


The secret of happiness...

- “The secret of happiness is low expectations.”
 - Consider winter in Michigan
- What might be a problem with having low expectations?
- Where are we tempted to have low expectations?
- What are our expectations for our lives in Christ?
 - ...for our church?
 - ...for His Church around the world?

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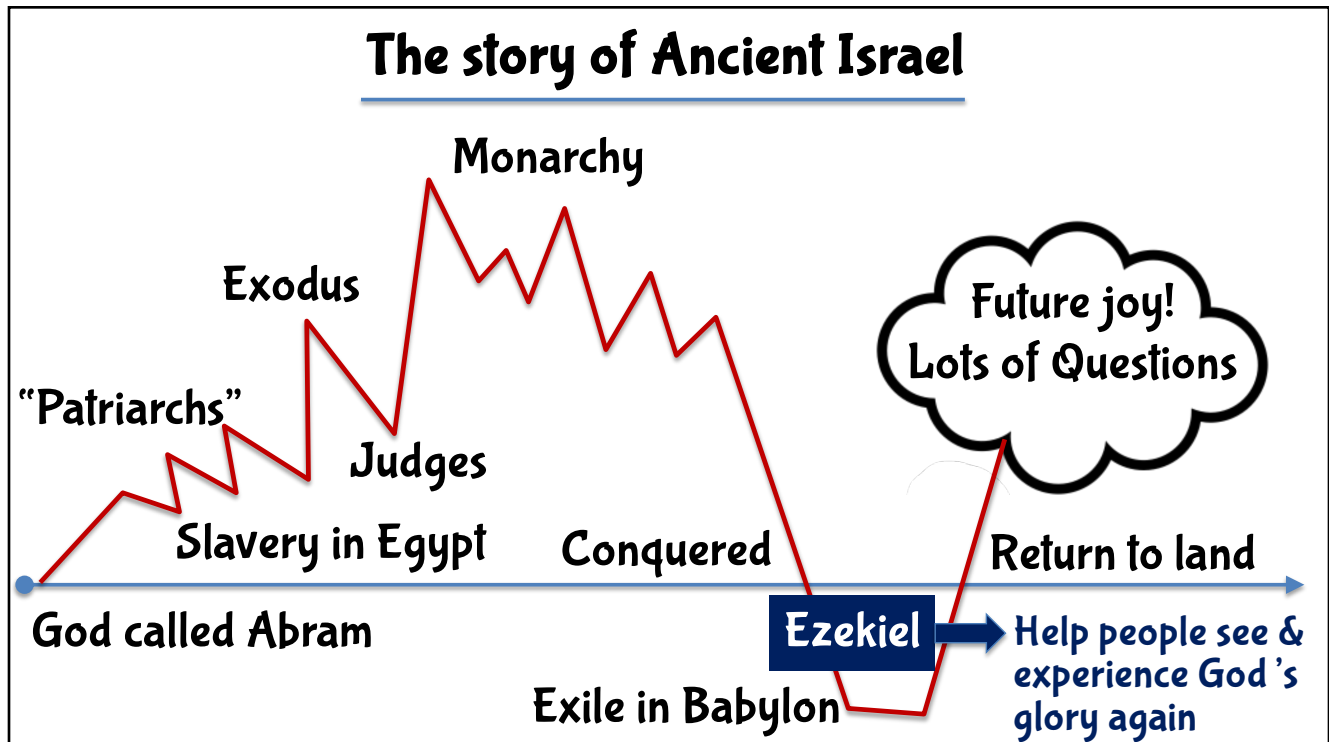


Superabounding Life

Ezekiel 47:1-12

bib.ly/Eze47.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

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Cultural Context: Water

- In most of Israel, water is scarce, yet necessary for life
 - Rivers, yet they dry up in the dry season (“wadis”)
 - Rain, yet it often didn’t rain
 - Cisterns, yet useless without a water source
 - Wells, yet they can dry up
- Some water is “bitter” and doesn’t give life
 - Dead Sea: so much salt, nothing lives

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 - Arabah: the “dead land” around the Dead Sea

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The Garden of Eden as the source of water

“Streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground” *Genesis 2:6*

“A **river watering the garden flowed from Eden**; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

The name of the first is the **Pishon**....

The name of the second river is the **Gihon**....

The name of the third river is the **Tigris**...

And the fourth river is the **Euphrates.**” *Genesis 2:10-14*

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**God showed Ezekiel what was coming
so He would tell the people**

Ezekiel 40: A messenger appeared to Ezekiel

“Son of man,
look carefully
and listen closely
and pay attention

to everything I am going to show you, for that is why you have been brought here. Tell the people of Israel everything you see.”

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Ezekiel 47:1-2

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. 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.

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*Ezekiel 47:1-12***1-2:** A trickle of water from the temple

- Threshold: place of the presence of God
- Trickle: related to the world for a vial or flask
- Hardly enough water to help a single person!

3-6a:

6b-12:

14

Ezekiel 47:3-6a

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?”

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Ezekiel 47:1-12

1-2: A trickle of water from the temple

3-6a: Becomes an uncrossable river

- Cubit is roughly 1/2 meter, so he was measuring every 500 meters
 - So in 2 km (1.2 miles), it was too deep to wade, and too wide to swim across!
 - That is dramatic growth!
- Invitation to contemplate this unique water source
 - “Are you paying attention?”
- Yet not all water is good water...

6b-12:

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Ezekiel 47:6b-9

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 Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty 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.

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Ezekiel 47:10-12

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. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 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.”

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Ezekiel 47:1-12

1-2: A trickle of water from the temple

3-6a: Becomes an uncrossable river

6b-12: That brings an overwhelming abundance of life!

- Echoes of Genesis 1
- **“where the river flows, everything will live”!**
- Salt is important as well as fresh water
 - Preservation
 - Religious practices
 - The pessimist thinks: maybe that life-giving work will bring too much of a good thing ☺
- Sounds like John’s vision in Revelation...

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Just like the New Heaven & New Earth

“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.**” *Revelation 22:1-2*

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As Jesus promised to each believer...

Jesus said, “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, **rivers of living water will flow from within them.**” By this he meant **the Spirit**, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

John 7:38-39

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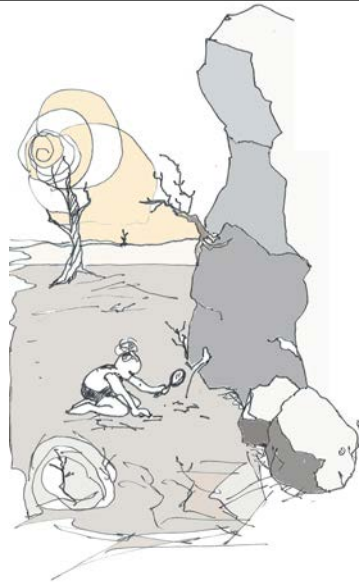
The Big Idea

**The Holy Spirit brings
overwhelmingly abundant life and healing
wherever He goes,
though we often
hope for too little,
despise the small beginnings,
or give up before it comes**

22

**That which is dry
and wrong
so often
seems so strong!**

**The good can
seem like a tiny
trickle that will be
swallowed up**



23

**That which is dry
and wrong
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**The good can
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**Yet the tiny trickle
that flows from
Christ becomes a
mighty river!**

**And where the
river flows,
everything
will live!**

24

The Big Idea

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overwhelmingly abundant life and healing
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though we often
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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit

- Jesus said: “whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a **spring of water welling up** to eternal life.” *John 4:13-14*
 - “Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, **rivers of living water** will flow from within them” *John 7:38*
 - “Sir, give me this water!”
 - Which part of you and me is better off without this??
 - The Holy Spirit lives in every true believer in Jesus Christ!
- So why doesn't it always feel like this superabounding life?

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit

Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!

- Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, but Martha was worried...
- “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you **that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?**” *John 11:39-40*
- **He is able to do far beyond all we could imagine!**
 - Yet I wonder if he can keep the smell down

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit

Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!

Rejoice in small beginnings

- Jesus said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a **mustard seed**, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” *Matthew 13:31-32*
- Again: “The kingdom of heaven is like **yeast** that a woman took and mixed into about **sixty pounds of flour** until it worked all through the dough.” *Matthew 13:33*

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit
Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!

Rejoice in small beginnings

- The Church will include **an uncountable multitude** from every nation, tribe, people and language
- Yet like a **tiny mustard seed**, it often exists like a **trickle**, hidden from human view, like **yeast** buried in the dough
- Most every work of God begins like a tiny trickle
 - Samuel heard what he thought was a voice in the next room
 - **Yet God was speaking directly to Samuel!!**
- By faith, we rejoice in the tiny seed and the tiny trickle, **knowing what it will become**

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit
Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!

Rejoice in small beginnings**Don't fear anything that resists the Holy Spirit!**

- If God is at work in us, who or what can stop His work?
- Not even death, or angels or demons, or any powers, or anything in all creation!
- Not a pandemic or our political opponents
- Not military powers, or hackers, or media powers, or fake news, or artificial intelligence, or anything else
- Not even our weaknesses or failings can stop the life and growth of Christ's Church

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit
Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!
Rejoice in small beginnings
Don't fear anything that resists the Holy Spirit!
Do "little things" in the Spirit with boldness & faith!

- Being patient and kind is part of the flow of Living Water
- Praying is part of the flow of Living Water
- Worshiping God is part of the flow of Living Water
- An act of justice or generosity, trusting God rather than being afraid, blessing instead of cursing, is part of the flow of Living Water of the Holy Spirit

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Application

Rejoice in the gift of the life-giving Holy Spirit
Genuinely trust in the limitless power of God!
Rejoice in small beginnings
Don't fear anything that resists the Holy Spirit!
Do "little things" in the Spirit with boldness & faith!
And expect to see the mighty hand of God!

- In His time and in His way
- Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that **if you believe, you will see the glory of God?**" *John 11:40*
- "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." *John 15:8*

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**The Holy Spirit brings
overwhelmingly abundant life and
healing wherever He goes,
though we often
hope for too little,
despise the small beginnings,
or give up before it comes**

33

What are we hoping to see God do?

What are we asking God to do?

“You do not have

because **you do not ask God.**

When you ask, you do not receive,

because **you ask with wrong motives,**

that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

James 4:2b-3

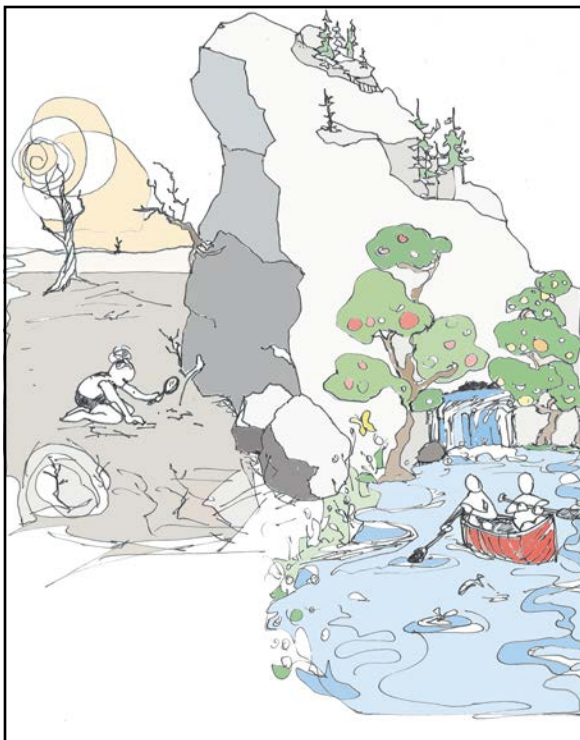
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“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**”

Luke 11:9-13

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The secret to true and lasting happiness is NOT low expectations!

It is having the source of true joy living inside us, and empowering our lives!

“Be FILLED with the Spirit!”

“And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

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What are we trusting God to do in 2021?

- So often I pray and hope for myself and for people in my life...
 - that we'll find a way to make it through
 - that God will give us that extra boost we need to do what is good and pleasing to Him
- Yet I am convinced that God wants **a life-giving river to flow that is so much deeper and wider and more abounding in life!**

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“Now to him who is able to do **immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**, according to his power that is at work within us (the Holy Spirit), **to him be glory** in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

Ephesians 3:20-21

“Father, glorify your name!”

“May your Kingdom come and your will be done!”

“Enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness!”

May we overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit!

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overwhelmingly abundant life and
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