

Everything You Need is in the River
Pastor Joe Oakley
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Last week Pastor Anthony preached an awesome message about killing giants based on the life of King David. In that sermon he brought out a point I had never heard before – that David went to the river to get the stones he needed to fight Goliath. The point was that the weapons of our warfare are in the river of God's presence in worship. Our ammunition is in the river!

That got me thinking about what else is in the river. So, I started thinking about tribes who live along the river. Their whole sustenance comes from the river. Their water – their food – their transportation – their bathing.

By the way, did you ever wonder why cities are located where they are? The answer is they were always settled near water. London has the River Thames, Paris has the Seine, Rome has the Tiber. Dallas has the Trinity River and Ft. Worth has the West Fork of the Trinity.

Later on in history, rivers provided power. First in the form of water wheels that provided energy to mills and later rivers were dammed up so water could fall through turbines to generate electricity. The point is that civilization is dependent upon rivers. Rivers provide water, food, transportation, power and many other necessities.

The same thing is true in the Kingdom of God. Our spiritual food and water – our cleansing – our power – are all found in the river. That's why I'm preaching a messaged entitled Everything You Need is in the River.

What do I mean by river? What is the river of God and how to we get in it? Well, let's look at some key verses. In John 4:14, Jesus said:

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 to eternal life.

The river of God is something that is available to all believers who have received eternal life through faith in Christ. Jesus also said in John 7:38-39:

Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit.

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ – we have the Holy Spirit living in us. But God also wants to baptize us – fill us to overflowing – with the Holy Spirit so that the river is in us and flows through us to touch others!

Psalm 46:4-5 says:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her...

This indicates that the river of God is the manifest presence of God. Remember – the omnipresence of God means He’s everywhere. The inner presence of God is the Holy Spirit within us. But the manifest presence of God is when God reveals Himself in an obvious way like in worship or through the gifts of the Spirit.

That’s why our vision statement is Touching Heaven – Changing Earth. Touching heaven is all about the manifest presence of God. Touching heaven is all about the river of God! When we gather to worship, our priority is to get in the river of God’s presence. Then we want that river to flow out and change the earth. That’s because everything we need is in the river!!!

This week I did a Bible search to find all the benefits to being in the river of God’s presence. Remember, the river is synonymous with the presence of God.

1- There is joy in the river –

Remember Psalm 46:4-5 says...

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

Psalm 16:11 says –

In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. So when we lose our joy – we lose our strength. That is the time to get in the river of God’s presence! That is where you find joy!

2- There is peace in the river –

Isaiah 66:9 says:

For this is what the Lord says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream."

Years ago we sang a song that said, I’ve got peace like a river. That peace is found in the river of God’s presence. The times you lose your peace are the times you lose awareness of the presence of God. The only way to get your peace back is to get back in the river!

3- There is rest in the river –

1 John 3:19 says: ... *we set our hearts at rest in His presence.*

Believers should live their lives in a state of rest rather than unrest! And rest is only found in the presence of God.

4- There is healing in the river of God's presence –

Revelation 22:1-2 says:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Where the river of God flows – healing flows!

5- We experience change in the river God's presence –

2 Corinthians 3:18 says:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We are changed in the presence of God because:

6- There is power in the river God's presence –

Psalms 63:1-4 says:

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and your glory. Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You. I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands.

This Psalm was written by King David. David is known for many things: for killing Goliath, for writing most of the Psalms, for being the king of Israel. David was a great leader and a mighty warrior. But at his heart – David was first and foremost a worshipper! David shows us being a mighty man and a worshipper go hand in hand. David was not a wimpy worshipper. He worshipped with all his heart and all his might.

In fact, in Acts 13:22 God said David was *a man after My own heart*.

The word “after” can mean “to pursue” or it can mean “to be like.” So, which is it? Is it pursuing God or becoming like God? It's both! When you pursue the presence of God you become more like God!

Oh – for a church full of men, women and children who pursue the heart of God – the presence of God – the river of God! I’m glad the men in our church worship in the presence of God. They don’t think praise and worship is just for women and children. They don’t think worship is for wimps.

Before David became king – the king of Israel was a weak, wimpy man named Saul. Saul did not have a heart after God and he did not care about being in God’s presence. So God replaced Saul with David, a man after God’s own heart who hungered for the presence of God. And when David became King – the first thing he did is found in 1 Chron. 13:3 where he said:

Let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we did not inquire of it during the reign of Saul.

Saul reigned for 40 years and ignored the presence of God. When David became king, one of the first things he did was seek the presence of God. It was not because he needed gold – he already had plenty. He did not need a box or a religious artifact. What he wanted and needed was the manifest presence of God.

David did not just wait around for God to show up – He went after God – He had a heart after God. He wanted to live his life in the presence of God. So – when he brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem – he placed it in a tent on Mount Zion called the Tabernacle of David where praise and worship went on non-stop 24/7 for 40 years!

The most important part of the Tabernacle of David was the ark of the covenant. What’s the big deal about the Ark? Exodus 25:22 says:

There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all My commands...

The ark of the covenant was where God manifest His presence. The ark did not represent God’s presence – it literally was the place where God revealed Himself on earth.

A major change happened with the Tabernacle of David. Before that, the presence of God was hidden from the people. But now it was an option for all the people to worship in the manifest presence of God. In the past, the presence of God was only open to the high priest. Now, the presence of God is open to all who choose to come in. Everyone can get in the river!!!

By the way, David did not always feel like praising! He chose to praise – even when it was a sacrifice. David chose to worship no matter what the circumstances. He turned every situation in his life into a praise party! He had learned how to practice the presence of God. And so can you! Because everything you need is in the river!

In Ezekiel 47:1-12 Ezekiel had a vision of the river of God.

I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple... 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. 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. 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.

He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh. 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 salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live.

This sea is the Dead Sea where absolutely nothing can live. This shows us that:

7- There is supernatural life in the river of God!

Wherever the river flows there is life and abundance.
That's because Jesus is the river of life.

Where the river flows, those things that were dead will now live. The dead places in our lives will be revived. So, if you feel spiritually stagnant – get in the river of God! Get in the presence of God and let Him revive you. Not only that – but

8- Evangelism happens in the river!

Ezekiel said:

Fishermen will stand along the shore...there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds — like the fish of the Great Sea.

We don't get in the river just so we can have a good time at church! The river is also about reaching the lost. We are fishers of men and when the river is flowing, there will be many fish to catch. Many churches try to stay out of the river because they believe they will reach more people that way. But the word of God says that people are saved where the river flows!

9- There is also fruitfulness in the river. Ezekiel said:

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, because the

water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.

This represents people who immerse themselves in God's word. You won't grow without immersing yourself in the Word of God. And the Bible makes it clear that God wants you to keep growing.

Psalms 1:3 says:

...those who delight themselves in the word will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

Not only does being in the river make us fruitful – but Ezekiel says:

Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.

10- That means our food is in the river!

Notice that the river flows from the sanctuary – the place of worship! When our hearts are a sanctuary for the presence of God - when we immerse ourselves in Jesus and His word - the fruit in our lives will feed ourselves and others and we will be instruments of healing.

The river that flowed from the temple of God was first ankle deep, then it was knee deep then it was waist deep, then it was a river that was deep enough to swim in. My encouragement to you is to take a step deeper in the river of God. You see, walking in water that is only ankle deep requires little effort. But if you want more of God, you can't stay in ankle deep water.

When our grandson Kristian was 4-years-old he had swimming lessons. At first all he would do was sit on the first step of the pool. It was about two inches deep. It took his instructor days to coax him off that step. Kristian had to learn to trust him first. His instructor would stand right in front of him and holding his hand and Kristian would jump into his arms yelling, "Look I did it, I'm swimming." He wasn't really swimming yet, but little by little Kristian responded to the call of his instructor to go deeper. And now he swims like a fish!

Some of us are like Kristian – sitting in ankle deep water. But God is calling us deeper into the river. Psalms 42:7 says:

Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and breakers have swept over me.

You should not stay ankle deep forever. The Christian life is progressive. We go from milk to meat. From glory to glory and from faith to faith. We start out ankle deep, then knee deep, then waist deep then we're in over our heads.

Ephesians 4:13 says we grow:

...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

God wants us to attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We're not there yet – so God is calling us deeper into the river. In fact, God is always drawing us deeper into the river of His presence. Because everything we need is in the river!

David knew that everything was in the river of God's presence. He knew that God inhabits praise. And God will inhabit your praise too! So, if you're in a situation that requires the power of God's presence – get in the river through praise and worship. Don't wait for the atmosphere to change to begin praising – you change the atmosphere by praising. The presence of God and the presence of Satan cannot inhabit the same space!

That brings me back to the beginning of this message where I said your weapons and ammunition are in the river! That means-

11- Victory over your enemy begins in the river!

God inhabits the praises of His people and God's presence drives out the enemy - so start praising! God is looking for people who will praise him no matter what – who will worship him in spite of circumstances, not because of circumstances. God is looking for those who have what I call “yet I will rejoice” faith. I get that from Habakkuk 3:17-19:

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.*

This means that in spite of total economic collapse – yet I will rejoice in the Lord! He'll make my feet like deer's feet. What does that mean? It means there may be a mountain ahead, but God will give me the feet to climb it. There may be a valley ahead, but God will give me the strength to cross it. There may be an ocean ahead, but if necessary - God will give me fins and gills to swim it.

Whatever I'm going to face, God's going to get me through. So – no matter what happens – I will rejoice! In the good times – I will rejoice! In tough times – I will rejoice! When gas prices go down to a dollar a gallon – I will rejoice! But if they go up to \$25 a pint – yet I will rejoice! I've made up my mind – God is good all the time – He is worthy of praise all the time – so in all times I will rejoice in the Lord my God!

Because everything I need is in the river!!
Joy and peace are in the river!
Rest is in the river!
Healing is in the river!
Change is in the river!
Power is in the river!
Life is in the river!
Evangelism is in the river!
Food and fruitfulness are in the river!

Our first priority is to seek the Kingdom of God and get in the river of God! When we do that, God provides everything we need because everything we need is in the river!