



The River of God

by Christine Gofron

The River of God flows from His sanctuary. The inner sanctuary of God is where we find His throne. This is where He is worshipped day and night without ceasing (Revelation 4:8). So what does this River mean to us, here on earth? Everything.

Ezekiel had a vision of this very River. Ezekiel chapter 47 gives a very vivid picture of what the River of God should mean to us. In his vision, he was shown a river that flowed from the threshold of the Temple. He was led deeper and deeper into this river - first his ankles, then his knees and then his loins. Eventually this river became something that Ezekiel could not cross, he could only swim. The Lord then took Him back to the banks of the river and asked him to look around. On either side of the river he saw many trees. Then the Lord revealed to him that this river flowed into the sea, and the waters are made fresh.

The sea in this vision is the Salt Sea. You may all know that the Salt Sea could bear no life because of its high salt content. It is also referred to as the Dead Sea. The waters of this sea would not sustain life. If a fish was put into these waters, it would die very quickly. So now you may get what I'm driving at.

I truly feel in my heart that today's church is in danger of becoming like the Dead Sea. To the naked eyes, you would look at the Dead Sea and envision plant life and marine life actively living in its depths. But unfortunately, this is quite the opposite. Should something living come in contact with its waters, it would not live. In the same way, in a lot of churches, you can walk in and see with the naked eye that there are people, music, sermons, activities, youth programs, fellowships, etc. But if you to walk in and present the living River of God, which promotes new life, you would be ushered out. You see, the River of God not only brings life, but it brings change. Change in the way we think, the way we worship, the way we pray and the way we receive the Word of God.

Churches which have become stagnant and complacent, sadly, you will often find that they are happy there. You may walk into a service and find someone who yearns for the living presence of God, but they will soon realize that taking on the ways of that body will make them dead inside as well. Church, are we taking too much time "testing our toes" in the River of God, or are we jumping in whole heartedly and letting it restore life to our dry bones?

Let's look at the portion of this River that represents change in the way we worship. Now you may tell me, I already know what it means to worship! Well, maybe you could enlighten the rest of us! We will never know the true release of worship and how it is done until we get to heaven! But there is a way to have God's will done, "on earth as it is in heaven".

The first part, and the most important part, is the sacrifice of worship. Sacrifice literally means to destroy or surrender something for the sake of something else. When we sing the song "We bring the sacrifice of praise" do we really know what we are saying to God? I believe that we do, but are we really doing it? I would venture to say that sometimes we are not. We (and by "we" I mean that I have been guilty of this too) stand in our spots and sing the words that are presented to us on the screen. We even may enjoy the worship to the sense that we enjoy the songs and even agree with what they are saying. But, oh please know, it's so much beyond that!

Singing songs is merely a by-product of worship! True worship begins in the heart of the worshipper. The precious words of David's heartfelt psalms were only a by-product of what was going on inside him. God was daily changing and molding this man. His heart was constantly being worked on. His mind was in a constant state of renewal. This is not to say that he worshipped God in the proper way at all times, but he knew that in order to worship God, he had to be "transformed by the renewing of his mind" (Romans 12:2)

So where does the sacrifice come into this? I think we know the answer to that. Sacrificing what we came looking for. When we come to God we tend to look for things...and that's okay because He's told us that we should ask. But when it's time to worship, nothing of what we have come to look

for has anything to do with what we are doing at that moment. We are simply there to praise Him - clapping our hands, lifting our voices, dancing before Him and we are there to worship Him - raising our hands, singing a new song, declaring our love for Him and bowing before Him. Should God choose to work on your heart at this time, and He usually does, we should accept this change. Sacrificing our desires is to become changed by Him.

"Everything lives where the river goes." (Ezekiel 47:9) Sacrificing, or surrendering, ourselves to worship God, places us right in the River. You can't be in the flow of the River if you don't surrender. The River's current is strong, and it goes with or without you. All that the River encounters will thrive. Let's embrace the flow of God's River in our lives, and let the overflow of that be our Sunday morning worship. I can think of nothing better to surrender myself to, and no better home to live in.

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