

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (2)

The Flow of Life with the Ministry of Life out from and for the Magnificent House of God (Message 22)

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 47:1-12; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 9:11; 3:6, 9; 4:15;
3:2, 12

- I. In order to participate in God's ultimate move, we need to experience the flow of life out from the house of God—Ezek. 47:1-12:
 - A. God's ultimate move is His move in man to deify man by saturating man with all that He is in His life, nature, element, and essence for the glory, the expression, of God—2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.
 - B. The water flows out from under the threshold—Ezek. 47:1:
 1. In order for the water to flow, there must be a threshold, an opening—cf. Psa. 81:10.
 2. If we draw closer to the Lord and have more contact with Him, there will be an opening that will allow the living water to flow out from the church—*Hymns*, #846.
 - C. The flow is toward the east—Ezek. 47:1:
 1. The river of God flows in the direction of God's glory—cf. Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2.
 2. If everyone in the church seeks and cares for God's glory, the living water will flow out from the church—John 7:18; 1 Cor. 10:31.
 - D. The water flows out from the right side of the house—Ezek. 47:1:
 1. In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place—cf. Heb. 1:3.
 2. The flow of life must have the preeminence within us, becoming the controlling factor in our living and work—Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b.
 - E. The flowing is by the side of the altar, showing that we need the dealing of the cross and a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life—Ezek. 47:1. [260]
 - F. For the increase of the flow of life, we need to be measured by the Lord as the man of bronze—40:3; 47:2-5; Rev. 1:15; cf. John

7:37-39:

1. To measure is to examine, test, judge, and possess—[Isa. 6:1-8](#); [Ezek. 42:20](#).
 2. The four measurings of a thousand cubits, which is a complete unit (cf. [Psa. 84:10](#)), indicate that as creatures we need to be thoroughly measured by the Lord so that He may take over and thoroughly possess our entire being—[Ezek. 47:2-5](#).
 3. The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes; the depth of the flow depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord—cf. [1 John 1:5, 7](#).
 4. The more we are measured by the Lord, the more we are restricted and limited by the flowing of the grace of life until eventually we are lost in and carried along by the flowing Triune God as a river in which to swim; in one sense we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free—[Ezek. 47:4-6](#).
- G. The river causes everything to live—[v. 9a](#):
1. Where the river flows, everything shall live and be full of life.
 2. The flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle—[vv. 7, 9-10, 12](#).
- H. The river waters the desert and heals the Dead Sea—[v. 8](#):
1. The river waters the dry, parched land and heals the death waters.
 2. This watering and healing are for the purpose of producing life.
- I. The river is unable to heal the swamps and marshes—[v. 11](#):
1. A swamp or marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise and lukewarmness—cf. [Rev. 3:15-16](#).
 2. For the flow of life and for the church life, we need to be absolute.
 3. “If you are in the Lord’s recovery, be in the recovery absolutely, not halfway...The Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness...By being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in. [261] Then everything shall live where the river comes” (*Life-study of Ezekiel*, pp. 311-312).
- II. Our enjoyment of Christ as the flow of life, the life-giving Spirit, is for us to be sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders with the ministry of life for the marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God:

- A. A sufficient minister of the new covenant is a person who ministers life to others in order to help them grow in life—[2 Cor. 3:6](#).
- B. A minister of life is a sower who sows spiritual seeds:
 - 1. In [1 Corinthians 9:11](#) Paul says to the Corinthians, “We have sown to you the spiritual things”; *the spiritual things* refers to spiritual seeds.
 - 2. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a spiritual seed is to impart life in, with, and out of our spirit.
 - 3. The Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race—[Matt. 13:3, 37](#).
 - 4. In the Lord’s recovery we, as ministers of the new covenant, need to be sowers who impart life to grow and produce Christ in others.
- C. A minister of life is a planter who plants Christ into God’s people—[1 Cor. 3:6](#):
 - 1. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God’s life, are God’s cultivated land, God’s farm, in God’s new creation—[v. 9](#).
 - 2. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit.
- D. A minister of life is a waterer who waters people with Christ—[v. 6](#):
 - 1. Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life—[Rev. 22:17](#).
 - 2. We may liken a waterer in God’s farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water; we should be a divine “irrigation system” with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God’s farm.
 - 3. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him so that we can be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, [262] that can supply others with the water of life—[John 4:14; 7:37-39](#).
- E. A minister of life is a begetter, a father, who imparts life to his children, whom he begets—[1 Cor. 4:15](#):
 - 1. To beget is to generate spiritual children, to bring them forth, through the impartation of life.
 - 2. We need to have the divine “life germ” in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God.
- F. A minister of life is a feeder; feeding is a matter of life; it differs

from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge:

1. To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others—3:2.
 2. What the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers seemed to be knowledge; actually, it was milk (not yet solid food), and it should have nourished them.
 3. The sound teaching of the apostles ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them—1 Tim. 1:10b; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9.
- G. A minister of life is a builder who builds with gold, silver, and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12:
1. Gold symbolizes God the Father in His divine nature, silver symbolizes Christ in His redemptive work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work (this is versus wood, which signifies the human nature; grass, which signifies man in the flesh; and stubble, which signifies lifelessness).
 2. Song of Songs portrays that in the proper church life the perfected believers coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect Christ's loving seekers by ministering the Triune God to them for their transformation by the Triune God's attributes being wrought into them to become their virtues—1:10-11.
 3. This is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for the accomplishing of God's eternal economy—1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 21:18-21.

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MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

THE FLOW OF LIFE WITH THE MINISTRY OF LIFE OUT FROM AND FOR THE MAGNIFICENT HOUSE OF GOD

The subject of this message is the flow of life with the ministry of life out from and for the magnificent house of God. My burden here is focused on a particular group, comprised of those whom we may call the working saints. Although this group of saints cannot be easily defined, they are becoming an increasing majority in the local churches. This term, *the working saints*, is a term used by Brother Lee to describe this group of saints in the book entitled *Messages Given to the Working Saints*. This term has no connotation of young or old; it is simply *the working saints*. Nevertheless, these working

saints must fall into a broad age group, which begins from about the mid-to-late twenties and continues all the way through the fifties, sixties, and beyond. Brother Lee considered these saints to be the backbone of the church. In chapter 6 of *Messages Given to the Working Saints*, Brother Lee used 1 John and the words of the old apostle to three groups of saints in the church life—the little children, the young men, and the fathers. In a broad sense, the working saints may be the “young men” to which John refers.

Many of these working saints are rising up and filling the gaps, as they should be. We increasingly see these brothers and sisters becoming those who bear the burden for the church life in many ways—in meetings, in services, in the gospel, and in many other areas. The Lord’s recovery is still under God’s commanded blessing of eternal life, with the Spirit of the Lord and the word of the Lord as the carriers of that life. We have not only life but also the flow of life. However, we have observed that the flow of life does not seem as deep as it should be; that is, the level of life in the churches is, generally speaking, not that high. Of course, some may ask how we measure the level of life. Although I do not presume to be the man with the reed, I cannot help but point out that during our earlier years, when we had only begun to gain the truth and did not have as much truth as we do presently, the level of life seemed greater.

Today we are being filled with deeper, higher, and even the highest [264] truths in the Scriptures, which the Lord has mercifully given to us through the ministry of this age. We have advanced in some marvelous ways compared to those early years, yet we also need to advance in our experience of the flow of life. Occasionally, when I consider the various aspects of the church life during those days—the meeting life, the serving life, and the general church life—it seems that the level, or depth, of the flow of life was greater. It is not that we were louder or more physically active in the meetings; rather, the level of life within was substantial, not only to sustain the meetings but also to overflow into many areas of the church life. There was a certain depth of life for which I find myself thirsting to recover. For this reason I am burdened to speak particularly to the group of saints upon whom the greater portion of the remedy and improvement of this situation depends.

In the first major section of this message we will cover mainly three items. The first comprises the features or hallmarks of the flow that issued from the temple and flowed beyond to give life and cause everything to live. The second is related to how this flow can increase and deepen, which is the heart of the burden. The third is the results of such a deepened flow. The second major section of the message outline is important, since it speaks to our present

application of these matters.

THE FLOW OF LIFE

We must consider what the flow of life is. An excellent definition is provided in a footnote on [Exodus 17:6](#). This verse says, “I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” This verse records the account of God’s command to Moses to strike the rock at Horeb so that water would come out for the people to drink. The footnote on the word *water* in this verse says,

The water flowing out of the smitten rock typifies the Spirit ([John 7:37-39](#)). Through incarnation Christ came to the earth as a rock. On the cross He was smitten by the authority of God’s righteous law to accomplish God’s redemption. His side was pierced, and living water flowed out for God’s people to drink ([John 19:34](#) and footnote). This living water is the water of life in resurrection, the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit as the ultimate issue of the Triune God ([1 Cor. 15:45](#); see footnote 1 on [John 7:39](#)). [265]

We need to be clear that when we speak concerning the flow of life, we are speaking concerning the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the ultimate issue of the Triune God. Footnote 3 on [Exodus 17:6](#) continues,

The source of the water of life is the throne of God and of the Lamb—the redeeming God ([Rev. 22:1](#)). Hence, the water of life is the Triune God flowing out to be our life. The flow of the living water began from the throne in eternity, continued through the incarnation, human living, and crucifixion of Christ ([John 4:10, 14; 19:34](#)), and now flows on in resurrection to supply God’s people with all the riches of the divine life ([Rev. 22:1-2](#)).

The flow of the living water did not begin in [Genesis 2](#), here in [Exodus 17](#), or when the Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman about the living water in [John 4](#). Rather, it began from the throne of God in eternity past and has continued through Christ’s resurrection. Thus, there is a flow in this universe that stretches from eternity to eternity; it begins from the throne in eternity past and continues in the holy city, and all the while its aim is to supply God’s people with all the riches of the divine life. Footnote 3 on [Exodus 17:6](#) continues,

When we identify ourselves with the smitten Christ, the divine life as the living water flows out of us ([John 7:38](#)).

This flow, which comes through our identification with the smitten Christ, is not merely an objective flow outside of us. Today there is a way for this flow to enter into us and flow out of us, as the Lord promised in [John 7. Verses 37 and 38](#) say, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.” Here Jesus promised that out of the drinkers of the living water would flow not only one river but many rivers of living water. Footnote 3 on [Exodus 17:6](#) concludes,

The flowing of the water of life in resurrection is for the building up of the Body of Christ ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)) and the preparation of the bride of Christ ([Rev. 19:7](#)), both of which will consummate in the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21:9-10](#); cf. [Eph. 5:23, 28-30](#)).

To drink of the water of life, we first need to be positioned to drink ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)), and we also need to be thirsty ([John 7:37](#); [Rev. 21:6](#)). Then we need to come to the Lord [266] ([John 7:37](#); [Rev. 22:17](#)), to ask of the Lord ([John 4:10](#)), to believe in the Lord ([John 7:38](#)), and to call on the name of the Lord ([Isa. 12:3-4](#); [Acts 2:21](#)).

With this brief word, none of us should consider calling on the name of the Lord to be a small thing. This practice has to do with God’s eternal purpose. To drink of the living water is for the producing of the Body of Christ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FLOW OF LIFE

With this definition of the flow, we need to consider some verses that Brother Lee used to underline the importance of this flow. [Ezekiel 47:1](#) says, “Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.” The water here signifies the Triune God as the water of life flowing out from eternity to quench the thirst of His people. [Genesis 2:10](#) says, “A river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.” In this verse we see the first type of the river of water of life. The subsequent verses show that in the flow of this river were precious materials, implying transformed materials for the building ([vv. 11-12](#)). Later in this chapter, we have the building—the person of Eve, the woman built from the rib of Adam ([vv. 21-23](#)).

[Exodus 17:6](#) says, “I will be standing before you there upon the rock in

Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” [First Corinthians 10:4](#) says, “All drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.” [Psalm 36:8-9](#) says, “They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. / For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.” In these verses the Trinity is revealed—the Father as the fountain, the Son as the fatness, and the Spirit as the river. Footnote 1 on [verse 8](#) says, “The fatness refers to Christ, the Son; the river of the divine pleasures, to the Spirit as the river of water of life ([John 7:37-39](#); [Rev. 22:1](#)); and the fountain of life and light ([Psa. 36:9](#)), to the Father as the source of life and light ([John 1:4](#); [1 John 1:5](#); [Rev. 21:23](#); [22:1-2, 5](#)).”

These verses show also that the flow is deeply associated with the house of God. Footnote 2 on [Psalm 36:8](#) says, [267]

The house of God here refers to the temple in the Old Testament, which typifies the church as the Body of Christ in the New Testament (see footnote 1 on [John 14:2](#)). Ultimately, the house of God will consummate in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth ([Rev. 21:3, 22](#)). In the proper church life we enjoy Christ as the fatness, the Spirit as the river, and the Father as the fountain of life and light ([Psa. 36:9](#)). This enjoyment leads us ultimately to the enjoyment of the tree of life, the river of water of life, and the light of life in the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 22:1-2, 5](#)).

There comes a point in our experience when the flow and the house are inseparable. Then the place to find the flow is in the house, and what issues out of the house is the flow of life. The flow and the house cannot be separated; they are one. [Psalm 46:4](#) says, “There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, / The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” The city is here, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High is here, and the river is streaming here.

[Zechariah 14:8](#) says, “In that day living waters will go forth from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; it will be there in summer and in winter.” The phrase *in that day* refers to the time of the millennium in which there will be a dispensational fulfillment of what we are seeing in the book of Ezekiel.

[John 4:14](#) says, “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.” The water that entered into us

when we drank of the water that Jesus gave us will become a fountain that springs up and flows out. This water of life is not a body of water such as a sea, a lake, a pond, or a puddle; it is a river, a flow with a current. It moves, flows, and goes to places; it spreads and brings life wherever it goes. It is living and active.

[John 7:37-39](#) says, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” The Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, which we covered in Message 18, is the Spirit that is flowing in us and in the church life today. [268]

[Revelation 22:1](#) says, “He showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.” Footnote 2, on the word *river* in this verse, says,

The river here, typified by the rivers in [Gen. 2:10-14](#), [Psa. 46:4](#), and [Ezek. 47:5-9](#), signifies the abundance of life in its flow. It is one river, flowing to the four corners of the holy city, like the one river in [Gen. 2:10-14](#), which parts into four heads. As indicated in [John 7:38](#), this one river with its riches becomes many rivers in our experience of the different aspects of the riches of God’s Spirit of life ([Rom. 8:2](#); [15:30](#); [1 Thes. 1:6](#); [2 Thes. 2:13](#); [Gal. 5:22-23](#)).

Then footnote 3 on the word *water* says,

The water of life is a symbol of God in Christ as the Spirit flowing Himself into His redeemed people to be their life and life supply. It is typified by the water that came out of the riven rock ([Exo. 17:6](#); [Num. 20:11](#)) and symbolized by the water that flowed out of the pierced side of the Lord Jesus ([John 19:34](#)). Here, the water of life becomes a river, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb to supply and saturate the entire New Jerusalem. Thus this city is filled with the divine life that it may express God in His glory of life.

In eternity the flow proceeds out of the throne; however, this is not the throne of God alone but “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” the Lamb-God. This river is found in a city. Praise the Lord that the flow today is out of the throne at the center in the city! [Revelation 22:17](#) says, “The Spirit and the bride say,

Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.”

Our church life today should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem, meaning that in our church life as the city, there should be the throne of God and of the Lamb as the center and a river flowing out of that throne to supply, enrich, maintain, and bring the tree of life to all who are living in the church life. Such a flow and supply will bring about the display of the glory of God’s life and constitute the church as the testimony of Jesus. Even though the church life has many activities, its testimony must ultimately be a city with a throne at its center and a river proceeding out of that throne with the tree of life growing in it to produce a grand expression of the glory of God, even the glory of His life. [269] With this understanding, we may now consider the flow of life with the ministry of life out from and for the magnificent house of God.

**IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD’S ULTIMATE MOVE,
OUR NEEDING TO EXPERIENCE THE FLOW OF LIFE
OUT FROM THE HOUSE OF GOD**

In order to participate in God’s ultimate move, we need to experience the flow of life out from the house of God ([Ezek. 47:1-12](#)). God’s ultimate move is not His initial move; His ultimate and final move means that the river, the flow of life, has passed through many steps, stages, and stations. Ultimately, we need to experience the flow of life out from the house of God. This flow from the house is a flow out from the reality of the church. The outflow of this river of water of life in the church in which we meet depends on all the saints. How deep this flow will be, how life-giving and widespread it will be, and how much this flow will produce, heal, and bear fruit unto God’s glory depends on all the saints.

**God’s Ultimate Move
Being His Move in Man to Deify Man
by Saturating Man with All That He Is
in His Life, Nature, Element, and Essence
for the Glory, the Expression, of God**

God’s ultimate move is His move in man to deify man by saturating man with all that He is in His life, nature, element, and essence for the glory, the expression, of God ([2 Cor. 3:18](#); [1 John 3:2](#)). Such a move is accomplished by the river. Thus, this river as the flow of life is a deifying and divinizing river;

it makes us God in life and in nature but not in His Godhead.

The Water Flowing Out from under the Threshold

In Order for the Water to Flow, There Having to Be a Threshold, an Opening

The water flows out from under the threshold ([Ezek. 47:1](#)). In order for the water to flow, there must be a threshold, an opening (cf. [Psa. 81:10](#)). Here we make a turn to consider the important features or properties related to this water. It is crucial to see that in our experience the water flows out from under the threshold. This means that there must be an opening for the flow. [270]

If We Draw Closer to the Lord and Have More Contact with Him, There Being an Opening That Will Allow the Living Water to Flow Out from the Church

If we draw closer to the Lord and have more contact with Him, there will be an opening that will allow the living water to flow out from the church (*Hymns*, #846). *Hymns*, #846 is found in the section entitled “The Church—Her Building.” The second through sixth stanzas say,

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
Now I implore Thee, Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
No more self-satisfied,
No more in self-bound pride,
No more my spirit tied;
Oh, may it flow!

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
For this I plead with Thee,
Oh, may it flow!
High-minded not to be,
Pride shall not prison me,
I'd flow unceasingly,
In spirit flow.

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
For this I seek Thee, Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
No more to isolate,
Nor self to perfect make,
My spirit nought abate,
Deeply to flow.

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
I ask Thee, gracious Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
My trust in self o'erthrow,
Down from self's throne I'll go,
That living water flow
In spirit, Lord. [271]

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
Answer my prayer, dear Lord,

That living water flow
In spirit, Lord. [271]

Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
Answer my prayer, dear Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
Not just commune with Thee,
I long to builded be,
Mingle with others free
In spirit, Lord.

I remember singing this hymn and repeatedly praying it to the Lord. We need to do the same today. I can never forget some of the words of this hymn. I would pray each line so that my spirit would flow.

Brothers and sisters, I feel there is a shortage of such a flow today, a shortage in the flowing of the Spirit. The Spirit is not flowing enough, nor is He released enough. This is not a matter of loudness or craziness; it is a matter of giving the Lord an opening. The Lord still needs to break through in many of us who are bound and isolated, who still care too much for our face, and who still preserve the self, not allowing the Spirit to flow freely. Because of these frustrations, life is ebbing and only trickling; there is not a powerful rushing of this flow, because the opening is so small.

[Psalm 81:10](#) says, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” With regard to the meetings of the church, this is not a small point. In many of the meetings, I do not sense that there is enough release of the spirit, enough of an opening to allow the Lord as the Spirit to flow. Rather, there is a lot of bondage, imprisonment, and fetters and shackles. There is not the freedom for the Spirit to flow. In order to turn this situation around, we need to draw close to the Lord, contact Him, and be broken so that the Spirit may be released. Such a breaking for the release of the Spirit is not for showing off but to care for the fact that the meeting needs a flow. The church meetings need a powerful flow of life from all the members. Thus, we need to let the Spirit flow.

The Flow Being toward the East

The River of God Flowing in the Direction of God’s Glory

The flow is toward the east ([Ezek. 47:1](#)). The river of God flows in the direction of God’s glory (cf. [Num. 2:3](#); [Ezek. 43:2](#)). This is very important. The temple entrance faces the east, and the river of God flows in the direction of God’s glory. In Message 17 we saw that many features [272] in the holy building of God are related to the glory of God. We must remember that the

flow has only one direction—toward the east. It is not for anything else—not for our glory, our happiness, or our satisfaction—but only for God’s glory.

***If Everyone in the Church
Seeks and Cares for God’s Glory,
the Living Water Flowing Out from the Church***

If everyone in the church seeks and cares for God’s glory, the living water will flow out from the church ([John 7:18](#); [1 Cor. 10:31](#)). When we come to the meetings, we should say, “Lord, I am here for Your glory, that You would be glorified in this meeting.” If everyone would come like this, the living water would flow out from the church like a river. However, if we have reservations, wanting something for ourselves, such as recognition or acknowledgment, the flow toward the east (God’s glory) will be hindered, and the flow out of the church will be diminished. We must seek only God’s glory.

When I was a young believer in the church in Los Angeles, I began practicing to speak in every meeting. To do so was difficult for me because I am naturally introverted. One day Brother Samuel Chang asked me, “When you stand up and speak in the meetings, to whom are you speaking?” I answered, “I am speaking to the saints.” He replied, “Do not just speak to the saints. Speak also to the Lord.” At the time I wondered what he meant, and for years I did not know. Later, I came to realize that we need to function in the church life unto God’s glory. May we all be single in this intention. As long as God gets the glory, nothing else matters. Whatever we do should be to His glory.

The Water Flowing Out from the Right Side of the House

The water flows out from the right side of the house ([Ezek. 47:1](#)). This is another very important hallmark. We do not need to wait; we can and should apply this in our church life today.

***In the Bible the Right Side
Being the Highest Position, the First Place***

In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place (cf. [Heb. 1:3](#)). This flow comes from under the threshold to the east, but it flows on the south side of the house, that is, on the right side of the house. In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place. [273]

***The Flow of Life Having to Have the Preeminence within Us,
Becoming the Controlling Factor in Our Living and Work***

The flow of life must have the preeminence within us, becoming the controlling factor in our living and work ([Rev. 22:1](#); [Col. 1:18b](#)). It is not only life but also the flow of life that must have preeminence within us. This reminds me of a sad story that Brother Lee told concerning a brother from England who was very much for the Spirit but who opposed the ground of the church. In 1957 this brother visited Taiwan, and in his ministry to the saints, he attacked the truth concerning the practical ground of the church, initiating a rebellion among a number of the young responsible brothers. The following year, Brother Lee visited this brother in England and was invited by this brother to his home in Scotland for a week. While there, they met twice a day and fellowshiped concerning the Lord's interest on the earth and the Lord's work. One morning when they were together, this brother said, "Brother Lee, when I departed from Taipei to Hong Kong in April 1957, the flow within me stopped as soon as my plane took off, and it has not been restored even to this day." This brother was a great minister of the Lord, one who knew about the flow. Then he said, "I rose up very early this morning to cry out to the Lord in His presence, asking Him why He has not restored the flow" (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1975-1976*, vol. 2, "Serving in the Flow of the Age," p. 150). His losing the flow was a sign that his ministry had stopped. Outwardly, his ministry continued until he passed away in the 1970s. However, the inner flow is more significant than outward ministry. In serving the Lord the controlling factor in our living and work should not be how busy, smart, or efficient we are. The preeminent thing must be whether we have the inner flow of life. If the flow is not there, we should stop and repent. We must honor and respect the flow, giving the flow the highest position, the preeminence, in our life and service. We must have the flow in our service, or all our service is in vain.

**The Flowing Being by the Side of the Altar,
Showing That We Need the Dealing of the Cross
and a Full Consecration to Enjoy the Flow of Life**

The flowing is by the side of the altar, showing that we need the dealing of the cross and a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life ([Ezek. 47:1](#)). This is another important hallmark and condition of the flow. The altar signifies the

cross, which is the center of the universe. If [274] we are serious about having the flow and the ministry of life in the church, there is no cheap or quick way; the only way is through the cross. The price must be paid. *Hymns*, #631 says, “If no death, no life.” Without the cross, there can be no flow. The more we die to ourselves, lose our soul-life, and take up His cross, the more there will be the flow of life. We cannot generate or fabricate the flow; instead, we die so that this flow may issue forth. If we mean business for the flow of life, we must die.

The altar also signifies a full consecration, which is a continual consecration. Brother Lee said that we should have a new consecration not only once a year but at the top of every hour. He once said, “We need to continually renew our consecration. Actually, we need to consecrate ourselves to the Lord every morning. Then at every turning point and every juncture in our life, we need a new consecration” (*Redemption in God’s Plan*, p. 116). We need to keep our consecration fresh and full so that we can enjoy the flow of life. When we touch someone who has the flow, we touch consecration and absoluteness. Consecration is the reason there is a strong flow with certain believers.

**For the Increase of the Flow of Life,
Our Needing to Be Measured by the Lord as the Man of Bronze**

To Measure Being to Examine, Test, Judge, and Possess

For the increase of the flow of life, we need to be measured by the Lord as the man of bronze (40:3; 47:2-5; Rev. 1:15; cf. John 7:37-39). To measure is to examine, test, judge, and possess (Isa. 6:1-8; Ezek. 42:20). We should remember this definition. In order to have the flow, we need to be examined, tested, and judged by the Lord as the man of bronze. The Son of Man is walking in the midst of the golden lampstands with feet like shining bronze to judge (Rev. 1:13, 15). By examining, testing, and judging us, the Lord possesses and gains us. How much flow we have depends on how much we are gained by the Lord. How much the Lord can gain us will be the degree to which we have the flow. If He gains us entirely, we will have the flow of life in a full way.

***The Four Measurements of a Thousand Cubits,
Which Is a Complete Unit, Indicating That as Creatures***

***We Need to Be Thoroughly Measured by the Lord So That
He May Take Over and Thoroughly Possess Our Entire Being***

The four measurings of a thousand cubits, which is a complete unit [275] (cf. [Psa. 84:10](#)), indicate that as creatures we need to be thoroughly measured by the Lord so that He may take over and thoroughly possess our entire being ([Ezek. 47:2-5](#)).

***The More We Allow the Lord to Examine, Test, and Judge Us
to Possess Us, the Deeper the Flow Becoming—
the Depth of the Flow Depending on How Much
We Have Been Measured by the Lord***

The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes; the depth of the flow depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord (cf. [1 John 1:5, 7](#)). The problem among us is not that there is no flow but that this flow is not deep enough. It needs to be deepened. The depth of the flow depends on measuring. As we saw in Message 20, we need to be measured by God's building. We need all manner of measuring. The Lord as the man of bronze does not let one iota go. He measures in a fine and detailed way. He desires to possess every part of our being so that every part would be a channel for rivers of life to flow forth. We need to consider whether or how much He has measured and possessed our mind, emotion, and will—every part of our inner being. If the flow in and among us is shallow, it is because the Lord's possessing of us is inadequate.

***The More We Are Measured by the Lord,
the More Our Being Restricted and Limited
by the Flowing of the Grace of Life
until Eventually We Are Lost in And Carried Along
by the Flowing Triune God as a River in Which to Swim;
in One Sense Our Losing All Our Freedom,
but in Another Sense Our Being Really Free***

The more we are measured by the Lord, the more we are restricted and limited by the flowing of the grace of life until eventually we are lost in and carried along by the flowing Triune God as a river in which to swim; in one sense we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free ([Ezek. 47:4-6](#)). There is no way to adequately describe this experience. We must have

this experience to know what it means for the water to be first to the ankles, then to the knees, and then to the loins (vv. 3-4). Each measurement is a thousand cubits. After the fourth measurement, the water becomes a river in which we can be submerged and lost—a river that can carry us along. While the measuring is taking place [276] in the first three stages, there is still a degree of self-dependence, for we can still walk. However, doing so becomes increasingly difficult because the limitation from the flow increases with the depth of the flow. The degree of limitation is an indication of the depth of the flow. The more the flow deepens in us, the more we live a constricted and limited life. Whichever way we turn, there is limitation. Paul described such limitation in [Acts 16:6-7](#). The Spirit would not allow him to turn to the left or to the right, thereby indicating that he had to go straight forward.

All the limitations by the Spirit are to increase the flow within us until it becomes water that sweeps us off our feet, and we can no longer walk by our strength. As a result, we totally lose our freedom regarding where to go, because the water carries us wherever it goes. However, in another sense, we are truly free. We should aspire to experience these things.

The River Causing Everything to Live

Where the River Flows, Everything Living and Being Full of Life

The river causes everything to live ([Ezek. 47:9a](#)). Where the river flows, everything shall live and be full of life. I have seen interesting pictures of the temple and the river flowing out of it, but we care for the spiritual reality. Wherever the river goes, it causes everything to live. It is full of life. The Dead Sea is so called because nothing lives or grows there. It has nothing but death, but when the river comes, everything will live. The river flowing from the house will heal the Dead Sea. In the church life we do not need human solutions; what we need is the death-swallowing flow. In the meetings and in our service in the church life, we need more of the flow; we need more life to swallow up death. This is the real solution. Everything will live where this river goes. I long to see everything living in our church life, that wherever the saints go, whatever they touch, and whoever they speak to will live. When the saints with the flow function, the meetings become living. That is the normal situation.

The Flow of the River Producing Trees, Fish, and Cattle

The flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle (vv. 7, 9-10, 12). The river of life produces trees with abundant fruit, cattle, and fish. [277] There are so many fish that there must be fishermen with nets to catch them. All manner of living things come from the flow of this river.

The River Watering the Desert and Healing the Dead Sea

The River Watering the Dry, Parched Land and Healing the Death Waters

The river waters the desert and heals the Dead Sea (v. 8). The river waters the dry, parched land and heals the death waters. The church life and many saints need much healing. With some, there is a long history of offenses, adversities, difficulties, trials, and death. These need the healing that is in this flow.

This Watering and Healing Being for the Purpose of Producing Life

This watering and healing are for the purpose of producing life.

The River Being Unable to Heal the Swamps and Marshes

A Swamp or Marsh Being a Neutral Place, a Halfway Place, a Place of Compromise and Lukewarmness

The river is unable to heal the swamps and marshes (v. 11). A swamp or marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise and lukewarmness (cf. Rev. 3:15-16). Even the river cannot heal swamps and marshes.

For the Flow of Life and for the Church Life, Our Needing to Be Absolute

For the flow of life and for the church life, we need to be absolute.

***“If You Are in the Lord’s Recovery,
Be in the Recovery Absolutely, Not Halfway...
The Lord Jesus Desires and Requires Absoluteness...
By Being Absolute We Will Be in the Flow,
and the Flow Will Not Be a Trickle but a River to Swim in.
Then Everything Shall Live Where the River Comes”***

“If you are in the Lord’s recovery, be in the recovery absolutely, not halfway...The Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness...By being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in. Then everything shall live where the river comes” [278] (*Life-study of Ezekiel*, pp. 311-312). Swamps and marshy situations may occur in our church life because of compromise, lukewarmness, mixture, and reservation. We must have an absolute church life, not a halfway church life, in order to enjoy the healing of the flow.

**OUR ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS THE FLOW OF LIFE,
THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT, BEING FOR US TO BE SOWERS, PLANTERS,
WATERERS, BEGETTERS, FEEDERS, AND BUILDERS
WITH THE MINISTRY OF LIFE FOR THE MARVELOUS ORGANIC
BUILDING OF GOD, THE MAGNIFICENT HOUSE OF GOD**

Our enjoyment of Christ as the flow of life, the life-giving Spirit, is for us to be sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders with the ministry of life for the marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God. This point concerns the application. The flow produces the building, and out of the building the flow comes forth. It is a holy cycle—more flow, more building; more building, more flow. Thus, in the present church life in our locality, we need to be these six categories of people. The emphasis in this message is not on any kind of way but on what kind of persons we should be.

**A Sufficient Minister of the New Covenant
Being a Person Who Ministers Life to Others
in Order to Help Them Grow in Life**

A sufficient minister of the new covenant is a person who ministers life to others in order to help them grow in life (2 Cor. 3:6). [Second Corinthians 3:6](#) reveals that the New Testament ministry is a ministry of life: “[God] has also

made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” Only the Spirit gives life. This New Testament ministry produces life, causes growth in life, and will eventually even bring forth maturity in life. We should all participate in this ministry.

A Minister of Life Being a Sower Who Sows Spiritual Seeds

***In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul Saying to the Corinthians,
“We Have Sown to You the Spiritual Things”;
the Spiritual Things Referring to Spiritual Seeds***

A minister of life is a sower who sows spiritual seeds. In [1 Corinthians 9:11](#) Paul says to the Corinthians, “We have sown to you the spiritual things”; *the spiritual things* refers to spiritual seeds. [279]

***A Seed Being a Container of Life, and to Sow a Spiritual Seed
Being to Impart Life in, with, and out of Our Spirit***

A seed is a container of life, and to sow a spiritual seed is to impart life in, with, and out of our spirit. Our spirit is the sowing organ, and life is the seed in the form of the word of life.

***The Lord Jesus Coming as a Sower
to Sow Himself as the Seed of Life into the Human Race***

The Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race ([Matt. 13:3, 37](#)).

***In the Lord’s Recovery, as Ministers of the New Covenant,
Our Needing to Be Sowers Who Impart Life
to Grow and Produce Christ in Others***

In the Lord’s recovery we, as ministers of the new covenant, need to be sowers who impart life to grow and produce Christ in others. We are going to Germany to sow seeds of life in the soil there.

A Minister of Life Being a Planter

Who Plants Christ into God's People

A minister of life is a planter who plants Christ into God's people (1 Cor. 3:6). This is not an indiscriminate sowing but a purposeful sowing to plant Christ into God's people for God's garden, God's farm.

The Believers, Who Have Been Regenerated in Christ with God's Life, Being God's Cultivated Land, God's Farm, in God's New Creation

The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, God's farm, in God's new creation (v. 9).

In Order for Us to Plant Christ into Others, Our Needing the Genuine Experience of Christ as Life in Our Spirit

In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit. Someone may give a message in a stadium to thousands of people in a way of mass sowing, but planting is often done in one person at a time. We must sow a seed in the right spot at the right time as the Lord leads. This kind of planting is [280] different from the sowing, which the Lord spoke about in His parables (cf. Matt. 13:3-8); planting is one seed at a time. When Paul says, "I planted" (1 Cor. 3:6), he is referring to a specific planting. For this we cannot depend on gift and zeal. For the gospel there must be the experience of life in our spirit so that we can plant Christ as life into others.

A Minister of Life Being a Waterer Who Waters People with Christ

Once We Plant Christ into Others, Our Needing to Water Them with the Water of Life

A minister of life is a waterer who waters people with Christ (v. 6). Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

A Waterer in God's Farm

***Being Like an Irrigation System with a Reservoir
That Supplies a Farm with Water;
Our Needing to Be a Divine “Irrigation System”
with a Reservoir of Living Water Stored within Us
to Water the Church as God’s Farm***

We may liken a waterer in God’s farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water; we should be a divine “irrigation system” with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God’s farm.

***Needing to Have the Genuine Experience of Christ
as the Water of Life and a Living Contact with Him
So That We Can Be a Channel of Living Water,
a Divine Irrigation System,
That Can Supply Others with the Water of Life***

We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him so that we can be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life ([John 4:14; 7:37-39](#)). [First Corinthians 3:6](#) says, “I planted, Apollos watered.” After planting, there needs to be a follow-up dispensing of life, a watering of the seeds in the soil. However, if we do not have the flow of the living water, we will have nothing with which to water others. Many may receive the seed and yet, as a result of a lack of watering, not grow. [281]

***A Minister of Life
Being a Begetter, a Father, Who Imparts Life
to His Children, Whom He Begets***

A minister of life is a begetter, a father, who imparts life to his children, whom he begets ([4:15](#)). Paul says to the Corinthians, “Though you have ten thousand guides in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” ([v. 15](#)).

***To Beget Being to Generate Spiritual Children,
to Bring Them Forth,
through the Impartation of Life***

To beget is to generate spiritual children, to bring them forth, through the impartation of life.

***Needing to Have the Divine “Life Germ”
in Order to Impart the Divine Life into Others
So That They May Be Begotten as Children of God***

We need to have the divine “life germ” in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God. This should not be merely a gospel campaign but the begetting of children, that is, living spiritual children who have received the divine nature through our impartation of the divine life. It is our responsibility as ministers of life in the church life to beget genuine spiritual children. Paul was able to identify specific ones as his spiritual children. Paul referred to Timothy as his “genuine child in faith” (1 Tim. 1:2) and “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:17). Producing such children is a matter of life.

**A Minister of Life Being a Feeder;
Feeding Being a Matter of Life;
Its Differing from Teaching,
Which Is a Matter of Knowledge**

***To Give Milk to Drink or Food to Eat
Being to Feed Others***

A minister of life is a feeder; feeding is a matter of life; it differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge. To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others (3:2). [282]

***What the Apostle Ministered
to the Corinthian Believers Seeming to Be Knowledge;
Actually, It Being Milk (Not Yet Solid Food),
Which Should Have Nourished Them***

What the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers seemed to be knowledge; actually, it was milk (not yet solid food), and it should have nourished them. The milk here refers to the milk of the word (1 Pet. 2:2).

***The Sound Teaching of the Apostles
Ministering the Healthy Teaching
as the Supply of Life to People,
Either Nourishing Them or Healing Them***

The sound teaching of the apostles ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them (1 Tim. 1:10b; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9). Along with being begetters, we also need to be those who provide healthy teaching that supplies life in the way of feeding and nourishing. Paul was such a one as a nursing mother and an exhorting father (1 Thes. 2:7, 11). Such ones are the true ministers of life spoken of in the New Testament. We need to know how to dispense milk, give food at the proper time, provide healthy, life-giving teaching, and even heal with a healthy word.

**A Minister of Life Being a Builder
Who Builds with Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones**

***Gold Symbolizing God the Father in His Divine Nature,
Silver Symbolizing Christ in His Redemptive Work,
and Precious Stones Signifying the Spirit
in His Transforming Work (This Being versus Wood,
Which Signifies the Human Nature;
Grass, Which Signifies Man in the Flesh;
and Stubble, Which Signifies Lifelessness)***

A minister of life is a builder who builds with gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12). Gold symbolizes God the Father in His divine nature, silver symbolizes Christ in His redemptive work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work (this is versus wood, which signifies the human nature; grass, which signifies man in the flesh; and stubble, which signifies lifelessness). [283]

***Song of Songs Portraying That in the Proper Church Life
the Perfected Believers Coordinate
with the Transforming Spirit to Perfect Christ's Loving Seekers
by Ministering the Triune God to Them
for Their Transformation by the Triune God's Attributes***

Being Wrought into Them to Become Their Virtues

Song of Songs portrays that in the proper church life the perfected believers coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect Christ's loving seekers by ministering the Triune God to them for their transformation by the Triune God's attributes being wrought into them to become their virtues (1:10-11). God Himself in all His divine attributes first needs to be experienced by us and wrought into us before we can dispense Him into others for their growth and transformation to become the building materials for God's building.

***This Being for the Building Up of the Church
as the Organic Body of Christ
to Consummate the New Jerusalem
for the Accomplishing of God's Eternal Economy***

This is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for the accomplishing of God's eternal economy (1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 21:18-21).

By the grace and mercy of the Lord, many brothers and sisters in the Lord's recovery must rise up not only to receive these things with an Amen but also to seek these things and exercise themselves to enter into these things by much dealing, prayer, and opening to the Lord. We need to pray, "Lord, make all these hallmarks of the flow of life mine. Measure me not for my spirituality but for the deepening of the divine flow so that through me, together with all the saints as channels of supply, the flow can become strong and prevailing in the church life. May everything in the church be full of life and every death situation be healed. Lord, I must experience this flow. Measure me, and possess me." We should aspire to be the six kinds of persons described above. For this, we need to learn of the apostles and of those who have gone before us. Everything shall live where the river goes.—M. C.