

Ezekiel 47.1-12 – Where is your “go”?

Read Ezekiel 47.1–12.

Then the talk is in 7 small parts. Overall the talk is about God's calling and going deeper with God.

Video - I've Got A River Of Life at iHop

Direct link – <https://youtu.be/WS9aPQ3Ss1o>

1. Ezekiel was led

Remember that Jesus is the head (the boss!) The Bible and the Holy Spirit inside us will help guide us into God's will. He leads us and we follow. “The sheep know my name and they hear and follow” – John 10.27. “All who led by God are sons of God.” – Romans 8.14.

This reminds me of a friend who has learning difficulties. He refers to every sheep he sees as 'Baaa-bara' (Barbara)!

So in our lives we should be led by Jesus – ‘led by the head’. Jesus Christ is constantly referred to as the head and just as it should be with us, the head is where the decisions are made! So we need to ask him to guide us and then listen to what he says. Sometimes it's general advice 'forgive people' and other times it can be really specific. I've heard God say to give an exact amount of money to a charity, for example.

It's equally important that when we're led, we follow and that we line up with God's timings. I remember God saying to me, ‘go now’ when I was going into a city centre in the car. I hesitated and when I got to the city centre road, the last free parking space was just being taken. If I'd gone straight away I would have got that last space.

Back in Ezekiel 43 we see God giving the instructions for the temple. God spoke about who he is (his character), what he'll do (in the future) and about seeing God's glory (seeing who God really is). It's interesting that Ezekiel heard a voice from the ‘inside’ of the temple. This is often how God speaks to us – by the Holy Spirit in us. Often it's a quite nudge or prompt or a feeling about something. Over time we learn what's God although we often miss his voice. But don't give up or be too hard on yourself. Keep doing your best to hear God and follow him. He understands we don't always get it right and he doesn't mind.

Seeing who God is leads to seeing what he wants us to do.

2. The River flowed from under the walls of the temple.

Derek Prince wrote a book called, ‘The way up is down’. God says ‘humble yourselves under God's mighty hand and he will exalt you in due time.’

Humbling yourself means putting God first. It's about doing what God wants first and over other things. Sometimes people have thought of this as being hard on yourself and saying things like, 'God I'm not worthy'. That can be good but someone has explained humility as this and it's pretty true:

'Humility isn't thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.'

The Bible also says that as we humble ourselves, God will lift us up. Jesus encouraged us not just to serve but be a slave. So by 'slave' he doesn't mean that you have to have a 'slave master' or that God is anything like a slave master. This isn't about you being controlled by someone else and having to obey them. This is an active choice that we have to choose. So we choose to serve. We choose to help. We choose to do things that others wouldn't do. The world is full of people that need help. If you help others, you'll never be short of anything to do, people to care for, or people who love you.

Derek Prince used to say 'it's better to humble yourself than have God do it for you.'

3. Water flowed from the temple entrance through the gates.

The source of the water was from the temple.

Back when David planned and Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the most important and holy part was the 'holy of holys'. This was a place where there was no light because it was lit by the glory of God. Only the priest could enter, wearing purple to represent the meeting of earth / man (red) and God (blue).

Today, God calls us living 'temples' of God. Today, one of the ways the glory of God shines out into the world is from this place in us (our spirits) and out from us (doing good, speaking life, praying for people, healings, comforting others, helping those in need).

This is why God tells us to guard our hearts and to take care of our 'temple.' (Proverbs 4.23). Guarding our heart is like standing guard at our hearts and mind and not allowing evil to get in – just as the guard at a building didn't let the enemy in.

The Bible tells us that our bodies are not our own – they belong to God. (1 Corinthians 6.19–20)

The water flowed through the gates and this talks about Jesus being the boss of what happens in our lives and through us. John 10.9 says Jesus is the gate. The water flows where God directs it to flow.

How do we enter these gates? By thanking God and praising him in worship (Psalm 100.4). This is a two stage process. We enter his gates with thanksgiving (for what he's done) and with praise (for who he is). I love listening to worship, playing along and leading. I watch Bethel videos on Youtube or Hillsong – and download various albums. These helps me connect with God, get infused with his life and passion.

What goes in must come out (spiritually speaking!) So when we put God 'in' to us or think about him - then it's God that flows 'out' of us!

4. Importance of 'seeing' throughout the Bible.

The Bible tells us that we walk by faith and not by sight

Does this mean we walk around with our eyes closed? Probably not a good idea, so no...

Just imagine you're a world famous pianist. You've been practising for months for an important Royal wedding. And now here you are on stage in front of thousands - tens of millions are watching live on TV and on the internet. You play and the music flows from the piano, leaving people speechless and in tears of joy. The happy Royal couple look on and thank you. You bow as the audience cheers and the world applauds.

That story just fed your imagination – the part of your mind that 'sees'. The Holy Spirit often speaks to us so we 'see' things in our mind that we may not see physically. This is what the Bible means by walking by faith and not by sight.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah said there would be rain after a long drought. He knew the rain was coming and he could see it in his mind by faith. God had said and God is true so it would happen! Elijah's servant couldn't physically see the rain. The servant of Elijah only saw the rain cloud the seventh time he went to look (1 Kings 18.44). Elijah had already seen it! Maybe it takes 7 times longer to see things physically than spiritually!

In 2 Kings 6 it records when a prophet called Elisha and his servant were being surrounded by a vast army who wanted to capture them. Elisha wasn't worried because he could see there were more angels there than the enemy army. But his servant couldn't see anything. Elisha prayed and asked God to allow his servant to 'see' the angels, which he did.

It's been said before that the world system is where seeing is believing. But very often the Kingdom of God involves the opposite – it's where believing is seeing. First we often 'see' with our mind's eye and then we see things physically.

5. Ezekiel was brought 'out' of the north gate.

The purpose of the flow of the water from the temple was 'out'.

I recently watched a feature on a couple who had been to a conference and heard the speaker talking on Matthew 28.19 where Jesus says, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel, making disciples...' They were struck by the word 'Go'. They'd planned a retirement to a beautiful snowy cottage in Poland but when they went back to it, they just weren't interested. They ended up setting up a Bible college in Poland, translating books and more.

So the question is 'where is your 'go' – the place God's calling you to go'.

God is always calling us to go 'out' and go with the flow of God's river of life.

The depth and width of the river in Ezekiel 47 increased the further away from the temple Ezekiel went. The deeper and further out we go, the greater the reward. Jesus told Peter to push out into the deep to get a greater catch of fish in Luke 5.4.

So in Ezekiel 47 we see that the water was ankle deep, knee deep, waist deep and then very deep. The further 'out' they went, the deeper the water got. It also tells us that we can get out into God's currents and it feel unsafe, uncertain and we can feel out of control. These are not necessarily bad things and not necessarily signs that God isn't right there with us or even leading us into the crazy white water currents!

6. The man leading Ezekiel kept measuring things

The man leading Ezekiel kept on measuring the depth of the water. As they went deeper, it was exactly a thousand 'cubits' each time. This tells us that God is a God of order. He is in control and knows exactly what is happening.

Our universe is one of order – it has a start and an end and is full of the signs that it was created by a creator – God. Just as computers are made up of zeros and ones, so the universe has been ordered. In 2009, a researcher won the Templeton Prize for fundamentally suggesting that reality goes beyond the three dimensions we can see (this is what the Bible says too) and effectively pointed to the hand of a creator.

The point for us is that God is in control. Everything comes down to trust. Do we trust God?

River that nobody could cross leads to abundance

As they went further away from the temple, they eventually saw a river that no-one could cross. That was one seriously wide river!

Many times in the Bible, the world and the people in the world are referred to as the 'sea'. Ezekiel 47 is an example of the power of the gospel (good news about Jesus) to impact massive numbers of people. On earth today there are tens of millions of Christians and it's increasing! Add to this all the people who have known God before and all the people that will come to know God. It's a huge number – a sea that we can't even imagine. Yet this sea is inside a much greater land of amazing good things.

One of the prophecies about Jesus from Isaiah that we often read at Christmas tells us about an increase of God's government that will never end, in this time and into eternity with God (Isaiah 9.7). We see how the gospel will spread and impact every nation, tribe and tongue. The Bible says that then the end will come. So we should spend time, money and effort seeing the Gospel spread to every tribe and tongue – that people's people in your neighbourhood from around the world as well as people from across the globe.

At the end of the river there were fish, life, swarms of living creatures, fruit trees growing. With God, there is always more and it never ends!

Christmas Video – Isaiah and Jesus – <https://youtu.be/Fkm5BeKFk-4>

Despite people's attempts to silence God and push him out, you cannot cross (cannot mess with) God! The only way is to come across God through the Cross. So the best way to meet God is to say yes to him being the boss in our lives!

Finally, let's conclude

Ezekiel 47 is a journey into God's leading, his heart and his abundance for us. The leaves on the trees do not wither and the fruit does not fail (see also Psalm 1 and Revelation 22.1–5).

The freshness is in the fact of connection to the water with the temple as the source. Out of this comes fruit, life, food and healing!