream. We're not content merely to fish from the bank because it limits the arc with which we can throw our fly or our bait.

And so we come in wanting the bigger fish. But we want to come in and yet feel ourselves secure. We want our feet firmly planted on that ground.

And there's a certain kind of scintillation as we feel the water rushing against our legs and the ebb and the tug of that water moves upon us. But we don't want to take that one further step which might find ourselves too deep. And so we fish but we're limited.

And there's something like that in the spiritual life also. I think the greater number of us may even yet well be on the bank looking down on the activity that is going on in the stream, but yet contemplating or debating whether we want to actually go in. Some of us have even ventured in up to our ankles and really it's a wonderful charismatic enjoyment.

The freshness of it and the excitement and the kicking up of our heels and the splashing about the fringes of that water really does something for us. And we think this must be it. Hardly understanding that it's the merest place of first beginnings.

Just a mere sense of the scintillation of the touch of water. But you know what's wrong with us? We're still measuring by the wrong thing. We're still measuring by what the effect is upon us.

What it does for us. What is the effect for us. Whether it constitutes an enjoyment, a satisfaction, a gratification for us.

And as long as us is the standard of our measure and not his rod, we have missed the glory of God. I don't mind saying that a thousand times over and in a thousand different ways I'm utterly persuaded the Lord has just stabbed my heart with it. That the sickly cancer of modern Christianity is our awesome self-centeredness.

And I don't care by what form or manner it's expressed or described it is there. We are still the measure of all things. Our satisfaction, our gratification.

What will it do for us? Are we being fed? And if we're not being fed we'll move ourselves elsewhere that we might be fed. Thinking that we're fully justified in doing so. Not recognizing that it's still an egocentrism of a kind.

Though it albeit it's spiritual, but it still makes us the measure of all things. And not him nor his glory. You'll never go into the deeps.

You'll never abandon yourself to the waters of life. So long as you are still the measure, what's it going to do for you? What is the benefit for you? What will redound to you by your entering? If that's your, what's the word? Perspective? You're not likely to go in all the way. So many of us therefore are only up to the ankles and not yet up to the knees.

Though we say Lord, Lord. The knee is a very significant joint. Are you in up to your knees? Or you may bend it but we straighten out soon enough.

Is he really the Lord of all your substance, all your time, all of your energy, your thought, your future, your concern? It's a deep place, much deeper than the ankles. And few have entered it though their mouths are prolifically speaking the word Lord. And yet even it is only a first or second step toward the desired goal.

He measured a thousand and he brought me through the waters and the waters were to the knees and he measured a thousand and brought me through the waters to the loins. It's a much deeper place and this is where you really feel the ebb and the tug of these powerfully moving forces of life. It's frightening.

All the more if you have been, what shall I say, brought up and trained and shaped in a kind of an institutional denominational situation, looking to the supervisors, the district superintendents, and all the kinds of things that men somehow have a talent to devise by which the life is assured and guaranteed and that has to do with elevation, promotion, success, evaluation, and all these things. But to go in one measure beyond that and to feel a greater force pressing upon your life than that which men can impose is a far more frightening kind of a sensation. It's a voluntary matter if we're willing to go that far.

There's nothing about this that is compulsory, nothing of it. And we have seen even in our own life those that have come and have subsequently gone because the pressure was too great, the demands were too great, the satisfactions were too slim, the risks were too enormous, the insecurities too great, unwilling to go in. What shall I say about the loins and all that is caught up in that aspect of the body? It circles the sex organs and how many have been in that deep in God? How many have given over that aspect of their life? How many even believe that God has any right to it? How many understand of all the things that pertain to their image and their masculinity and their prowess, their self-assurance, the hips, the place where the men pack their six shooters and stick their thumbs in their belt, that you've gone in that deep in the waters of life, that it's God's territory and no longer your own, and that your self-esteem and the way you perceive yourself and your assurance and your security is not to be based by anything that you do by virtue of your

own strength.

It came to us as quite a revelation that the most successful charismatics, people who came to us with praises and speaking all the vocabulary of the body of Christ, within a matter of weeks began to come apart at the seams. And one of the strongest forces working to reveal that they had not a true foundation was what happened to them when they could no longer be the breadwinners for their families. I hope you understand what I'm saying.

It's not that God took away from them work, but he took away from them work as a means by which their self-assurance and image was sustained. And when that prop was removed, it was amazing how many brave men collapsed and showed themselves wanting. How much of your self-image and your self-esteem comes not from the fact that you are accepted and beloved, but comes from that which is the result of your own prowess, your own strength, your own ability, your own doing.

And in fact, how much of that is even manifested and ventilated and exhibited in your church experience and activity? How much of what actually goes on in the church is God's work and how much is our own? How much are we laboring and striving in the same kind of exertion that we knew in the world, only now it pertains to building programs or other programs or other activities, and yet it is still we and not he himself who is doing the Father's work. Have you ever been in up to your thighs? I can't tell you how frightening that is. What an eerie and unusual kind of sensation.

It's not at all comfortable if you have lived all your life in the assurance of your own strength to come into a depth where you realize that something is wavering now and the forces in the places where you are are stronger than you yourself and you have to accede to them. Has God got you up to the hips? Have you come in that thousand cubits more? And yet it is not yet the ultimate thing to which God builds his people come. And 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.

I think whether we like it or not, the waters are assuredly rising, economically, socially, politically, culturally, in every way, whether it's the riots in Florida, whether it's the volcanic eruption of a mountain, whether it's hostages that cannot be regained by the most powerful nation on earth, whether it's the declining economy and the mortification of seeing our proudest industry humbled by the nation which we recently defeated in a war, all of these factors tend to suggest that the waters are rising, that are going to be too deep to swim in. They cannot be passed over. We're not going to make this by any virtue of our own.

Our intelligence is not going to bail us out of this. Uncle Sam is not going to come up with some kind of stunning surprise. I think we're already exhibiting in other nations the same.

They were beyond a place where we can save ourselves. Somehow we even have the sense it doesn't matter who's elected, because the forces have been loosed in the world, so overwhelmingly powerful that whoever the personality is and whatever the party he represents, their ideologies and their distinctions are made as nothing, and they themselves are pushed and molded and forced by these forces that have been unleashed, which are greater than they themselves. Waters too deep to swim in.

A river that cannot be passed over. Are we willing to enter that? Will your feet actually leave the ground, that one step further, and you have no longer that security of being planted, but you're borne up and now moved by the forces that are greater than you yourself. This is coming to the very heart of the stream.

This is where the waters are deepest, clearest, and most pure. How many of us will venture in? Oh, I know that we have been experimenters. I know we have adopted the name charismatic and the word in its use.

I know that we have been willing to condescend to certain innovations. Some of us have even bravely launched out, maybe even to a weekly house group, a Bible study, or a prayer group to supplement the Sunday service. But do we think that these are yet the deep waters of life? I'll tell you that the deep waters are beyond our thinking, beyond our programming, and beyond our calculation and establishing.

The waters themselves will determine where we go, where we move. And if it's over some precipice and down to be crushed into the rocks below, so be it. There's no guarantee whether the next bend is going to bring us to some kind of idyllic lake of great placid beauty or push us over a waterfall in which we're going to be crushed on the rocks.

We have simply got to trust the waters themselves that come out from under the throne of the temple, crystal clear and pure, and be willing to be moved where He will. That's why we're in Minnesota. It has not to do with our choosing.

It has not to do with our calculation. It has to do with the river of life. And indeed, we've had experiences where we have come out into great limpid pools of beauty, and we have enjoyed the moment.

But we have not been allowed the luxury of remaining there long, because these waters move. And you continue from that beautiful spot, which has given you as a respite for a moment. And before the next turn comes, you find yourself going headlong over such a deep that you could not have imagined.

This goes wrong, and that goes wrong, and this trial, and that problem. And it seems like the whole thing is exploding in your face. Such aggravation, such perplexity, such demands beyond your wisdom, beyond your understanding, until you just thrust and utter despair upon God.

And yet, out of it somehow, a kind of a purification comes. Something is being worked out as the water breaks upon the rocks, and through all of these elements, and the grit, and the earth, and the tremendous force of this moving through these elements, purges, purifies, and brings forth a yet clearer stream. Are you willing, are you willing to follow the man who has the rod, who bids you come a thousand cubits more? Interesting that just before I left on this trip, someone sent me a Xerox book, an out-of-print book by Madame Guillon.

I hope you've heard her name. A remarkable 18th century saint, I believe, from France, who had enormous understanding about the deeper life, looked upon as a kind of a freak, a fanatic. I think her life ended in the Bastille, persecuted and hounded by men, and especially the victim of the religious, to whom she brought some kind of an intimidation and fear because of her intimate knowledge of God.

The book that was sent me is called, significantly, *Spiritual Torrents*, and one of the early chapters speaks about a certain class of believers, souls who after their conversion give themselves up to meditation, I don't know what she means by that, or even to works of charity. They perform some exterior austerities, endeavor little by little to purify themselves, to rid themselves of certain notable sins, and even of voluntary venial ones. They endeavor with all their little strength to advance gradually, but it is feebly and slowly, as their source is not abundant.

Is that a description of anyone here? You've come into the life, but in such a mean and limited measure, that your advance has been, if any, if it can be called advance, something quite feeble, limited. Little

exterior austerities, like a dollar in the collection plate, rather than your all, as the source is not abundant. I can tell you that the Lord has made some lessons clear to us, who have embarked on these eight-week journeys that begin in Egypt and take you through Eastern European countries, and Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and places like that, day after day, and night after night, and all kinds of demands and things that cannot be anticipated, that if you have only a meager source of the waters of life, you're soon going to find yourself expiring.

And the Lord has shown the difference between a puddle that quickly dissipates and dries up when demand is made for its use, as against the waters of life as they course through in their deepest part. The reason that this sounds academic to many of you, is that you have never been put in a place of such intense pressure, and such unremitting demand, that it revealed the paucity of your life, revealed that you did not have the streams of living water, but all that you had was a residual puddle. And a puddle is sufficient to take you from a Sunday to Sunday, and keep your head from nodding in the Sunday school class, and take you comfortably through a service, but it's not enough when there's any real demand upon your life.

I want to say that for those who are serious and earnest with God, most assuredly, there shall be such demands placed upon our lives, that a puddle will not suffice. Their source is not abundant, and the dryness sometimes causes delay. I don't know if I can even describe to you the experience of speaking through an interpreter at a critical time, at a message that came at a Baptist congregation in Berlin.

A people being pressed by God into deeper waters beyond anything they had ever known, that when the end of those days came, I don't know if you can picture it, Baptists who had never even so much as held up their hands or come forward for an altar call, things which are familiar to us as Pentecostals and Charismatics, were down on their faces, strewn throughout the floor in the whole building in groans before God, being marked in their foreheads with oil in a kind of ultimate consecration to God. By the way, the pastor of that church has been twice called before his denomination to explain this untoward conduct. But I remember one of those important services as God was bringing this people to this kind of crunching demand, and I was going with full steam and full force in the vigor of God, when all of a sudden I was conscious that the interpreter was sagging.

He was coming to the end of his supply, and I couldn't prompt him, and I realized that we had to bring the message to a conclusion. It was not a physical matter, it was a spiritual matter. His waters were running out, and he had nothing more to give.

I can't describe to you the dismay, the way in which your heart is pierced in such a moment, when you know that God is pressing upon a people, and there's something urgent that is coming forth out of his heart, but for the want of the waters of life and men, it's been required to be cut short. How abundant are the waters of life in you and through you. How thirsty are you for them.

How recklessly are you willing to abandon yourself to them, and to come in off the bank and out of the shallows, in the places that are comfortable and secure and familiar, and trust to their moving, carry you where they will. She writes, there are even periods and times of aridity, when they dry up altogether. Can you think of any greater mortification or humiliation than that our waters should dry up, when the heat is on? We need to be brought again to the door of the temple, and that's what God is saying this morning.

This isn't a sermon, I don't know how to give one. It's a man with a measuring rod, who's saying we need to be brought again to the place where life has its source, out from under, and if we're not willing for the

things that come out from under, we can forget it. We might play our little charismatic game in the shallows, but we're not going to be an effectual force for God in our final generation.

I don't know what this will mean for you. I don't know what will have to be abandoned. I don't know what kind of radical changes such an unabashed giving yourself to God in the waters of life will mean, but I know that without question it's going to mean change and radical change.

Maybe the whole structure of things. I don't know how far God will go. We need such a thorough shaking.

I don't know what, is it the Sunday school system? Is it the whole format? Is it the whole order of things? Is it the whole comfortable convenience that has to be concluded by 12, with 10 extra minutes for a strange speaker who needs it? Something is vastly wrong, and the reason that we have not noted it is because we have been too distant from the source of the waters ourselves. There's a God who's calling us again to the door. I don't have to tell you who that door is, and I can't think of a more urgent time for return than in this present moment.

She writes, they dry up altogether. They do not cease to flow from the source, but it is so feeble as to be barely perceptible. What's the source of your life? I wish I could describe my condition as I sat there this morning.

Pathetic. Almost universally my condition in every place, in every circumstance. Feeling like nothing.

That if I had to be some kind of bright and formidable Christian personality and speaker, I might just as well fall through a trapdoor in the platform as to come up and stand behind this podium. Nothing. Nothing in the physical man.

Nothing in the natural man. Nothing that can be acknowledged or celebrated or let alone used. No gift, no distinction, no ability.

Nothing. And if there's no life that comes from the source, there's nothing. How'd you like to live on that basis? And the Lord will test you every once in a while, and it will be nothing.

And you'll be there with your face sticking out before hundreds with nothing. Just to check you and see that you're clean, and that you're not condescending again to return to your own life, your own source, and your own meager supply. Your own wit, your own intelligence, your own ability, your own command of language, your own personality.

Somehow to do a number on the people and be impressive and get through. There's a source, folks, and we have grievously abandoned it. I feel like nailing 95 theses on the doors of the Church of God at Springfield and in other places to show that the heinous sin of God's people in our generation has been a total forsaking and rejection of God by the Spirit.

And from none more conspicuously and grievously than those who ostensibly celebrate the Spirit, namely Pentecostals and Charismatics. Oh, we can work up a little unction into our voices, and we can lift up our hands and sing some spirited courses, but what is the source of the life? What river is that? Is it some murky, trafficked-in thing that is our own natural life and ability? Or is there crystal clear, pure waters of life that come out from under the throne of the Temple, namely Himself? There's not one of us in a thousand who has ever experienced for a moment what it means to live in that life and to minister from that life, let alone to know it consistently and exclusively as the only source. And that's why healing is not coming to

the nations.

That's why there's not fruit in its season. I haven't even the time to read the entire text, but it says that where this river flowed, there were trees on these banks that gave their fruit in their season, new every month. And here we are, content week after week after week to the same mechanical and predictable kinds of services, and we consider that the norm.

Where is the variableness of God? Where is the Great Creator? Where is the God who's original? Why is it that we should have predictable meetings that can be anticipated when there should not be any two that are ever the same? We should even abandon the word meeting itself and speak more of holy convocations and the gatherings of God's people when something electric and unique will come out of the heart of God by the river of life on every occasion. Why should it be otherwise? And if we will not expect it, how then shall we have it? And if we think it's only going to come from one man or a staff, we've missed it. We've been content to be passive dummies, sitting in our pews, receiving the programs, paying for it, getting some measure, but we have been unwilling to be apostolic participants in the life.

When you come together, Paul says, each man has a psalm, a hymn, a word, a prophecy, a revelation. Well, where is it for God's sake? And how are you given occasion to express it? And you come with the anticipation that you're to be used of God and not passively to sit to receive in our service and to leave the room in the same condition in which you entered it, for which reason you have not been going on from glory to glory, but your lives have been fixed and stalemated at the same spiritual plateau essentially at which they began. Something radical needs to change.

I'm not speaking as some kind of alien from outside taking a potshot in an Assemblies of God church. I was saved in the Assembly's work in Jerusalem as an unsuspecting atheist who was lost on a bus and got out of the bus looking for directions and entered that work, the bookstore, stunned that they were selling Christian literature, only to hear the voice of God commanding me to remain with these Pentecostal Jews four days later to pray my first prayer in 35 years and to enter the Kingdom of God. My earliest Christian beginnings were in Assemblies churches.

I'm not speaking as some kind of harsh critic from outside, and I would say the same thing in any kind of church, and I'm not even speaking by calculation. I'm speaking by the river of life. It's only that river that indeed that can give you some vision of God's sense of things, some estimation, some sense of what He's about and what His desire is.

It cannot be communicated in a single session. A mere service is not going to do it. The best perhaps that can be obtained in such an occasion as this is that your thirst shall be whetted for more, and I just want to tell you there's more, vastly more.

We don't have to go to church growth seminars and learn by techniques and methodologies how to numerically increase our congregations. We have only to come again to the door of the Temple of God where the waters flow out from under, and let the waters lead us and do His work and bring us where it will. Fruit in a season new every month, unpredictable, life-giving, leaves that heal the nations, waters that flow out to the seas, that we don't have to hear a chorus of who's going to go out and labor in the fields of God.

Our whole life is for a going out. If we're here momentarily, it's the purpose of God and training and shaping and maturing, waiting for the call of God for a now to come to the church, which is at St. Louis

Park. Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereinto I have called them.

But where are the Pauls and the Barnabases of St. Louis Park? Where are the Apostles and the Prophets and the Teachers? Where are the men that are coming to maturity and stature in God because they're deep in the life-giving stream that courses in this place? You'll never hear the call except that such men are being spawned and brought to maturity. There's a world that is dying and waiting for men of such stature and maturity, but it only comes from those who are drinking deeply of the waters of life, who have recklessly abandoned themselves to those waters, who are not content to the mere frolicking that comes by being only ankle-deep. They are not fit for great things, she writes.

Are you fit for great things? Oh, dear children, you've been drinking from the wrong source if your appetite and your thirst is not for great things. You're too modest, too satisfied with too little, too content to get by, too content to model your life and to pattern it upon the world's definition, and you have not the vision and the sense of that which pertains to the glory of God, either in marriage or in life or in ministry. They're not fit for great things.

I'd rather fail over the great things than to succeed in that which is merely modest. And I'll tell you, if ever an age called God's people to great things at our age, for the world has not answered, well, my time is up. There's a little thumber verse, and I'll just conclude with that, that we need to be reminded.

I have an obligation to show it. It's the 11th verse, but the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed, they shall be given over to salt. How'd you like to be a backwater? How'd you like to be some kind of stale pool, once in the flow of God and now diverted to some kind of side place, not in the thrust and in the center of God's apostolic end-time purpose? Doing your thing, having your programs, not even aware because you have not even so much as the life-giving consciousness that you're becoming a waste place, miry, salty, and encrusted.

Oh, I'll tell you, there shall be many that shall find themselves by the side, because they have not had an intensity of desire to be at the center of the stream, where the waters are deepest, albeit most perilous and most challenging. You don't even dare take a risk of being lost in the shallows, lest you end in a place as that unhappy verse describes. So, what shall we do? What shall we say to the man who has the measuring rod of a thousand cubits more? Satisfied where you are this morning? Thought you had it all together? Quite pleased in your religious walk and your family is at least manageable, if not an exceptional glory? Trusting that the teenage daughter might make it through without becoming pregnant, and the children will not ostracize or humiliate the family, and although the marriage is not something to write home about, it's tolerable.

Pleasant congregation adorning a nice suburb of Minneapolis. I think there's a large Jewish segment here never been touched by the gospel. How far are we willing to go? Willing to be at the bank and play in the shallows? Even up to the knees, some of us who are adventurous? How many, though, up to the thighs? How many in altogether, beyond their standing? Waters too deep to swim in that cannot be passed over.

Your life is no longer your own. You're thrust by him, where he will, when he will. I know that God is speaking this morning because I can see it in your faces and I can sense the weightiness of this moment, so I'm just going to take the liberty as the minister of this word to say, will you respond to God?

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