

Superabounding Life!

Ezekiel 47:1-12

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?

The Story of Ancient Israel

God called Abram / “Patriarchs” / Slavery in Egypt / Exodus / Judges / Monarchy / Conquered / Exile in Babylon / Return to land / Future joy! Lots of Questions

Ezekiel: Help people see & experience God’s glory again

Cultural Context: Water

In most of Israel, water is scarce, yet necessary for life

Rivers, yet they dry up in the dry season (a “wadi”)

Rain, yet it often doesn’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

Arabah: the “dead land” around the Dead Sea

The Garden of Eden as the source of water: *Genesis 2:6, 10-14*



Ezekiel 40

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

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: 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

Yet not all water is good water...

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

Sounds like John’s vision in Revelation 22:1-2

As Jesus promised to each believer in John 7:38-39

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**

That which is dry and wrong so often seems so strong!
The good can seem like a tiny trickle that will be swallowed up
Yet the tiny trickle that flows from Christ becomes a mighty river!
And where the river flows, everything will live!



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?

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

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*

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

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

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

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*

The secret...

What are we hoping to see God do? What are we asking God to do?

James 4:2b-3; Luke 11:9-13

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.”

What are we trusting God to do in 2021?

Ephesians 3:20-21

Reflection Questions

1. Where are you tempted to have low expectations for the work of God? Why might that be?
2. What things do you fear might have the power to stop the overwhelmingly abundant life and healing that God is bring through his Holy Spirit? What does that say about your trust in God?
3. What “little things” will you do with boldness and faith, believing that they are a part of the flow of the Living Water of God, bringing His Kingdom and His will
4. What will you pray with boldness for God to do, according to His Word, for His glory?