

# Revival - Part 8

by Doc Greenway

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*Doc Greenway's sermon explores the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in revival and the importance of deepening our spiritual experience.*

**Duration:** 1:08:08

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 47:1, John 7:38-39

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects the love of God. He encourages the listeners to imitate God and emulate His love in their actions. The preacher highlights the power of love to overcome hate and cover sins. He also emphasizes the need for love to be grounded in knowledge and not driven by sentimental feelings. The sermon references the vision of the river in Ezekiel 47 as a metaphor for the abundant and satisfying love of God.

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## Transcript

While it is manifestly true that we cannot establish doctrine on symbolism alone, and I think this is fairly evident, it is equally true that symbolism, under which the Holy Spirit appears, enables us both to illustrate and to apply the truth of God that God would reveal to us as his people. And so if we swing at times from the Old to the New Testament, you'll understand what is happening. Because the symbolism is largely in the Old Testament, but the doctrine is in the New Testament.

And so we endeavor by the grace of God to show the link between the two, and to apply the truth of God that appears under the symbolism in a positive and practical way. I'm explaining this at the very beginning, because some of you may not perhaps have grasped the significance of what has been taking place during our times together here. I believe in both the Old and the New Testaments.

I have no doubt about that. I believe that in the Old Testament, the New Testament is enclosed, and that in the New Testament, the Old Testament is disclosed. And so we are able by the grace of God to see that in both Testaments, the Holy Spirit himself is endeavoring to magnify and to glorify the coming Messiah in the Old Testament, and the living Savior in the New.

I'm concerned, as you are, that Christ should be magnified. This, I believe, is the absorbing passion of the Holy Spirit, that Christ should be glorified, that he should be shown forth in all his fullness, because he is never glorified by additions to his possessions, but only by revelations of his personality and of what he is.

And the only one who can truly interpret Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God.

Only one equal with God can ever interpret God. And this is why we are so dependent upon him, the Spirit of God, if we want to know who Jesus is, and if we want the revelation to be brought to us, which was brought to his servants so long ago, that we in turn will say, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Symbolism, then, is important.

Bearing this in mind, we are not surprised to find that there are many exceeding great and precious promises which God makes to his people concerning revival and the agent in revival, the Holy Spirit himself. Promises such as are found, for instance, in Isaiah 41, 17 and 18. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them.

I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

God's great and wonderful promises concerning the rain of the Spirit, the water of the Spirit, the refreshing of the Spirit that comes in times of great revival. Or this promise in Isaiah 58, 11, And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones. And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Again and again there is reference in the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit under this figure of speech, this emblem of water. And as we have mentioned already, the emblem of water under which the Holy Spirit is presented to us as the agent of revival is one of the richest and fullest of the emblems of the Spirit which you find in the Word of God. We have noted already that He comes as the dew.

We saw this, I think, last Tuesday night, divinely given, given of God Himself, never manipulated, never manufactured, associated with unity, that unity which only God Himself can produce. Completely saturating in His influence as the dew saturated the fleece, and also beautifying and strengthening in His contact with us, as we also saw last Tuesday night, as the dew of God comes to do His work in the lives of God's people. But He comes also as the springs, and as the rain, and as the floods, and simply as water in many connections and associations.

And He comes as the river. And I felt that tonight we should begin to think about the Holy Spirit under this figure of speech, as the river of God in fullness and in so many aspects that are presented to us, both in the Old and in the New Testaments. Now, perhaps a word of explanation.

We know surely by experience that there are some emblems of the Spirit which have a special application to us in the particular area of life in which we are found. It may be at the particular degree of spirituality which we have experienced. But we will discover this over and over again, that certain emblems of the Spirit will seem to have a particular message to us, a personal word from God to us as individuals.

Well, don't you be disheartened if at times you don't sense this, because if you are not receiving this special word from the Lord, someone else is. And this is in the purpose and plan of God, because as we have often said, no one type of ministry could ever perfect the saints of God, and no one kind of emblem can satisfy the deepest longings in all the saints of God. So it requires the emblems of the Spirit, the titles of the Spirit, the prepositions of the Spirit, all these combined to give to us a satisfaction which will really satisfy.

God, by His Spirit, knows what He is doing. And I felt as I was preparing this message for tonight that this was God's word for us on this occasion. And so I want to be faithful to Him.

I've told you, and I think you believe me by now, I'm not the least bit interested in preaching sermons. I'm only concerned in giving God's message. Whatever that message is, well, then I'm sure that the Spirit of God will endorse and confirm it, and that we shall receive the blessing, and He will receive all the glory and all the praise.

Let us begin, then, in thinking about the vision which God gave to Ezekiel of the river. You find it in Ezekiel 47 and verse 1. I'm not reading all the verses, but just parts of it. Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house.

And behold, waters issued from under the threshold of the house eastward, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. The water, which is later called a river that could not be passed over, flowed from its source, which was the altar, the altar in the sanctuary. That is the source from which the river of the Spirit flows, the altar in the sanctuary.

Surely this reminds us of two things, that Christ is our altar, and that the altar where He was crucified is the place called Calvary. It's so important, isn't it, that we should never forget that the Spirit is conferred on us because Jesus was crucified for us, that there is an unbreakable bond between the Passover and the day of Pentecost. The river flowed from the altar.

The Spirit's coming expresses Christ's bounty as the Savior of mankind, as the Redeemer of men. And I believe that the effusion of the Spirit is part of the redemptive purpose of God. And it is also a revelation of the glorifying work of the Holy Spirit, for we read the Spirit was not yet given because that Christ was not yet glorified.

We have seen already there were two ascensions of Christ, one on the day of His resurrection to fulfill the Levitical type, and one from the Mount of Olives. So because of the first ascension, because of the first ascension, the Spirit was given to the disciples when Jesus breathed on or into them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. At that moment, they were born again of the Spirit of God.

Up to this point, they had been saved on credit, but now Calvary had been affected, and the resurrection was complete. And now He could breathe on them and say, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. And they received life, *emphusau*, the impartation of life by the Spirit.

At that moment, they were born again. But the effusion of the Spirit is connected with the second ascension of Christ, this time from the Mount of Olives. And arising from this, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room, and they were all filled with the Spirit.

So in the first instance, it is an impartation of life by the Spirit. In the second case, it is an impartation of power by the Holy Spirit. But the day of Pentecost, don't forget, is based on the Passover.

If there is no cross on the hill, there is no church in the upper room. The river of the Spirit flows from the altar of the cross. And it seems to me a sort of poetic justice that in this very world which once trembled at the impact of the Savior's outpoured blood, men should now behold the triumph of the Son of God in the outpoured Spirit flowing like a river, deep and wide, to magnify the Lord of glory and to show Him as the altogether lovely One.

I think it is God's purpose that this should have been. Remember, it is the outflowing Holy Spirit whose presence in the midst of us confirms the victory of Jesus Christ, the victory of Calvary. You recall that Isaiah had two visions of Calvary, Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 63.

In Isaiah 53, you have the suffering servant, the suffering Savior. And you know how it begins. Who hath believed our report? Unto whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground.

He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him.

He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. There is the first picture. But Isaiah 63, who is this that cometh from Eden with dyed garments from Bosrah, this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? And the answer comes, I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

What a different picture this is. This is the other side of the cross. This is the resurrection side of Calvary.

This is the triumphant Redeemer of men. This is the conquering Christ that we see. Who is this that cometh from Eden, the place of blood-red earth, with dyed garments from Bosrah, the place of deep distress? Who is this? He is traveling in the greatness of his strength, for as they saw Him hanging in weakness and in suffering, in agony and in blood upon Calvary.

But now traveling in the greatness of His strength, His garments dyed. Here is the vision for the church. And I believe that if we were to think of Him before Pentecost, we may possibly conceive that He was just a carpenter's son.

We may think of Him in terms of the lowly Nazarene. We may indeed imagine Him as such, the meek and lowly Savior, walking and moving amongst men. But I am sure that since the river of the Spirit flowed out in revival on the day of Pentecost, He stands revealed as the Lord of glory, the living head of His church, the One who is mighty to save.

And this is the vision that we need, the vision of the Christ of God triumphant. And this only comes because the river of the Spirit has flowed from the day of Pentecost. And thank God it is flowing still right here in this service, if we dare to believe it.

This, then, we must remember, that the source of the river was from the altar, reminding us of Calvary and of Jesus dying for our sake, but reminding us, too, that He is the triumphant Savior, that He did arise the third day. And because He now is glorifying, then the presence and power of the Spirit has become an established fact in the Christian church and in the life of the Christian believer. Now, what lessons are we taught by this river which Ezekiel saw? Well, I think that, first of all, it was a progressively deepening river.

Ezekiel 47, verses 3 to 5, I won't read all the verses, but just mention parts of them. The waters were to the ankles, the waters were to the knees, the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass over, for the waters were risen, waters to swim in.

So we are taught by this symbolism that fellowship with the Holy Spirit is intended to be an ever-deepening experience. Now, we can't stand still in this life in the Spirit. There must be a going on.

There must be an advancing in the purpose and will of God. There must be some progress that we make if we are to attain to the point that God requires we should reach. This surely is taught us by this symbolism.

Now, there are some who may be satisfied with the ankle-deep relationship. They try to walk in the Spirit, but often they find the flesh is too strong. But they've only gone in as far as their ankles, and they didn't go in head-first either.

Others have gone in up to the knees, and their fellowship with the Spirit is largely in the area of prayer. This is about all they know when it comes to relationship or partnership with the Spirit of God. Still others have progressed to the loin's depth, and as the loin symbolized strength, then they have, in fellowship with the Spirit, discovered Him as the Spirit of power, and with this they are satisfied.

They say, hallelujah, we've arrived. We know the Holy Spirit's power in our lives. This is what God always intended, and we can rejoice in this glorious fact.

Ah, but there are still the waters to swim in. And what about these? We may have gone ankle-depth and knee-depth and loin-depth, and we may have said, well, now we've reached the limit surely. Don't you believe it? There are still waters to swim in, waters beyond our human computation.

There are depths, there are realms, there are spheres, there are areas, there are facets, there are wonderful and glorious times of fellowship with the Spirit beyond our human comprehension, beyond our understanding, but thank God not beyond our faith. If we dare to reach out and to believe that these waters to swim in represent to us a tremendous enlargement of fellowship and partnership with the living Spirit of God, perhaps we have never even thought about it, but here it is presented to us in this symbolism. There are, I believe, progressive degrees in experiential fellowship with the Holy Spirit, as there are in other areas of spiritual life, for progress is a law of life, and to be satisfied with what we have attained is just simply a hindrance to that progress.

Think of Paul's approach to the question of fellowship with Christ. He expresses it in Philippians 3.10, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering. There's a progress here, there's a going on here, that I may know him, the person, and the power of his resurrection, the power, and the fellowship of his sufferings, the passion of Christ.

There's a going on experience, surely, in this relationship. I suppose you could say that Martha knew him, and maybe that's as far as she ever got, but I'm positive that Lazarus knew a little bit about the power of his resurrection, and in a very real and positive way. Ah, but it was Mary who knew the fellowship of his suffering.

Wasn't it? Only Mary who knew that. Also, it seems to me that out of those three, she was the one who had the vision that enabled her to do what she did in honor of her Lord. Remember how she took the box of ointment, of spikenard, very costly, and how she anointed the feet of Jesus? You know the story very well, don't you? Have you thought what a difficult occasion it must have been? All the excitement in the house, people who had come to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, others who wanted to see this great teacher called Jesus.

What a tremendous movement there must have been in that house, but it was then that Mary did what she did. And I like to think of this as worship in the Spirit. It never will be absolutely, perfectly easy to break through.

Mary discovered this, but she did break through, and she did what the Lord prompted her to do when He wanted it done. And so she did not lose her opportunity, however difficult the occasion might have been. Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of spikenard, very costly.

She put a right evaluation on what she did. The whole pound must go, nothing kept back at all. How long, I wonder, had it taken her to save enough money to buy this precious spikenard? Ah, but that's not the consideration now, is it? He is worthy of it all, and the whole pound must go.

The right evaluation. What a loving conception she had. She anointed His feet, not His head, as one would have expected, but His feet, stooping at the feet of the Master to anoint Him.

This surely was a loving conception. And what a blessed reciprocation there was, because as she wiped His feet with her hair, the blessing she poured out upon His feet returned upon her own head, and it always will, every time. You worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

You give to Him of your devotion. You give to Him of your love, those deep longings, those yearnings, those aspirations after Him. Give to Him in worship, lowly at His feet, that which your heart prompts you to give, and inevitably it will return upon your own head in blessing beyond your understanding, beyond your comprehension.

This was how it was in the case of Mary, wasn't it? Of course, there was a carnal objection. Why was not this ointment sold, and the money given to the poor, and so on? But notice how quickly there came this divine intervention of the Master. Let her alone, He said, against a day of my burying.

Ah, she kept this. She had the vision of the passion of Jesus. She entered into the fellowship of His suffering, and what was the result? The whole house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

There was a bountiful, a glorious, bountiful benediction until the whole house was filled with the odor, with the fragrance of what she had done. I didn't intend to say all that, but anyhow, the point I was getting across was this, that if Martha knew Him, and Lazarus knew the power of His resurrection, Mary knew the fellowship of His suffering. And I'm sure that where Paul is concerned, this is the point at which he aims.

He talks about filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the church. Not that the redemptive sufferings of Christ were not sufficient for the redemption of mankind, not at all. This is not for the world's sake, this is for the body's sake.

For he knows that sympathy, *sympathia*, is suffering together. And therefore, if the member on earth suffers, the head feels it in heaven, but he can only express his sympathy through his fellow member on earth. And this is where Paul would be, allowing the Spirit of God to fill up in him what is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the church, to make him a channel, if you like, of sympathy, an expression of loving-kindness, a means in the hands of the eternal Spirit of conveying something of compassion, and of mercy, and of understanding and comprehension to those who need it.

This is the fellowship of His suffering. And I want to deny whether in relation to Jesus Christ there has been this advancing in our concept, this progressive movement toward the end and the aim and the objective, which is to enter into fellowship with His suffering. You notice the same thing in the area of prayer, don't you? Ask, and it shall be given unto you, and that's as far as some ever get, the asking part.

But it goes on, seek and ye shall find. And there are others who reach this point and experience in prayer. But the third one, well, knock, it shall be opened unto you.

Asking, seeking, knocking in the area of prayer, it represents some advancement, some progress that we make, surely. And I like the way that the Greek has it here. Keep on asking, and it shall be given unto you.

Keep on seeking, and ye shall find. Keep on knocking, it shall be opened unto you. For he who keeps on asking, keeps on receiving.

And he who keeps on seeking, keeps on finding. And he who keeps on knocking, to him the door keeps on being opened. That is the message of the text.

And this, I believe, should be the experience in the area of prayer. I had an Irish evangelist friend who was once conducting a mission and his finances weren't too good. He had his hotel bill to meet.

And so he was on his knees in his room praying in front of a chair. And suddenly the Lord brought to his mind, you know, this very scripture. And he thought to himself, well, I've tried asking and nothing has happened.

I've tried seeking, but I haven't tried knocking yet. So he said, well, Lord, here we go. And he began to knock on the chair.

Well, I said he was Irish. He was knocking on the chair for all he was worth and saying, Lord, I'm knocking, I'm knocking, Lord. His eyes fast closed, you know.

And in a little while he stopped and thought, well, praise the Lord. I've done what the Lord asked me to do. And when he opened his eyes and looked, somebody had slid an envelope under the door.

And here was enough money to pay his account. Well, try knocking. I don't know, anything might happen.

So the point is this, that there are degrees surely in the area of prayer, of progressiveness, an ever deepening experience that God would have us know, not simply as an ideal, but as a practical outworking in our daily life and experience. It has always been this way. Think of the days of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

He could have a multitude to the desert if there was a chance of bread and something in the way of material blessing. But only 70 out of these learners that he could send out, and only 12 that he could choose to be with him in special companionship, and only three who would go with him into the garden of Gethsemane, and only one who could lean upon his bosom, the disciple whom Jesus loved. There was something about this relationship with Christ which demanded an understanding, a comprehension, a cultivation of his presence, a comprehension of his purposes that enabled John, at least, at last, to reach the point where he could lean on the heart of Jesus and know something of the secrets, not of time, but of eternity.

For he was caught up with a pulse beat of eternal things, and he was lifted eventually out of the realm of time and gave us that marvelous book of Revelation which proves the point that he had reached a point in experience in association with Jesus, which I believe no one else had reached up to that time, at least. Well, there it is. But now when it comes to the Holy Spirit himself and our relationship with him, what about deepening relationship here? Well, I still think there are degrees.

For instance, in Romans 8 and verse 2, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that made me free from the law of sin and death, there are many who know the life of the Spirit, and this is as far as they go. But then there is the leading of the Spirit. That's Romans 8, 14, isn't it? For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And there are degrees even here in this leading by the Spirit. You have it demonstrated in the case of Jesus, in the evangelists, the three evangelists who recount his experience when he was led into the wilderness. One evangelist says that he was led up.

The other says he was carried away. The third one, Mark, says he was driven forth. And so there are degrees in this sort of leading by the Spirit where you have perhaps some concept that is deep and abiding for you, but which you cannot put into words.

But then you go on to seek the Lord, and it becomes stronger and stronger until at last you find yourself like the prophets of old, being borne along as by a strong wind. And somehow you know, you sense that the Spirit of God is in real control of your life. Now, these are surely degrees even within this leading of the Spirit.

But then 2 Corinthians 3, 17, the Lordship of the Spirit, translated by many, Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty. So there is a deepening fellowship, isn't there, even with the Spirit of God? Do you know Him in the area of life, the life of the Spirit? Or is it with you, the leading of the Spirit? Or has it become the Lordship of the Spirit, where He is in absolute control of every area and every part of your life? So I think that our aim should be these waters, the swimming, this abundance that God has for us in the life of partnership with the Spirit of God. And if there is one word that, or one expression which would sum this up for us, I think it would be a deepening love, because this expresses what abundant life in the Spirit is all about, doesn't it? This deepening love which is born of the Spirit and which is shed abroad in our heart.

Do you recall how Paul prayed about this when he prayed for the Philippians? Philippians 1, verses 9 to 11, he said, And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more. Can't you see the waters, the swimming? Can't you see the abundance in this concept of love? He talks about the outflow of love, because this is the main thrust of his prayer. And you'll notice it is a prayer for love abounding.

Your love may abound yet more and more. I said last Tuesday night I wasn't going to rush over these things. I'm not going to rush over this either.

This I pray. Now, this word for pray is not the usual deesis begging a favor. It's the word *prosokamai*, intense intercession on fire.

So he really means business when he prays like this. This I pray, that your love, here it is not feline love, a brotherly love, a kindly love, an unimpassioned love, but it is agape, a divine love, the love that loves the unlovely, if you like. It is a love that prizes the soul for whom Jesus died.

And when he talks about love, this is what he means, that your love may abound, perish you, as a river flowing in superabundant measure. This is his prayer. And this I pray, that your love may flow like a river in superabundant measure.

I said last Tuesday that the trouble with our human love is it doesn't go far enough and it doesn't go deep enough. And it is true. It doesn't reach down deep enough to meet the needs of people.

It doesn't last out long enough when the pressures are on. But this divine love in abundant measure, love abounding. But then it is also love attaining in knowledge, he says.

Not in sentimental outbursts, not in spurts and gasps of love, not this sort of thing that you see sometimes where people are trying to do good works, it lasts for a little while, and it is impelled, I suppose, by some sort of human love for people, a kind of philanthropy. Not this at all, but love according to knowledge, epinosai, full experiential knowledge, but allowing, if you like, your heart to run away with your head because this is possible. It's love apprehending and in all judgment.

And here it means in all sensitive spiritual tactfulness, a sensitivity which flows from a divine love. For this is divine love in essence, the ability to size up a situation and to act accordingly. And this is linked with a second quality in this abounding love, the insight of love, verse 10 of that same chapter, that he may approve things that are excellent, that he may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

Love's insight is revealed in discernment, that he may approve. Here the word is dokimazai, put to the test so as to approve, as the assayer tests the metal. It was used of physicians who had passed the test and were therefore now recognized as fully fledged.

This is the word dokimazai, passed the test. It's interesting to notice that the word used for temptation, and what the devil does, is the word parazo. And the difference lies here.

In dokimazai, it is looking for something to approve. In parazo, it is looking and searching for something to condemn. And so when God does the testing, He is not testing you to find you out in some fault.

He is testing and proving to find something to commend. It's when Satan gets on the job that the whole picture is changed, and he is seeking and striving as the accuser of the brethren to find something about which you may be condemned. But dokimazai, things that are excellent, says the apostle, diapharenta, things that differ, that bear different ways, so that you get your priorities right when it comes to this question of abounding, superabiding, superabounding love.

It's revealed in this position that he may be sincere. Now, this word sincere, alikrinais, the Greeks themselves didn't know what it really meant. It suggested two possibilities.

One, tested by sunlight, from highly sun or sunshine and to judge. And two, eyeline, to whirl around as in a sieve, and so remove all impurities and make the thing pure. Well, you can choose whichever you wish.

I mean, there's nothing hard and fast about this. Personally, I prefer the first illustration, tested by sunlight. I'll tell you why, because I've seen it worked out.

When I was in Japan some years ago, I remember going with a person who had been in Japan for many years to buy some material. Went into one of these little Japanese shops, very dark inside. And here the Japanese proprietor showed us, of course, the length of material, and they looked all right to me.

But my friend who was wise to the game said, don't you dare buy anything in this shop. He said, you come outside first and make him bring his material outside. And that's exactly what happened.

He brought all the material outside and then my friend insisted that he displayed it with the sunlight behind it. And then you could see the flaws, tested by sunlight. That's the word sincere so far as I'm concerned.

Able to stand the sunlight with no flaws to be revealed, no inconsistencies. This is this word sincere, that he may be sincere. And it is revealed also in deportment and without offense.

Here the word is *aproscochai*, not stumbled against, not becoming a stumbling block to others. And this should be the conduct, till the day of Christ. Till Christ returns again in the expectation of his coming, live in this way, sincere and without becoming a stumbling block to other people.

How should we live? As though Jesus died yesterday, arose this morning and is coming back tomorrow. And if we could only live like this, then we would certainly keep short accounts with God, would we not? This is the kind of thing that the apostle has, it seems to me, when he prays as he does for these people. And then the outcome of love is in verse 11.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Christ Jesus unto the glory and praise of God. Cure is fruit to the fullest degree. Being filled, filled full, for you know there are degrees of fruitfulness too, aren't there? Fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and fruit that abides, remains, and so on.

Filled to the full. And it is fruit in the widest application. It says in the Authorized Version, fruits of righteousness.

But it really is fruit of right-wiseness. In other words, the quality of being just. And the singular word fruit here suggests the wholesome character of the Lord reproduced in the believer.

And this is fruit for the highest approval. For you know it is which are by Christ Jesus unto the glory and praise of God. Glory and praise.

Glory is doxology. Doxology comes from this word. And it really means the honor resulting from a good opinion.

Isn't that lovely? To think that a fruitful Christian creates a good opinion of the God whom he loves and serves? This is the kind of glory that God is seeking for. And the Apostle understood this. And hence this kind of prayer.

And after all, the strongest argument for Christianity is still a consistent Christian. Someone whose life is really fruitful. I have a friend in the ministry.

In his unconverted days, well, he was inclined to take things that he wanted without asking permission. He was a tradesman. They have many, many sort of terms for it.

Souveniring is one of the things they use. You know the kind of thing that goes on. All right, we talked about this last Tuesday night, about the sin of stealing.

So we won't go on about that tonight. But anyway, in his unconverted days, he had taken something from the workshop. And when he had given his heart to the Lord, he became suddenly conscious of this.

And so he went to his boss and told his boss exactly what had happened and said, if you'll give me time, I'm quite willing to pay for the whole thing. And his boss looked at him in amazement and said, well, Jack, he said, I've had my doubts about you, but never again. If he said, Jesus Christ can make you do this to me, well, it's good enough for me, isn't it? There's something in it after all.

And isn't it true that you can say more by living very often than you can with your lips in all your speaking? If your life is consistent, if your life is fruitful, then it has its effect. It gives people a good opinion of the God whom you serve. And this is the meaning of the word glory as we have it here.

All right, reverting again to Ezekiel's vision of the river. The ever-deepening river was certainly fruit-bearing. And this is the point that we reached, wasn't it, in our consideration of the prayer, fruit for the highest approval, a fruit-producing river.

Ezekiel 47, 12, On the banks of the river, wherever it went, there were trees, of which it is said, Whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruit according to his months. Because they are they issued out of the sanctuary.

This is the reason. Because this river came out from the sanctuary of God, then the fruit abounded. Naturally, when we think of the river here as fruit-producing, we cannot but connect it with the fruit of the Spirit.

Not the fruits of the Spirit, please. I do hear this sometimes, the fruits of the Spirit. No, not at all.

The fruit of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are divisible, but the fruit of the Spirit is indivisible. The gifts of the Spirit, to one, the utterance of wisdom, to another, the utterance of knowledge, to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, but it never is to one, love, and to another, joy, and to another, peace, and to another, not at all.

It is the fruit of the Spirit which is indivisible. And so here we are to think in terms of this river of the Spirit producing the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer. John had the same vision, I notice, of the river as Ezekiel did.

For in Revelation 22, 1 and 2 you read, And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the land. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation.

So like Ezekiel's river, it was a fruit-producing river. Again, it was a healing river, and both visions confirm this fact. Ezekiel 47 verse 8, verse 9, verse 12, in the Revised Version, the fruit trees produced by the river are for healing.

Now this reminds us surely that the Holy Spirit is concerned with healing and not with friction. I am not talking now simply about physical healing, but spiritual healing as well. And here I think the Holy Spirit, as the river, gives us some indication of the purpose and the mind of God where this ministry is concerned.

If you have heard or read anything of the Rwanda Revival, you will know that this was one of the phases, one of the aspects that came to life. How healing, spiritual healing, became the order of the day. Barriers were broken down, wounds were cleansed and cured, problems were overcome, and the Spirit came into the midst of God's people.

I think Paul had a clear vision of what was entailed in this sort of friction that occurs in the church from time to time. We have already mentioned about his desire for the Philippians, and I believe that when he speaks in the second chapter, I think it is, about the need of being one in the truest, deepest sense of the word, he bases his appeal upon their deepest and most intimate experiences as believers on the Lord

Jesus Christ. How does it go? If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, that is the first thing.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, this is the word entreaty, paraklesis, a calling near. For in Christ there is no place for division, for Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, wise or otherwise, but all one in Christ. This, to my mind, is the heart of the matter.

In Christ there is no place for selfishness, for independence, or aloofness from others. There should be no traditional hold-ups, denominational barriers, doctrinal exclusiveness, which you sometimes discover. If we are met as one in Christ, if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, this is a calling near.

In Christ is the operative word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us. And this is the unity of the Spirit when we are one in them because of our own personal relationship with God the Father, with the Son of God, and with the Holy Spirit. I wish there were time to enlarge another bit, but there isn't.

Paul proceeds, if any comfort of love. Here it is the word paramouthion, a word which draws near to one to stimulate or persuade. This is what it means, a word which draws near to one to stimulate or to persuade.

So there is first a calling near in Christ, and now there is a drawing near in divine love, and it is love that breaks barriers. The river of the Spirit, so far as I'm concerned, is a river of divine love, and that is why it is healing in its flow. With a brother in Christ, servant of God, who said things about me and did things concerning me which I resented very much, I'm sorry to have to confess it, but an open confession is good for the soul.

I should add, it happened a long time ago, so it's not so hurtful to me now. Well, I felt this resentment. I knew it wasn't right, and yet, you know, I couldn't sort of break through to say anything or do anything.

One day there were three of us walking along, he was in the center, and he put his arm across the shoulders of his fellow minister on the other side of himself, and then he put his arm around my shoulder. And to this day, I can almost feel the pressure of that loving arm across my shoulder, and I realize, you know, in spite of everything, he did really love me. Every bit of resentment disappeared.

There wasn't a trace of it. What a wonderful thing it is when love breaks through the barriers, isn't it? When you're conscious of this drawing near that love stimulates. But he goes on, you know, if any fellowship of the Spirit, koinonia, if any mutual sharing with the Spirit in the common interests of life.

This is a joining near in the Spirit, and it's implied in this mutual sharing. And this is surely a basis for the healing of friction, such as evidently existed in the Philippian churches, Paul's love letter. And it contains less of censure and more of praise than any one of his writings, but there was still trouble there.

And I'm sorry to have to say this, ladies, but it seems to have arisen between two women in the church, and strange to relate, they'd fallen out, from what we can read between the lines, over the question of sanctification. Amazing, isn't it? Eudaeus and Syntyche, that's how it is in the authorized version. I remember a dear old Welsh elder, my acquaintance, who couldn't read English very well, but was doing his best, you know.

When he came to read out from Philippians this particular passage, I beseech you, Eudaeus, and I beseech Syntyche, that there be one in the Lord, he brought it out, I beseech you, Eudaeus and Syntyche. And the result, as you can well imagine in the congregation, was quite something to behold. But anyway,

Paul understands that there is friction, and he knows that this is the way in which the Spirit of God, like the healing river, will bring this friction to an end.

If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, this literally means compassionate yearnings, feelings, or actions, which flow from the Christian life, from the one who was moved with compassion, and whose compassions fail not. So you see the process. If consolation in Christ is a calling year, if comfort of love is a drawing year, if fellowship of the Spirit is a joining year, then this bowels and mercies is a bending year, a stooping.

And like Ezekiel's river, this type of healing can only come from the flow of the Holy Spirit Himself. It is not man-made. Thank God it is God-given, and how much we need this in the Christian church today.

The flow of God's Spirit, like Ezekiel's river, bringing healing wherever it goes, healing the friction, healing the disunity, healing the bondage, bringing liberty and freedom in its flow, the kind of healing which in the end is far more important than physical healing could ever be. Spiritual healing. This is part of the vision.

And I believe, too, you know, that when Paul wrote, as he did, fulfilling my joy that he be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, he really felt that this was important. This is a paraphrase, my own paraphrase, but I think it's very near the original. Fill to the brim, my cup of gladness, that you think the same kind of thing, that you are motivated by the same kind of love, that you are harmonized with one another, that you are united in soul.

Make my cup of joy overflow by being in this way. This surely is in the purpose and the mind of one. It was a life-giving river, Ezekiel 47, 9. And everything shall live whither the river cometh, so with the Holy Spirit as the river.

His ministry is vital. For you see, if the essence of being is life, the essence of well-being is liberty. And both are part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, life-giving and liberty-producing.

A life-giving river. So God promises, I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

What a wonderful promise. It's the promise of life where deadness reigns. What kind of life is produced by the Holy Spirit? It flows from Him.

Therefore it will bear distinctive characteristics. Writing to the Ephesians in chapter 5, Paul speaks about this kind of life that the river of the Spirit will produce. When he says in chapter 5, verses 1 and 2, Be therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

As we listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, we learn how to live victoriously in a world that is morally filthy and spiritually bankrupt. And in fact, right down to verse 10 of this same chapter, the theme is victorious living, the kind of life the river of the Spirit creates. We are called to emulate the good, verses 1 and 2. We are called to repudiate the bad, verses 3 to 7. We are called to appreciate the light, verses 8 to 10.

Of course, there's no time to expound this, but just look at the beginning. Emulate the good. Be therefore followers of God.

Ephesians 5, verse 1. It involves the life of God, because this word be means become. It's a standard to be attained, a process. By nature and instinct, we tend to drift away from God.

Therefore, become followers of God. The word followers of God is the mater. It means imitators of God in character and conduct, conforming to his kind of life, to this idea.

And I believe it does mean a holy life. It does mean renouncing all that is unholy, as dear children, children beloved of the Father, children who exhibit the family likeness in holiness. For only God can live a holy life in finite man.

Only God can do it. And when we think about holiness, we have to think not in terms of the absolute, but in terms of the relative. Yet we are to copy God, for to emulate the good involves the life of God.

Do you remember the old type copy books? Perhaps it's too far back for some of you to remember. We used to have them in wheels. I still write copperplate when I, at least when I sign a check or when I write my signature.

Because in those days, you know, you had the copperplate letters on the top of the page. You had to copy them, line by line by line. Now, the strange thing was that the upper lines, you know, they were almost perfect in their copy.

But right down the lower line, what a hopeless mess. The further you were away from the original, the worse it was, you know. I hope you get the point.

Copy God. Emulate God. This is what we are called to do because it involves the life of God, but it also involves the love of Christ.

And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, constantly ordering your behavior within the sphere of Christ's own love. A life of love, in other words. What kind of life does the river of the Spirit produce? Like the dew, this love must saturate the life, not merely flavor it.

We must know its constraining power, for the love of Christ constraineth us. Hate can never destroy hate, but love can and does, praise God. So the constraining power.

We must know its restraining power, for love covereth a multitude of sins. And this is the inescapable pattern, as Christ also hath loved us. How has he loved us? Exactly as he loved his disciples, with an excelling love.

Greater love hath no man than this, he said, that a man lay down his life for his friend. With an encircling love, Romans 8.35. Who, not what, because things can never do it. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? It's an encircling love.

It's an enduring love, John 13.1. Then Jesus, having loved his own which are with him in the world, he loved them unto the end. To emulate the good involves the love of Christ. And this is the kind of life the river of the Spirit brings into being.

To emulate the good involves the law of sacrifice. And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. The A.S. Weyes translation reads, Walk in ways of love, like Messiah's love for us, which drew him to yield himself up for us, as an offering to God, as a victim slain, to be wafted up in fragrance of a grateful odor.

Hath given himself for us. These words are important. Given himself for us.

Paridoken. As the staggering climax of his love. Gave himself.

Gave up the glory of heaven for earth with all its testings and its trials. Gave up the company of angels to become known as the friend of sinners. Gave up so much during his earthly life.

Gave his back to the smiters. Gave his brow to the thorns. Gave his hands and his feet to the nails.

Gave his side to the spear. Gave his mother to his disciples. When he had given everything else, he gave himself.

But he gave himself as the staggering climax to the love which he bore for you and for me. He'd sometimes sing, Oh, make me understand it. Help me to take it in what it meant for thee, the Holy One, to bear away my sin.

We never can understand it. We never will comprehend it. Thank God we believe it.

And Paul believed it. And hath given himself for us. What is Calvary? Calvary is love stooping to win.

Calvary is love dying to live. Calvary is love losing to gain. Calvary is love burning its fiercest.

It is love shining its clearest. It is love giving its dearest. The Savior we love and adore is the Savior of Calvary.

And out of this wonderful love of his, it was all for us that it was done. Cuper, haemon, the preposition of substitution. He died an atoning death.

And this was his sacrifice acceptable to God, a sweet-smelling savor. And so it should be in our case, Romans 12, 1 and 2. You should know it off by heart by now. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that he present your bodies a living sacrifice.

There it is. Corresponding act of love and devotion. So you see the life of God, the love of Christ, the law of sacrifice.

This sums up the kind of life that the life-giving river of the Spirit produces in its flow. Perhaps it also expresses what Paul means in Ephesians 5, 9 when he says, For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Goodness is active goodness.

Not idealistically good, but actively good. Righteousness, a sincere and holy regard for the rights of others. And truth, the unchanging reality lying at the base of something.

This is the kind of life that the river of the Spirit produces. And this is how I see it. And because this is the kind of life the Holy Spirit leads, then a life in partnership with him will be a life observant of his purity, a life obedient to his purpose, a life dependent on his power.

One last reference to the river, and only a reference, from the proclamation of Jesus, John 7, 37 to 39, In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. The Feast of Tabernacles. For seven days a circuit was made by the priests around the altar, crying, Hosanna, as they went.

Every morning after sacrifice, priests and people went to the fountain of Siloam. There the priest filled a golden pitcher with water, and was carried back to the altar to the sound of singing. At the altar of burnt offering, the priest poured it out toward the west as a libation, while the people chanted, With joy shall he draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Then the priest poured out of a golden vessel wine toward the east. And this was done day by day for seven days. But on the last day, the eighth day, the great day of the Feast, there was no libation poured out.

That is what is so significant about what Jesus did. That on this day, when there was no libation, no outpouring, he cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me. Hallelujah! What a tremendous thing it must have been to hear him say those words, and to be on, to be there on the very ground when Jesus, inspired by the Spirit of God, made known the fact that henceforward there was no limitation, but now there was expansion, effusion.

The Spirit could be poured out in abundant measure. If any man thirst, let him come. It's a cry to the thirsting soul.

And it always is a cry to thirsting soul. So thirst for God. The psalmist added, My soul thirsteth for God.

Why? Because every one of us was designed for God. And every one of us has been deprived of God. And down deep within there's a thirst for God.

And only God can satisfy us. Jesus understood this. The psalmist understood it.

Remember what Jesus said, Blessed are they that who hunger and thirst, they shall be filled, they shall be satisfied. How Isaiah promised, I will pour water on him that is thirsty. So it's a cry to the thirsty soul, the man who really is desirous of knowing God.

And it's a cry to the believing soul, he that believeth on me, not giving a mental assent to truth, but a heart commitment to life. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, the Lord himself, remember, is the ultimate source of the rivers. He it is who is called the fountain of living waters in Jeremiah.

But the promise is that as a channel out of the thirsting and believing man shall flow rivers of living water. Remembering what the river symbolizes, concerning our fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God, the agent in revival. Let us recall, it is an ever-deepening fellowship.

It is a fruit-producing fellowship. It is a continually healing fellowship. It is a life-imparting fellowship.

It is a soul-satisfying fellowship. Thank God he has promised, I will open rivers on the bare heights, and may this be our experience to his glory and praise. Let us pray.

O God, our Father, we thank Thee because not only dost Thou come as the dew in stillness, but Thou dost come as the rivers, too, in abundance. Our humble prayer tonight is that if there should be anyone in this service to whom Thou hast spoken directly and personally on this issue, that there must be an ever-deepening fellowship with the Spirit of God. Thou wilt Thyself give grace that what has to be done might be done, that there shall be no hindrance in the lives of God's people, but a progressive unfolding of

the purpose and plan of God, not simply in black and white as we have it in the book, but in flesh and blood as we have it in the lives of God's people.

O God, we pray that Thou wilt move in the midst of us by Thy Holy Spirit in a very definite and real way. We shall be so careful to give Thee the praise and the glory. Amen.

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