



**Greetings. Where do you have your quiet time?** You know, that place where you and God meet? You have one I assume? Some of my finest times have been by a river. I have found it interesting to stand next to a river and take a look at the surrounding environment. On many a safe river (and safe

riverbank) one can sometimes see in the summer children swimming freely in the river. Perhaps some men were enjoying an afternoon of fishing activity, undisturbed by the noises coming from the playful children. Possibly in previous years (or you are out camping) you might see some people washing their clothes in the river. On many a river there are lots of trees, bushes, flowers, birds and various animals that live their lives on the river.

*'Mole (He) thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before-- this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver--glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. (The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame)*



**Along the riverbank, there is life.** Rivers are significant, for “where the river flows, it brings life.” We have a river within us, too. Whether this river is alive and flowing or has marshes and swamps in our lives. **Ezekiel 47:1-12** describes this river within us that flows from the Sanctuary of God. God was showing Ezekiel the meaning and the purpose of the river.

**The Source of the River. Ezekiel 47:1** tells us that the source of the river comes from the sanctuary of God. In the Old Testament, the sanctuary is a physical temple of God. But God moves Himself from a physical temple into our heart. The Bible says that our body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

He is here to stay in us when we accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour. The Holy Spirit is a seal of our identity as the child of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ. Now, in us, flows this river and the source of the river is the Holy Spirit. But this river must flow out of us and whether it is gushing out of us, will depend on our spiritual walk with our Father. In order for the river to gush out of us, we must make room for the Holy Spirit to fill us and lead us in our walk every day. We can impede the Holy Spirit, or we can allow the Holy Spirit to take control of us.

**The Course of the River: Ezekiel was shown the river.** He was also led by the angel out from the temple into the river. First, the water was up to his ankles. Then as he walked deeper into the river, the water came up to his knees. He walked further into the river, the water came up to his waist and eventually it was too deep for him to walk

in the river. He has to swim. As the river flows, it does not get wider and wider. Instead, as it flows, it cuts deeper and deeper into the land. As we choose to walk with God, we will find that your life becomes stronger and deeply rooted in God and His word. It also means that you begin to trust God more and more because in the deep river, you cannot walk and touch the ground, you can only swim. When there are no more steps to stand on, we need to let go of ourselves and learn to rely on God to guide you across the river. Depth and substance are what God wants to build in us, not width and more material wealth. These are just the by-products of seeking God first. If we are not anchored in God, we will find ourselves struggling to keep alive by swimming but eventually our strength will wear out and we will drown from fatigue.

**The Marshes and Swamps that Stop the River Flows.** As the river flows, there will be obstacles and hindrances that prevent the river from flowing on. When the river stops to flow, it forms into swamps and marshes. This 'dead sea' is no good to anyone as the water is too salty for any use. It cannot be used for drinking. It cannot be used for providing nutrients to the growth of plants and food. It's basically useless. In our lives, we must beware of swamps and marshes that hinder our personal relationship with God. These swamps and marshes thwart the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us to others. When these swamps and marshes are built up over time, nothing living can grow in it. No life will flow from us and everything we touch ceases to bring life and draw others to God.

**There is power in the flow of the river.** The force of the river brings life. The amount of flow will depend on how much we are willing to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. **There must also be life in us.** If the force of a flowing river is powerful, all kinds of plants will grow alongside it and bear fruits. **These fruits become food for us.** When we walk with God, our lives will become fruitful as we do good works. Through our good works, it becomes food for our spiritual growth and for others to be helped and encouraged.

We become "medicine" for others who needed a helping hand, a listening ear, and a shoulder to cry on. As we help the poor and needy, we bring healing to their souls through our kindness, love, compassion. They will see God and the goodness of God through you. But if you are a dead sea, there is no output from a dead sea except lots of salt. And we know the more salt you take, the thirstier you become, and you will die from lack of water.

**"Once upon a time,"** began a story by *Peter Marshall*, "a certain town grew up at the foot of a mountain range. It was sheltered in the lee of the protecting heights, so that the wind that shuddered at the doors and flung handfuls of sleet against the windowpanes was a wind whose fury was spent. High up in the hills, a strange and quiet forest dweller took it upon himself to be the Keeper of the Springs. He patrolled the hills and wherever he found a spring, he cleaned its brown pool of silt and fallen leaves, of mud and mould and took away from the spring all foreign matter, so that the water which bubbled up through the sand ran down clean and cold and pure. It leaped, sparkling over rocks and dropped joyously in crystal cascades until, swollen by other streams; it became a river of life to the busy town."

The Reverend Dr. Peter Marshall (May 27, 1902 – January 26, 1949) was a Scottish-American preacher, and twice served as Chaplain of the United States Senate. He is remembered most popularly from the biography *A Man Called Peter*.

Marshall went on to tell how that in an economy mood the town fathers decided not to continue to pay the Keeper of the Springs, thinking that his work was of no significance. The result was that the pools soon became clogged with leaves and silt and slime. The water did not flow as freely as before and even that which did reach the town was not as pure and clean. Because of the lack of water, the town and the valley began to die. Only then did the people realize their mistake. Marshall's story concluded, *"Again they sought out the Keeper of the Springs and begged him to return to his former joyous labour. Gladly he agreed, and once more the pools began to send their pure water liltng down the mountain sides."*



**We began this newsletter by talking about rivers and water.** Christ often spoke of water: "but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. (John 7:37). "He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to

drink...eternal life." (John 4:14). On the last and greatest day of the Feast, To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. (Rev. 21:6). The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. (Rev. 22:17).

**The spiritual water of life is the most precious commodity known to man, and it is our responsibility to insist that we keep it pure and clean.** Only when we stay close to the source of spiritual light, the inspired scriptures, can we be sure that we are keepers of the springs.

God has positioned us where we can become the channel for the river of life to flow through and out of us to bring life to others around us. Ask yourself whether your life is full of swamps, marshes or a dead sea.

**Or, is your life a flowing river or a still river?** If you have not allowed the Holy Spirit to take control of your life today, will you go before God and ask Him to fill you with His Spirit to make you a living river? **It is never too late to do so.**

### **Ezekiel 47:1- The River From the Temple (NIV)**

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

<sup>3</sup> As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup> He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. <sup>5</sup> He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was

deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. <sup>6</sup> He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. <sup>8</sup> He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh.<sup>9</sup> Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the saltwater fresh; so where the river flows everything will live.<sup>10</sup> Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. <sup>11</sup> But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. <sup>12</sup> Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

### **Holy Alphabet**

**A**lthough things are not perfect  
**B**ecause of trial or pain  
**C**ontinue in thanksgiving  
**D**o not begin to blame  
**E**ven when the times are hard  
**F**ierce winds are bound to blow  
**G**od is forever able  
**H**old on to what you know  
**I**magine life without His love  
**J**oy would cease to be  
**K**eep thanking Him for all the things  
**L**ove imparts to thee  
**M**ove out of "Camp Complaining"  
**N**o weapon that is known  
**O**n earth can yield the power  
**P**raise can do alone  
**Q**uit looking at the future  
**R**edeem the time at hand  
**S**tart every day with worship  
**T**o "thank" is a command  
**U**ntil we see Him coming  
**V**ictorious in the sky  
**W**e'll run the race with gratitude  
**X**alting God most high  
**Y**es, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but...  
**Z**ion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!