

PRAYER

Are you bringing God's
presence by prayer
to the river of life?

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Prayer

Are we bringing God's presence by prayer to the river of life?

The sermon I will give today is covered in this booklet which is the first half of the booklet and the second half of the booklet is some additional information regarding prayer.

A few weeks ago, you were given a journal for taking notes, and for points or thoughts that God brings to you during each service. This booklet is in addition to that journal and I hope that you have brought your journal so that you can jot down any thoughts you might have from this sermon.

Prayer:

Father as I bring your word to us today – please open our ears and eyes, hearts and minds to understand. Please speak to each of us during this service and give each of us revelations of You and Your desire. I ask in Your precious Son's Name. Amen.

Prayer – I wonder how many of us find prayer easy. I wonder if you, like I do, find that when you go to pray that thoughts come that you should be more focused before you start, or that you should be in a more appropriate place – thoughts from the enemy to get us to **not** pray. Alternatively, there are suddenly so many distractions that it is not possible to pray.

I think these distractions are signs to us just how important prayer is. Prayer is so important that Satan doesn't want us to pray because he knows what is possible with prayer.

Are we devoted to prayer?

- We read in the scriptures that people were devoted to prayer

Acts 1:14:

All of these (*the eleven disciples*) with their minds in full agreement **devoted** themselves steadfastly to prayer, [waiting together] with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
Acts 1:14

Or

That we will continue to **devote** ourselves steadfastly to prayer...
(Acts 6:4)

Or

That we have deprived ourselves to devote ourselves to prayer with fasting, Acts 13:2, and 3, 14:23 and Matthew 6:16 all refer to “fasting”

Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting....

Acts 13:3 Then after fasting and praying, they put their hands on them and sent them away.

Acts 14:23: And when they had appointed and ordained elders for them in each church with prayer and fasting.....

Matthew 6:16 And whenever you are fasting, do not look gloomy.....

Or abstaining from marital rights - 1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not refuse and deprive and defraud each other [of your due marital rights], except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, so that you may devote yourselves unhindered to prayer.....1
Corinthians 7:5

- It is very clear from the bible that we should pray. Matthew 6 verses 5, 6, and 7 **all** say **when we pray** not if we pray
 - Matthew 6:5 Also when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrite....
 - Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your [most] private room,
 - Matthew 6:7 And when you pray, do not heap up phrases.....

Just as we saw in Acts it says **when we fast** not if we fast.

- So, when we pray, what are we praying for:
 - God to release His power?
 - Why do we need to pray if God is all powerful? If God is all powerful, Sovereign, the Supreme ruler why do we need to pray? Why doesn't He just do it!
 - Do we have to keep bothering God with enough prayer so that he will finally answer our prayer? (The unjust judge Luke 18)
 - Are we trying to talk God into answering our prayer?
 - Does a certain situation need a certain amount of prayer?
 - Do we earn answers to our prayers by praying?
- Or alternatively why don't we pray, or why don't we pray as much as we should?

I suggest because:

- We are complacent or happy with our own ability to sort the issue.
- Maybe we think we can do it better and are reluctant to lose control.
- We doubt or don't believe - we really don't believe that prayer will make a difference. Or putting it another way - if we really believed that prayer would really make a difference and change things would we pray more?
- We are discouraged or we have been disappointed in the past. We prayed and nothing happened!

I think the questions regarding our motivations for prayer or our reasons for not praying or not praying as much as we should, arise because our minds have been programmed by what we have experienced and been taught. We doubt, we have unbelief, we allow the world's reason and knowledge and our experience to rule in our prayer life.

- What does the bible say?
 - In the old testament, God's temple was a house of prayer.
All these I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:7)
 - Jesus was incensed that His Father's house had been turned from its primary focus

He said to them, The Scripture says, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers (Matthew 21;13).

The old covenant has however passed away. The veil in the temple has been torn and a new covenant, a more excellent covenant has been ushered in. The old temple has been replaced. We are now His temple. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says:

Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received (as a Gift) from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

It therefore follows that if we are God's temple, then we should therefore be His house of prayer.

- He has placed in us His Holy Spirit to help us pray

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words reaching out to God to petition the all sovereign God (Romans 8:26)

- And from us should flow streams of living water
...As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.' John 7:38
- Those rivers of living water are coming from the source - God
- God who cannot change
God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind. Has he promised, and will

he not do it? Has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?
Numbers 23:19

Isaiah 55 says that that His word shall not return to Him empty but that it shall accomplish that which He purposed and that it will succeed in the things for which He sent it.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.** (Isaiah 55:10-11)

I believe that we should be plying the heavens, petitioning God with His promises, seeking the release of the work of Jesus and God's goodness, mercy, love and compassion into the circumstances in this fallen world. By prayer, bringing the will of God and heaven to earth.

- **So, how big is your, or my, river of living waters flowing from the throne of God through us for this fallen world?**

If we reflect on our reading from Ezekiel:

Significantly the source of the river is the throne of God – God a greatness so vast and deep that it is unsearchable

Great is the Lord and highly to be praised; and His greatness is so vast and deep as to be unsearchable (Psalm 145:3)

And He has chosen to work through man – we are the channel, and we are also the restriction.

Are our prayers flowing into the world, the dead sea and bringing it to life? Are our prayers healing and restoring people? Are our prayers bringing people to know the true God? What was the commission for the church?....

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:15-18)

I believe that we can only fulfil this commission through prayer and fasting and by turning our prayer lives from the trickle that starts at the throne door until we are swept away beyond our control empowered by the Holy Spirit.

I believe that when we pray, we need to remember:

- **The source to whom we pray** – Our Father Who receives our prayer. Our Father cannot change, He cannot lie, He will fulfil and deliver His promises.

I believe that when we pray, we need to remember:

- **In whose name we pray or ask - Christ, our high priest,** Who is our mediator – Who brings our prayers to Our Father, and His Father, presenting all that He is –His righteous, His authority, His will, the very attributes of God.

Christ is our mediator

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

For there [is only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5)

Christ is our High Priest - Hebrews 8 says

We have such a High Priest, One Who is seated at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven, As officiating Priest, a Minister in the holy places *and* in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord. For every high priest is appointed to offer up gifts and sacrifices; so it is essential for this [High Priest] to have some offering to make also. (Hebrews 8:1-3)

Christ is our Intercessor – bringing our prayers to our Father
It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us (Romans 8:34)

And Christ our High Priest and Intercessor has **all** authority
....Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him. (1 Peter 3:22)

I believe that when we pray, we need to remember:

- **Our helper – the Holy Spirit** – Who empowers us – and strengthens our inner man

that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, (Ephesian 3:16)

Who intercedes helping us to pray, even praying for us, pleading for us according to God's will

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27)

When we submit our lives to God as living sacrifices and offer up prayers, empowered by the Holy Spirit, Christ is ready to present them. And we know that our prayers are a sacrificial offering.

I believe that if we humble ourselves, and confess our sin of being deficient and defective in prayer, of being self-sufficient, of doubts and our unbelief – that God will hear our prayer – and if we will dedicate – devote ourselves to prayer – then we will see the rivers of living water flowing from us. We will see and witness His Hand and His answers, and we will witness His kingdom on earth.

God challenged me this year to be more dedicated to prayer. It is not easy. It is still an area that needs a lot of work and discipline for me. However, I find that as I bring my inadequate offering – five loaves and two fish – God is training me so that prayer becomes easier – as long as I choose to dedicate the time. As long as I choose to do His will and not my will. As long as I choose Him over the world.

We have our example – Christ. There was something very special about Christ's prayer life. The disciples knew about prayer – Jewish practice of daily prayer required prayer three times a day:

- morning prayer at sunrise
- afternoon prayer at the time of the evening sacrifice in the Temple in Jerusalem (3pm)
- evening prayer at nightfall.

Yet the disciples asked to be taught how to pray. They wanted what Christ had. As they watched and waited for Jesus to finish praying, they realised that Jesus's time of prayer was different. By asking 'teach us to pray' they made an open admission that their prayer life was deficient. The ability to learn begins with the ability to admit what we are missing and to express a desire to learn – 'teach us to pray'.

I would like you to look at this video clip. It is by Marilee Dunker on prayer. It is titled "How we pray with real hope in the Lord"

Video clip

Marilee Dunker summarises

"So, even though he was God incarnate, Jesus didn't draw on his superpowers as the Son of God when it came to facing life's challenges. Instead, when he was exhausted or burdened or in need of spiritual refreshment, he would "slip away" to pray — plugging into the power, perception, and purpose that can only be found in God's presence".

She has 8 key points and they are based on the "Lord's prayer".

Her points are:

1. Know to whom you are speaking
2. Thank Him
3. Ask for God's will
4. Say what you need

5. Ask for forgiveness
6. Pray with a friend
7. Pray the word
8. Memorise scripture

Prayer:

Father help us when we pray and when we make our requests and petitions to remember that you are our Source. Through Your Son and by Your Spirit help us to come to You and encourage us. Let us see Your Hand on circumstances, to witness Your kingdom on earth. Help us by Your Spirit to thank You for the answers that You have set in motion long before we can discern results. Help us to keep thanking You for the answers and the results and that they are on the way.

Thank You for the gift of healing that was purchased by You Lord, by the stripes laid on Your back, by the blood and agony You shed and bore for us. Thank You for taking our place – for this is how love wins.

Help us, empowered by Your Spirit to ply the heavens with Your promises and to pray in expectation that You will answer. That You will fulfil Your word as You have promised.

Lord, Holy Spirit, help us to be devoted to prayer, to be earnest in prayer, to be committed to prayer, and both alert and intent in praying with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2 Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer [life], being [both] alert and intent in [your praying] with thanksgiving.

Help us to be humble and sacrificial in prayer.

Father we ask that that You will open a door to us for the Word, the Gospel, to proclaim the mystery concerning Christ, the Messiah,That we may proclaim it fully, clearly, speaking boldly and unfold that mystery, as is our duty. **(Colossians 4:3-4)**

And at the same time pray for us also, that God may open a door to us for the Word (the Gospel), to proclaim the mystery concerning Christ (the Messiah) That I may proclaim it fully and make it clear [speak boldly and unfold that mystery], as is my duty. Colossians 4:3-4

So, I would like us to pray a prayer using the Lord's prayer as a template. Before we pray this prayer – I would like you to take some time to read it through and then I would like us to pray the prayer together.

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Father I worship you and give You thanks for You are a great God - the one and only God, a great King. In Your hand are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains, as is the sea. For You made it all with Your hands^(Psalm 95:3-7).

Thank You Father that I can come before as Your adopted child, through Christ^(Ephesians 1:5). By Your Spirit You have drawn us close. Thank You.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Father help me today, empowered by Your Spirit to choose to do Your will in my life today and to lay aside my will and to

bring Your will and Your ways, Your heaven to earth today (Isaiah 55:8-9). I submit to You my will, my thoughts, my tongue - a living sacrifice and I ask that through me today Your will be done and not mine. That Your Kingdom will be brought to earth today and I will be a witness to Your Presence here today.

Give us this day our daily bread;

Thank You Father that You know us so well (Psalm 139:2-4), and You know our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8). Father I ask that You make provision for me today and for my family, friends and those that I struggle with.

Father Your word says for me to cast all my anxiety on You, because You care for me (1 Peter 5:7) and for all Your creation. So, Father, in silence I bring the prayers of my heart to You.

In silence bring your prayers to Your Father.....

Thank You Father that Your word promises to fully satisfy every one of my needs according to Your riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19). Father I ask that You release all your goodness and mercy and grace, Your perfect answers. In Jesus Name. Amen

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

Father I choose to forgive those who have hurt me, harmed me, wounded me in anyway. Help me to forgive them as unconditionally as Christ asked You to forgive us for crucifying Him.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Father You know my weaknesses and how easily I can fall into sin. Father please protect me from myself, for You know all my ways. Help me to watch and pray, that I may not come into temptation (Matthew 26:40). Father, by Your Spirit, warn me early and make me alert to the path and option that you have provided for me so that I cannot sin and help me to run from temptation, Father, and to not walk or look back.

Protect me from the evil one and let his plans come to nothing.

Thank You Father that when I call on You, You will answer me, You will be with me in trouble, and You will rescue me (Psalms 91:14-15). Father by Your Spirit enable me to call on You early and protect us as we call on Your Name.

For thine is the Kingdom now and forever.

Father Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever (Psalm 45:6). You, O LORD, rule forever; Your throne is from generation to generation (Lamentations 5:19). How great are Your signs and how mighty are Your wonders! Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And Your dominion is from generation to generation (Daniel 4:3). Thank You that You are mindful of me and that You hear my cry to You. To You our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. (Philippians 4:20).

Amen.

Closing thoughts: Our call to action is to act like Jesus – to be dedicated to prayer. I would like you to take some time over the next few minutes and the next week to think about the things that you are passionate about that you would like God to change and to

write them down in the journal that you got several weeks ago – and then make a commitment to bring these before God on a regular basis.

Readings for the sermon

- **Ezekiel 47:1-12**

⁴⁷Then he [my guide] brought me again to the door of the house [of the Lord—the temple], and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple was toward the east; and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the temple, on the south side of the altar.

² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around outside to the outer gate by the way that faces east, and behold, waters were running out on the right side.

³ And when the man went on eastward with the measuring line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were ankle-deep.

⁴ Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the knees. Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the loins.

⁵ Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the waters had risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over or through.

⁶ And he said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me and caused me to return to the bank of the river.

⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

⁸ Then he said to me, These waters pour out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah (the Jordan Valley) and on into the Dead Sea. And when they shall enter into the sea [the sea of putrid waters], the waters shall be healed and made fresh.

⁹And wherever the double river shall go, every living creature which swarms shall live. And there shall be a very great number of fish, because these waters go there that [the waters of the sea] may be healed and made fresh; and everything shall live wherever the river goes.

¹⁰The fishermen shall stand on [the banks of the Dead Sea]; from En-ge-di even to En-eglaim shall be a place to spread nets; their fish shall be of very many kinds, as the fish of the Great or Mediterranean Sea.

¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become wholesome for animal life; they shall [as the river subsides] be left encrusted with salt and given over to it.

¹² And on the banks of the river on both its sides, there shall grow all kinds of trees for food; their leaf shall not fade nor shall their fruit fail [to meet the demand]. Each tree shall bring forth new fruit every month, [these supernatural qualities being] because their waters came from out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food and their leaves for healing.

- **James 5:13-18: The Prayer of Faith**

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them

up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

- **John 7:37-40**

³⁷On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified. ⁴⁰When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.”

- **Mark 16:14-20: Jesus Commissions the Disciples**

¹⁴Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. ¹⁶The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

The Ascension of Jesus

¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

Scripture references from the sermon

³For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. ⁵The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. ⁶O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! ⁷For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95:3-7)

He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ,.. (Ephesian 1:5)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. ³You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. (Psalm 139:2-4)

...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6:8)

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

...and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. (Matthew 26:41)

¹⁴Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. ¹⁵When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them. (Psalm 91:14-15)

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. (Psalm 45:6)

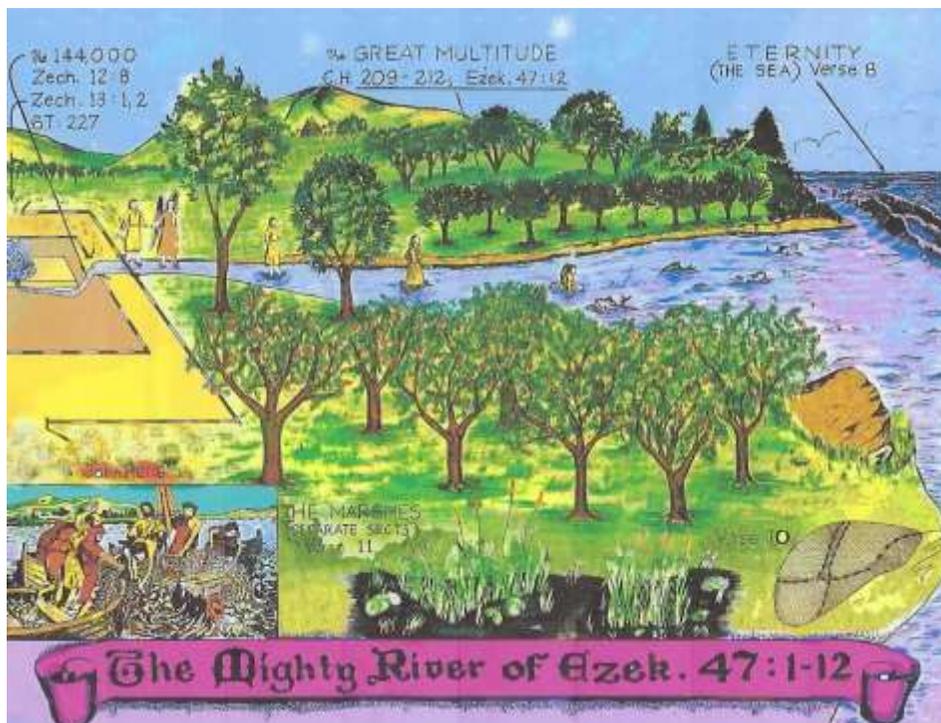
You, O LORD, rule forever; Your throne is from generation to generation. (Lamentations 5:19)

How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:3)

To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Philippians 4:20).

Reflections - The River of Life

So how big is our river of living water flowing through us?



Ezekiel 47:1-12 are prophetic passages that deal with the nation of Israel, and of the time when the Lord returns to this earth and establishes His kingdom. There is also a practical application for us as well, today. This picture of the Mighty River of Ezekiel 47:1-12¹ was used last year in a representation of the growth of our Christian walk and journey, and the life that the river of life brings.

The story of the Christian walk and journey was based on a sermon by Chris Benfield. The journey for salvation has many similarities to our journey with prayer life.

¹ https://www.pulpitpages.com/uploads/9/5/3/2/9532717/getting_in_the_deep_water_-_ez.471-12.pdf

Chris Benfield described our journey with salvation as follows:

Our journey starts by us being drawn by the Holy Spirit to the River of Life.

The river of life starts from the Holy of Holies, so too our Christian walk begins with Christ drawing us from His throne in the Holiest of Holies.

²Then he brought me out by way of the north gate..... ³And when the man went on eastward with the measuring line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were ankle-deep. ⁴Again he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the knees. Again, he measured a thousand cubits and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that reached to the loins. ⁵Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the waters had risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over or through.

We see the stream grows in volume supernaturally from the source. There are no tributaries or "feeder" streams coming into this river. Christ alone is the source of our salvation and the hope that is given through the Spirit!

The small stream of blood that flowed from His precious side became a rushing river of life! We see the progression of our journey as we are drawn and accept and grow until we are total immersed in our relationship and we have lost all control of our life through submission to the force of the River of Life.

We see that Ezekiel's unnamed guide takes Ezekiel into and through the waters. The river was not something for Ezekiel to simply look at or think about; it was something for him to enter into. The river wasn't very deep, it was up to Ezekiel's ankles, but Ezekiel was in it as much as he could be, experiencing all

the depth the river had at that point. As Ezekiel continued, at each measuring point, the river became deeper. Starting at ankle depth, then up to his knees, then his waist. At each point along the way, Ezekiel was in the river as deep as he could be. He didn't artificially sink himself into the

river, but his experience matched the actual depth of the river.

When we start in a river at ankle depth we are in control. We can feel the river, but we are comfortable. Then as we progress deeper and deeper, we feel the effects of the river, but we have not surrendered to the power of the river. We can move deeper into the river of life as we surrender ourselves to Christ through communion with Him and by the power of the Holy Spirit living within, changing us to be more like Christ. Our knees represent our prayer life, loins are where we derive strength and power in our walk – a strong relationship with the Lord. But we are still in control, we still have our feet on the ground. We experience God. We may be out of our comfort zone sometimes, but largely we are still in control. Then Ezekiel reaches a place in the river where it is impossible to stand. The point where we are no longer in control, where we have surrendered to God and where the river takes us is His will and not our own. It is beyond our ability to take charge – we are entirely dependent on God. We are continually filled throughout our souls with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

And the disciples were continually filled [throughout their souls] with joy and the Holy Spirit. (acts 13:52)

And that we walk and live habitually in the Holy Spirit, controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit.

But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; Galatians 5:16

Meyer said:

“We need the ankle-depths of walking to be exchanged for the knee-depths of praying; and these for the loin-depths of perfect purity; and these for the length, depth, breadth, and height of the love of Christ.”

When Ezekiel returns to the river bank² he sees that wherever the river flows³ it brought life. The River of Life brings life, growth, vitality, refreshment, hope, and security.

¹³And on the banks of the river on both its sides, there shall grow all kinds of trees for food; their leaf shall not fade nor shall their fruit fail [to meet the demand]. Each tree shall bring forth new fruit every month, [these supernatural qualities being] because their waters came from out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food and their leaves for healing.

I believe that we can use the same imagery to think about our prayer life.

- We go to the Father, our source of prayer – and the prayer starts in the Holy of Holies.
- We have a prayer partner – the Holy Spirit.

If we are willing, committed, devoted, in agreement, trust in the promises of God and keep focusing on Him despite the circumstances, we can bring life to the dead sea – the world. We can witness people being saved, healed and restored. Like Ezekiel when we come out of the river, we can witness the effects of our partnership with the Trinity in prayer.

Ezekiel 47:6-12

⁶And he said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me and caused me to return to the bank of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then he said to me, These waters pour out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah (the Jordan Valley) and on into the Dead Sea. And when they shall enter into the sea [the sea of putrid waters], the waters shall be healed and made fresh.

9 And wherever the double river shall go, every living creature which swarms shall live. And there shall be a very great number of fish, because these waters go there that [the waters of the sea] may be healed and made fresh; and everything shall live wherever the river goes.

10 The fishermen shall stand on [the banks of the Dead Sea]; from En-ge-di even to En-eglaim shall be a place to spread nets; their fish shall be of very many kinds, as the fish of the Great or Mediterranean Sea.

11 But its swamps and marshes will not become wholesome for animal life; they shall [as the river subsides] be left encrusted with salt and given over to it.

12 And on the banks of the river on both its sides, there shall grow all kinds of trees for food; their leaf shall not fade nor shall their fruit fail [to meet the demand]. Each tree shall bring forth new fruit every month, [these supernatural qualities being] because their waters came from out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food and their leaves for healing.

Prayer is a key work for a Christian – to bring God’s will and His Son’s authority to earth. Yes, it is work. Difficult work. It is difficult to resist our own thoughts and those around us who tell us the world’s reasons and knowledge and why we are foolish, to not speak doubt or unbelief, to stand against what our eyes see and what our heart feels and to say “Even now – I believe thatcan be restored”.

We only have to step out in prayer – and offer our 5 loaves and 2 fish [Luke 9:16](#) – we only need a crumb from the masters table [Matthew 15:27](#) or faith only as large as a mustard seed [Matthew 17:20](#). We can encourage ourselves with scripture recognising where we are. For example:

- **The even now prayer** – “Even now” – Lazarus was raised from the dead [John 11:39-40](#) – the miracle was beyond all human reason “by now there is an offensive odour”. And –2 Kings 4 when the Elisha raises the Shunammite’s son Her son had died (verses 20-21), she spoke no doubt or unbelief (verse 26) and her son was raised from the dead (verse 37).
- **Somewhere between here and there, as we take action, the miracle occurs** – The parting of the Red Sea [Exodus 14:21-22](#) and the Jordan River [Joshua 3:13](#), Elijah parting the Jordan River [2 Kings 2:8](#), and Elisha doing likewise [2 Kings 2:14](#), water changed to wine [John 2:1-11](#), ten lepers going to the priests healed [Luke 17:11-19](#). It was as the disciples gave out the bread and fish that the miracle of multiplication happened [Luke 9:16](#)
- **Little faith** – I only need a kernel of faith – the size of a mustard seed [Matthew 17:20](#) or a crumb from the master’s table [Matthew 15:27](#)
- **Unbelief** – Father I believe, help my unbelief [Mark 9:24](#).

So why is it necessary to ask when He is all powerful, especially when He already knows our needs?

Because when we ask, we are choosing to seek God’s help. We live in a fallen world. God always expected the world would be a partnership. The original plan was for it to be between man and God [Genesis 1:27-28](#).

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth. Genesis 1:27-28.

Think about the awesomeness of these statements. God who has just created the whole universe now makes us, man, that we might partner with Him and have dominion over His Creation on earth.

But mankind chooses a different partner – the serpent; the authority changes hands. Satan now has the title “the prince of this world”. Now we need to choose to partner with God. Through Christ we once again have direct access, the veil has been torn, but we still need to ask for his help. Christ demonstrated that partnership through His life.

Scripture tells us that we are wrestling with powers and principalities [Ephesians 6:12](#). An example of this battle is described in Daniel chapter 10. Daniel had fasted and prayer and continued this for three weeks [Daniel 10:2-3](#) before the answer to his prayer arrived – yet Daniel is told that his prayer was heard and answered on day one [Daniel 10:12](#). The period between day 1 and day 21 had been a battle in the heavenlies [Daniel 10:13-14](#). Satan wants us to become discouraged and all the things that we probably are! But God challenges us to be obedient and to choose to pray.

When we pray, we are asking God, through the work of His Son, Jesus, who has done the work through His life and death and

resurrection, who has defeated the enemy, to legally apply the new covenant to this situation on earth.

I believe that God hears all prayer. God heard Cornelius's prayer – a good man who feared God but who was not a saved man [Acts 10:1-8](#) until Peter came and spoke with him and he received Christ and was baptised [Acts 10:25-42](#). As Christians however, we have a special relationship. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling within, helping us pray [Romans 8:26-27](#). AND we have more authority and more rights and privileges because we have been given the keys - we need to use those keys. Jesus says ["I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."](#) ([Matthew 16:19](#)).

The keys of the kingdom is a reference to King David's time. King David destroyed the self-seeking official who held the keys to his palace and David gave the keys to house of David to his servant Eliakim. And David says ["And the key of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder; he shall open and no one shall shut, he shall shut and no one shall open \(Isaiah 22:22\)](#). The image is that Eliakim, David's servant, would have the large master key of the palace fastened to the shoulder of his tunic. The key was a picture and demonstration of the authority, the authority to open and shut which no man can oppose. Logically this implies there was only one key. Prophetically this means that there is only one set of keys to the kingdom of heaven – and the church has them. In Revelations 3:7-8 we read ["And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:.... Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut"](#).

I have mentioned Cornelius earlier a good man who feared God but who was an unsaved man – and God worked through Peter to bring the gospel to Cornelius and his household. God has chosen from the very beginning to partner with man. We are the Lord’s servants. We need to pray and then act in obedience to what we are shown to do, just as Peter acted in obedience to what he was shown to do for Cornelius or Ananias who was sent in response to Saul’s prayer to pray for Saul/Paul [Acts 9:10-19](#).

Our call to action is to act like Jesus – to be dedicated to prayer, seeking wisdom and guidance and then being obedient to the direction we receive. As the Lord said to Moses just before the parting of the Red Sea [Why do you cry to Me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward!](#) ([Exodus 14:15](#)).

Scripture references for the reflections

Feeding the five thousand

[He took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread and fish to the disciples to hand out to the crowd. Luke 9:16](#)

Canaanite woman seeking healing for her daughter

[She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the little pups \(little whelps\) eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table. Matthew 15:27](#)

With a mere kernel of faith

[For truly I say to you, if you have faith \[that is living\] like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. Matthew 17:20](#)

Raising Lazarus from the tomb

³⁹Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, exclaimed, But Lord, by this time he [is decaying and] throws off an offensive odour, for he has been dead four days!

⁴⁰Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you and promise you that if you would believe and rely on Me, you would see the glory of God? (John 11:39-40)

Elisha Raises the Shunammite's Son

She had laid her dead son on the bed

.....he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. ²¹And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him and went out. (2 Kings 4:20-21).

She went for help and was greeted by Gehazi with the questions in verses 26 “Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?” She answered, “It is all right.”

....her son was raised from death in verse 37!

Crossing the Red Sea

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea dry land; and the waters were divided. ²²And the Israelites went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left (Exodus 14:21-22).

Israel crosses the Jordan

When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord of all the earth shall rest in the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan

coming down from above shall be cut off and they shall stand in one heap (Joshua 3:13).

Elijah pasts the Jordan River

And Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up and struck the waters, and they divided this way and that, so that the two of them went over on dry ground (2 Kings 2:8).

As does Elisha

He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. (2 Kings 2:14).

The wedding at Cana – water changed to wine

John 2:1-11

Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers

Luke 17:11-19

The healing of a boy with a spirit

Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood

For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly supernatural sphere (Ephesians 6:12).

Conflict and Heavenly powers

Daniel 10

Peter and Cornelius

Acts 10: 1-8 and Acts 10:25-42

Life within – the Holy Spirit

²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

The conversion of Saul

Acts 9:10-19