

A River of Life

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of accessing the waters of life, which are available to us in proportion to our submission to the sovereignty of God and our adherence to the lordship of Christ.

Duration: 55:07

Scripture: Revelation 22:1

Topics: "River of Life", "Abundant Life", "Living Water"

Description

Art Katz emphasizes the significance of the 'river of life' flowing from the throne of God, illustrating how this divine life is accessible to believers who submit to God's sovereignty. He contrasts the abundant life available through Christ with the stagnation of religious practices that lack true vitality. Katz urges the congregation to seek deeper intimacy with God, moving beyond superficial faith to experience the transformative power of the waters of life. He highlights the healing and nourishing qualities of this life, which can revitalize not only individuals but also entire nations. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to dive deeper into the river of life, encouraging believers to embrace the fullness of God's presence.

Transcript

And so take, my God, this occasion to yourself, be glorified before your saints, and have your own heart warmed. We bless you, we give you praise, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I have valiantly looked to the Lord all through the week, even last night till late. All I knew was a certain text, a certain theme of paradise and the waters of life that issue out from under the throne. It came at the very commencement of these days, and interestingly, what is behind me in this backdrop sort of is a depiction of that paradise.

But I was waiting for the Lord to amplify, and the amplification has not come. So, I'll read the text, we'll just look to the Lord. If there's anything that is to issue from you, a thought, a word, a comment, we'll see what he will give.

I've got two Bibles, a little book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. But you should have seen my bed last night, piled that high with every commentary that I could find. And it's remarkable, when you're on to something, how little the commentators have to say.

I took down my index of all my Karl Barth commentaries, which gives every scripture that he's used. And it comes to Ezekiel 47, and maybe one or two scant references, and not at all what I would have liked to have heard. And for others of them, they even fall short of that.

So I think the Lord himself has got to, on the spot, say something to us. Out of Revelation chapter 22, the final book of the Bible, that begins, And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manna of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no night there, they shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.

Amen. Well somehow the word throne kind of, I won't say leaped off the page, but it's mentioned twice here, as having, indicating the locus of which these waters issue. And I don't know what to make of that.

But that somehow the sovereignty of God, the rule of God, the reign of God, has to do with the waters of life. So to the degree that we ourselves are submitted to that Lordship, we also have access to these waters. And though this is the description of the millennial age and the glory of it, there's something that is already available of these waters and of this life, for as many of us as are yielded to the throne.

I want to come back to that, I don't know how. Excuse my faltering, I'm just feeling my way. But if we go back to the first reference in Genesis to the tree of life, the expulsion from the garden, we have the tragedy at the beginning, and the great consummation at the end.

And everything is between these two great polar points. So looking at Genesis chapter 3, after the fall of Adam and Eve, verse 22, the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us to know good and evil, and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken.

So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Now why doesn't it just say to keep the tree of life? So the word the way of the tree of life intrigued me, but I have not found a commentator anywhere who has anything to say about this particular phrase, the way of the tree of life. And I know that it's not happenstance or inadvertent that it's employed.

It means something, and it means something of such a kind that God will jealously guard it by cherubim. And the cherubim are angelic beings whose function is to God what is holy and sacred, particularly around the ark of God or the throne of God. We spoke at the prophetic school about the cherubim on either side of the mercy seat, looking to each other face to face and down through the lid upon which the blood of the eternal sacrifice is sprinkled, down to the righteous requirement in the ark below, and that that ark has been called by Israel or known by it as also the throne of God.

So the ark of God, the throne of God, is the domain over which these angelic creatures guard. I think that when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, he saw him in an enthronement, and these angelic creatures were crying holy, holy, holy around that very same presence. So I think I'm benefited by starting in Revelation and seeing what is the eternal blessedness of God in the clear waters of life that shall flow out

to the nations, and the tree of life that bears fruit in all of its variety every month and leaves for the healing of the nations as being the release or the availability of what was positionally available to Adam, but which he could not access because he ate from another tree, and God kept him from the tree of life lest he live forever.

So the tree of life, the waters of life, are suggestive of something ultimate and so sacred, life itself, it's the life of God, and not only eternal but abounding, as we will soon see in another text where the same river of life, starting out with a trickle, rises up from the ankles to the knee to the thigh and then becomes waters too deep to pass over. So I wrote a little note here at the bottom of my page. Will we understand the glory of the clear waters of life that will flow out from under the throne and out to the nations and blessing the tree of life and making it fruitful if we have not a sufficient sense of the tragedy of the loss of that Edenic and paradisaical condition that was forfeited by Adam and remains forfeited until every son of Adam, by the blood of the greater Adam, is healed of that breach occasioned by that Adamic sin.

The pity is that many of us who are in the second Adam and need not wait for the millennial flow of the river of life are not accessing what is available to us even presently, and that maybe it's proportionate to our own proximity to the throne, that somehow the word throne and the waters of life issuing from under the throne are more than just a little picturesque description but have an uttermost significance which I've been breaking my head all these days to find out and the Lord has not been disposed to show me, only to offer to you as suggestion, as prophetic intimation, that there's a profound conjunction between this throne and the waters of life and the tree of life so watered by those waters that everywhere that this river of life passes, life itself is activated and commenced. And so that we have access, I'm not saying thus saith the Lord, I'm just hinting prophetically that we have access to these waters and to this life and to its abundance, to its prolific source, to the degree that we have access or proximity to the throne itself. If we are not totally yielded to that throne, then who is? If there are variances of self-will and independence of heart, mind, spirit, whatever that is that keeps us from the total adhesion to the lordship of Christ to the uttermost, to that degree also we are kept from that flow.

Some of us are getting by minimally, some adequately, but very few bountifully. And I think that the issue is the issue of the throne. And God is so concerned about that, he's not allowing cheap access and the cherubim, God, this very location to keep the way of the tree of life.

Not just the tree, the way of the tree of life. You help me, you think on that, you ponder that. My other text, in Ezekiel 47, again, very much echoes the remarkable culmination of the whole redemptive drama that we cited in reading from chapter 22 of Revelation, is picked up by Ezekiel in 47, who's being shown about by an angel called the man.

And the man brought me back to the entrance of 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. The altar, the temple, the throne, the tabernacle, the ark of God, the tent of Shem, all of these are indexes referring to one locus and one reality.

It's where God is, in his supreme sovereignty, lordship, and kingship. And the water's issue out from under, I like that phrase. And down from under, there's an under.

I don't know, maybe there are meteorological reasons why water issues from under, but I like the under. I like the things that are not visible. I like the subterranean depths.

I like the secret history of a believer with God. The things that are in the deeps is the place also where the water issues up and rises up from. So he then brought me in verse 2, out through the north gate and led me to the outside, to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

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 and I could not cross because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in, a river that no one could cross. And he asked of me, son of man, do you see this? Then he led me back to the river. And 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, some kind of cleft or indentation, a kind of a rift, even in the geography of Israel to this day. Where it enters the sea, the sea is the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the water becomes fresh.

I don't know if you've ever been to the Dead Sea or on the Dead Sea. I won't say in the Dead Sea because you can't actually submerge yourself into it. It's so laden with salts and chemicals that it's buoyant.

And everybody wants to take a picture reading a newspaper on your back, on top of the Dead Sea. So what kind of flow and gush will purify those waters is a graphic picture of the power of what issues from under the throne of God and flows out into the deep crevices and cracks and finds its way to the lowest point on the face of the earth, the Dead Sea. It's dead, it's moribund, it's closed in.

It has no value except its chemical value or the curiosity of tourists. But there's no life on it or in it. There cannot be.

And when it empties into the sea, the water there becomes fresh. I always marvel at how much God can say in so few words. How terse God is.

I would have at least spent a paragraph amplifying what happens when the waters of life touch the place of death. No, it's just the waters there become 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. Fishermen will stand along the shore from Ein Gedi to Ein Egalim.

And there, there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds like the fish of the Great 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 because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing. I could sit down now and just to read these texts is to be blessed.

But if these texts are also symbolic as well as graphic and descriptive and that we ourselves can bear fruit in season because the waters of life flow through us copiously in proportion to our adherence to the throne and that it bears fruit in season and variable and every month different and the leaves also from the tree are healing for the nations then there's a remarkable application for us as believers. And it's an application that does not have to wait for the millennium. It's available now.

But we see little evidence or application of this because I think that we're more or less satisfied with mixed waters or stagnant waters or waters that are not even life-giving. And it shows up in the way we conduct ourselves. I guess religion is a good word that describes stagnant activity that ostensibly is in the name of God but it's rarely ever fresh.

It's predictable. It's hackneyed. It's cliched.

It's you know what you're going to get and you don't get much. It's not life. Somewhere in our discussion in these days and we've had back-to-back schools and now a convocation we took a moment to celebrate the word life and to mention that T. Austin Sparks, if you know that name one of the most significant modern-day commentators godly man and a contemporary and a friend of Watchman Nee wrote as the conclusion of his *Believing and Seeking Life* I forgot the title of the booklet but it was something like *Life vs.*

Death in which he said, now that I survey my whole lifetime in the Lord and my ministerial service and all of the issues and things that I've touched and explored and expressed what it amounts to in the last analysis is a conflict between life and death. The whole of the cosmic drama in which we are engaged is the issue of life vs. death.

And I went on to say that we need to recognize the forms of death because we live with them so long that they become so fixed and so normative and almost acceptable that we don't contend for life. Any restriction of life is a form of death moodiness, temperament, physical bodily ailments anything repressive, melancholy depression itself are forms of death there's a prince of death that wants everywhere to contend against life we have two princes the prince of life and the prince of death and I don't feel that we are vehement enough for life we are not asserting the primacy of life we're not contending for life and we're allowing the forms of death which are more abundant, restrictive to affect untold millions and that they live so long with it they think it normative. Jesus said I've come to bring you life and that more abundantly.

So I love these references to the waters of life that gush out and so not only prolific but so powerful that when they come even to the dead place death has got to bow death has got to go out and life comes in and life of such a kind that forms of life flourish in it even the variety of the fish that are described here that fishermen can line up from Ein Gedi to Ein Galim with their nets and not take it all and that the forms of it are as variable as is to be found in the great Mediterranean Sea itself in a place that was formerly known for its death it's the triumph of life and we don't have to wait for the millennium to enjoy it you dear saints God is wanting evidence now if it comes up from under those are the deep places so you know these texts deserve close examination as for example after the angel this man leads the prophet to an excursion of viewing this remarkable water of life that begins only minimally ankle deep and rules out a thousand cubits more a thousand cubits more a thousand cubits more I like the number one thousand the first contribution to the New York work was from the Hutterite colony from which John and the precious saints come today it was a thousand dollars for the New York work and I went thank you Lord because a thousand is the

number of ultimate measure have you ever given ultimately? or have you given stingily? do you measure it out by the inches or the teaspoons? or lavishly? our God is lavish and a thousand cubits is ultimate measure and the question is that while this prophet is being shown the different depths of these waters he himself is not required to enter as if the angel is showing him the options and allowing him to choose just how far in he wants to go and to what depth he wants to move and live and have his being where are you this morning you dear saints?

I venture to say if you're representative of the church in the world there are some here who are not even up to their ankles you're just content to play footsie with your toes and get a little scintillation but get back onto that beach quick enough where security is the known and fixed categories of your established evangelical and fundamental faith but to go in up to the ankles is already a little risque how about a thousand cubits more? up to the knees which is of course the place of prayer but no longer the place of religious prayer the place of godly prayer of prayers that go beyond what you would know to pray and to ask because up till now your prayers have been timid and prescribed and predictable and having to do with you and your interest and your need which of course is valid God

already knows it but he lovingly and patiently hears your petitions but we don't go beyond them because we've not been in deep enough into the waters of life have you been up to your knees? it'll change your prayer life and you would think well what further? isn't that enough? prayer is so critical? no there's yet a thousand cubits more up to the waist well what shall we say about the waist or the loins this belt around here that has to do with our sexual what? identity and sense of power authority the blood cells in the hip that's where the lord touched Jacob when he wrestled with him the one place that left him crippled was in the bone marrow in the knit where the blood itself forms and where the man hangs his holster or his cell phone I'm still not a favorite in the Philippines in that

night when I spoke and the CEO the young whiz kid another J-5th success was swaggering around the platform with his cell phone on his hip it might just as well have been a revolver I thought does he need to make a phone call during the service? is there some critical thing that requires his attention for which he needs to be so girded? you know what the message was that night? the lord came down on the back of an ass upon which never man sat that the way into the kingdom and the thing for which the world is waiting to cry out Hosanna to the king is a kingdom that will come as the king came in lowliness and meekness and debility and foolishness tottering on a little beastie upon which never man sat but when he sees swagger and arrogance of those things on our hip in which we hoist and put

our thumbs in it's the antithesis of God if he's not got us up to that place in those waters, he's not got us but who wants to go in that deep? because then you can feel the waters rising and they're surging and they're battering against your frame you liked it when it was up to the ankles even the knees you could bear that because you still had your feet on terra firma and you were in control you had it all lined out but when you go in up to your waist you begin to move with the pulsation of the water the flow and the power of it itself and it gets a little frightening how many of us have gone in that deep? because there's a man with a measuring rod who's measuring out this morning a thousand cubits more and until we go in how shall those that are dying receive the benefit? where are the

words of life that shall issue from us that we get in the measure that we're taken up into the life of God and into his powerful surging life not only that that buoys us up from without but from within maybe we're drinking and taking in and issuing from up from under the things that we speak and say and do as much as we are also being moved from without by those waters.

We have as much the water of life within as we are giving ourselves to be submitted to the waters of life without if we're submitting ourselves it's up to you it was up to this prophet he wasn't required to follow he brought him back to the shore as if to say ok now you've seen the varying options of depth how far are you willing to go and of course the last is the most terrifying of all because there you can no longer stand waters too deep to pass over and you yourself are lifted up and carried by it not where you will but where it will terrifying but glorious because those waters now will move you into the place of God's own election choice and the fruit that you'll bear will be variable and something that you'll not appoint for yourself you don't even know what you're saying all you

know is you've got a text and you'll stand up and trust that the Lord himself is going to carry it and bring it in application though you yourself by your own exercise could not obtain it how do you like that as a mode of life and being it's the way of the tree of life that God guards it's a way a little book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer creation and fall precious godly I almost say prophet whose life ended at the end of a Nazi noose a week before the end of World War II who could have had safety in New York or London but chose to go back to Germany, face the music and be a witness in a nation that it was spiraling downward and out under such evil as had not been seen in the earth in modern times and finally became its victim but even while he's dead he lives who has not read his book on

discipleship what's the title of that The Cost of Discipleship and Life Together a classic primer on what community means by a man who learned the lesson having to flee from Nazi discovery and persecution in such an intensity of life underground down from under came such a water of life as to inspire and encourage characters like myself and others who have gone beyond their ankles and into waters called community not knowing what it means or how to obtain it not having been there heretofore so he writes some interesting things I haven't doped it out yet but maybe it'll say much more to you than it has to me though I know it's cogent he's talking about Adam who recognizes that his death consists in having to live before God without life from God you can retire Dietrich after that one

statement you can hang up your hat to say that is enough let me read that again Adam is expelled from the garden he has eaten from the wrong tree and now he's forbidden to touch the tree of life lest he live forever and the issue of the tree of life dear saints though I'm no expert I'm a novice feeling my way is not only the issue of perpetuity it's the issue of prolificity it's the issue of abundant living it's a dynamic it not only prolongs your life but affects the character of the life as it's lived it's an abundance and God would not allow him to touch it lest he live forever and live in a way now that he has come to know as God he would be able to live like God he had to be cast out and the cherubim with their flaming swords how jealous God is to protect this remarkable tree which

unless it does go forth and bear it's fruit unless the leaves of it are applied to the wounds and the devastations of the nations they continue to suffer that degradation nothing is going to heal them that will be issued from the United Nations or any other well meaning organization or source the nations dear saints have been ravaged there will be no healing for Croatia and Serbia and Kosovo and the Bantu tribes in Rwanda or Israel and Palestinians until the leaves from off this tree are applied to the nations this is it has to be symbolic what do you want blood? but you have to understand the remarkable symbolism and that how jealous God is over it and waits for that paradisaical consummation of the age where the waters flow freely the river of life and water the trees who give the

abundant fruit but also the leaves that heal the nations so what is Adam's dilemma? he's caught glimpse of something but he's not allowed now to touch it and death has come in as penalty for sin what is that

death? it consists in having to live before God without life from God well you dear Adam you'd be better off as an atheist it would save you from the quandary of knowing about God and not being able to live for God but the only way to live for God is to live by God by the waters of life and if you can't have access to that what a grim prospect to just be religious and out of your own unaided energy and naturalness seek to make some kind of a show or a performance that is so pathetically limited that it's nothing less than death itself will you understand me when I say that nowhere is

death more evident than in some tired Pentecostal church that once knew the Holy Spirit and has reduced it now to a formula of do you have it? it's a double death I hold my breath if I have got to come into such an environment because it's not just death of something that had never been known or obtained but once having known it and having obtained it and having lost it and now seeking to emulate the evidence of that life is so pathetic so crunching so deathly that you wonder how congregations can survive being in that atmosphere Sunday after Sunday Sunday after Sunday why doesn't someone cry out for life cry out for repentance cry out to go back to square one and realize that our religion is living death we need the life of God as a brother said in the early history of Ben Israel that I

quote from time to time it takes God to love God it takes God to worship God it takes God to serve God and it's said in Revelation 2 and his servants shall serve him not in the way and measure that we have known till now but in unlimited measure and serve him unlimitedly that when he says that's what you speak and though it chafes the hearers and you'd like yourself to change the subject if God will not change it, it remains it's not an issue of your choosing my servants shall serve him well that's going to take an extraordinary energy because the demand of it is so great because death contends against it death is offended by it death wants to shut the mouth and wants to go on without being troubled or threatened or challenged by an evidence of a reality that does not know and doesn't

want to know so we are the servants of life and poor Adam whose death is having to live before God without life from God, condemned to live without life what do you mean he doesn't have life? biologically, but he doesn't have the life that issues down from under he doesn't have the waters of life, he doesn't have the freshness of that life the creativity of that life he's just a stalking death upon the face of the earth though he's going to live for hundreds of years in that condition which is itself a judgment interesting that those who celebrate life, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, die young and die early, I can think of a few others, but there was so much in their 30 or 40 years, like Oswald Chambers who died before he was 40 I believe that that what issued from them continues to bring life

to those who can avail themselves, their life was so profound, not measured by their longevity but by its character and its kind, its intensity and its value that though they are dead so called yet do they live, while many who are living are yet dead, the issue is the water of life and I'm just taking a kind of a gamble to say that we have the measure of it within to the degree that we have submitted to it without that we have as much of the flow within that is creative original and fresh as we are willing to go in, up to our ankles up to our knees, up to our thighs so he talks about the predicament of Adam as only a German theologian can the will to live, the inability to live having to live, that is a living death of the man who is like God the life of Adam is a continued, renewed

rebellion against his existence it is a dispute with life a reaching out for the life that would bring this life to an end that would be the new life in all circumstances Adam wanted to live to be sure, he is allowed to live in the preserved world but he knows that this life is a life on the way to death and therefore death it's a biological life it's an intelligent life but it's a life without the life of God and therefore it's on its way to death

and it is death and so he says it creates an unquenchable thirst in the nature of the case is a desperate unquenchable eternal thirst that Adam feels for life that the more passionately Adam asks for life the more deeply he is entangled in death it is a thirst for death so the word thirst conjures up already the waters of life that Adam could

not access and that will be available again in the millennial glory that we are approaching and that is available to us even now so what I wrote here what is perhaps for us more tragic than being barred Adam is tragic, he is condemned to death even as he lives but what is for us more tragic than being barred from the way of the tree of life is to have access to the tree and yet not eat from it they have to have access to the fountain of living waters and not drink from it have access to the river of life and never be willing to go and to hazard going beyond our ankles that is more tragic than Adam's fate and that's the condition in which many of us languish, we have access to the degree of our proximity to the throne, to the absoluteness of the sovereignty of God in everything and maybe

if we are not drinking from the waters of life or being moved by the river of life we need to question whether our decisions and choices were predicated on the absoluteness of God's sovereignty or our own disposition and will I think it's normative of the intention of God that God's people would overflow with life and that there would be a freshness and a creativity in all that we say and that we do that no two services could ever be the same that no conversation is predictable, that even when we have just but a few words of greeting there's something even in that communication that is life-giving because the flow of life is in us and within us and in our deeps, out from under and going out to bring life so if the throne is the key examine your proximity to the throne and be jealous for

life, be intolerant of the things that are predictable and stale and look for and expect the freshness that God says will be expressed by fruit in its season, 12 months of the year one different from the other, can you imagine a church like that?

My God, what a grace for mankind to have a presence of that kind in this stale earth where people are dying for the want of a fix for novelty and amusement because everything is so dull and predictable, monotonous that they need fantasy they need space trips they need remarkable forms of, quote, entertainment because of the boredom of death something to break the boredom, however bizarre but once you've experienced it then it loses its novelty then you're on a quest for something yet more novel yet more bizarre, yet more grim yet more ugly, yet more vile, until we're by stage, by stage, we're coming to the utterness of Sodom and Gomorrah and the terrible depravity and utter devastation of men morally and physically out of a need to combat death by novelty rather than to meet it by life so

where the lordship is actual to that degree I think that the waters of life are flowing and it waters the tree whose leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them and their fruit will serve for food real nourishment and their leaves for healing so let me be the man who measures out a thousand cubits more to let you know it's available to the depth that you're willing to submit ask yourself quickly as I bring these remarks to a close where am I my god in the river of life how far in am I in it at all or am I just at the periphery and the beach, just like liking the scintillating touch of the water from time to time but having no desire to enter and how am I functioning to serve the lord is it out of human

determination and my own energy and ability, or is it the same life that the service will be more demanding in proportion to the depth and because it's more demanding it requires yet a greater measure of the life

everything goes together the quality of the service, and his servants shall serve him, it says in revelation 22, to the uttermost by the enablement that is given to the uttermost, the inexhaustible life of god that flows it can flow to us as a trickle it can flow to us as a stream it can flow to us as a rising river and it can flow out to us as waters too deep for us to cross where we have to let go to that kind of thing that gives us a sense of security where we can always go back to the thing familiar and trusted, the beach that god is not speaking to us about these things only

to give us esoteric views of eschatological future, but to finger our present and to say, how far are you willing to go how deep are you in for the world is in desperate need of what will be wrought and brought to it by those who are carried by this river it fructifies everything it touches even the dead sea becomes alive and teeming with fish, how much more our congregations, how much more our society, how much more ourselves where we let the waters of life come in there are salt marshes it says you know what the clever commentators say, well the lord has preserved that because of their chemical value my own thought would be that these are places that the river had not reached maybe because a dam had been built up or a crust where the salt marsh wants to remain a salt marsh and doesn't

want to have its essential character changed it doesn't want to be flooded by waters of life that will purify it, it wants to remain stagnant and outside and a little out of the way and the purposes of god will pass it by it will go on into the sea and out into the nations while those that choose to remain stagnant will become permanently hardened and crystallized and encrusted as a marsh in a salt waste that's frightening so let's bow before the lord let's turn a suggestive word into an event over the issue of the throne and our proximity to it an utterness toward god all the stops pulled out for the water that is described in revelation 22 is clear as crystal every last taint and corruption of race, nationality ethnicity, culture has been taken out, it is the pure waters of life flowing

out from under the throne and out to the world for its healing for its fruit for its blessedness and his servants shall serve him and he will be the light of it so lord, precious god on high this much I know I could not have turned to another theme this morning if my very life depended on it I sought for an alternative there was nothing this and this only as fragmentary as it was just really the text itself and trusting that in an obedience of a man who will serve him that the life of god himself will take the word and make of it an issue of life for those who are languishing around the beach and around the periphery and perhaps might even be in danger of hardening into a salt marsh and never being touched and purified by the waters that issue out from under the throne and lord we're not

just speaking to these immediate saints but through the tape of this out into a denominational and religious world that has already hardening into that marsh that is already living a double death and has lived in it so long it thinks it normative but has not seen the freshness and the variableness of god in the messages of their ministers you know what the man is going to say, you know that the three choruses precede the message, you know that the offering follows, it's stale it's stagnant, it's death and so lord we plead for life and if that life will not issue in and through the church to a world what life will they know they'll be knocking down the doors of the theaters and the arcades and the electronic games and every kind of device and anything to break the deadness of predictable

monotony for they have not life come my god and show them servants who serve you, who can only serve you out of the power of your life who are full and vibrant they're never without the ability to pray, they're never without an ability to give a real word their very presence is life they palpitate and pulsate with the life of god, they're in up to the deeps so my god chasten us for our desire for safety a minimal touch without

an abandonment and call out of even this congregation to a deeper place those for whom you're measuring a thousand cubits more, will you receive that from the lord, will you will you say, I choose I'm on the shore, looking at these options, but I want to go in a thousand cubits more, I thought I was an exemplary saint dutiful and sincere but I know now, hearing

this, that I want yet to have my feet in a secure place I want the control my knowledge those kinds of things I'm unwilling to be swept off my feet, for who knows where it will carry me I might be speaking about the tent of Shem if I can say god forbid or something else that is the fruit in the season of the god who chooses and who is very life himself dear saints choose choose, how far will you go in, and if you're really making a choice, you'll not be embarrassed to stand and make that choice and your standing is a statement to god I'm standing for a thousand cubits more I know I'm making myself a candidate for fearsome things that I cannot contemplate but I know, that I'll not myself be able to mediate those things, or control them for my security but I'm willing to be borne up by you

for wherever you move wherever you flow is righteous because it issues from the throne itself, from the sanctuary, from the temple from the tent, from the very heart and presence of god himself and therefore, it's life healing, and fruit thank you lord, take note of your saints and require of them and remind them, didn't you stand on that sunday morning, to that strange invitation well, why now are you upset, why now are you anxious and fearful, when you said, I'm entering lord, I'm willing for the thousand cubits more why then are you palpitating and apprehensive and want to go back when I'm going to bare you into places and uses, that you have never ever contemplated which this hour will require as I, in my great wisdom, know from my own throne and sanctuary lord, perform it, I pray for

every soul who has stood, and may they rejoice, may they give you the praise, may those black saints in Kansas City in the streets, encounter something that they've never seen though they've heard other, quote, gospel outreaches, just the face of those who meet them, and the words that they speak, unpredictable not cliched, not are you saved brother, do you know Jesus, but a fresh way, a way that the life of God will quicken in that moment, that will make a man to blink and to be arrested, I've not heard this, there's something about this that pierces me it's powerful, it's the life of God may it come to your Jewish kinsmen in New York lord through this one, and others whom you'll raise up, and in every nation my God, fruit and healing, even now within the province that is within us now,

not having to wait for the eschatological climax for the waters are available now to as many as have proximity to your throne, and will go in seal this standing lord, and let it affect something very substantial, that we might say with Paul, with greater comprehension than ever we knew, for us to live is Christ we haven't needed that before, because we could perform the predictable and required religious thing but now, now this uttermost thing lord, requires the power and the enablement of the risen and ascendant life, and we drink it in, we take deep drafts even now, suck it in lord, fill our void, fill our being, let it go right into our deeps my God, that out of our deeps and from under, it can issue forth for others as life if this is not a possibility, that has been made available to

us through your suffering death, resurrection, and ascension, then we of all people are mostly visited we're condemned to live for God without God, we are in Adam's plight but praise God for the life that is available that flows continually out from under the throne of heaven we bless you lord give us deep drafts of that living water and move us into its deeps that many might receive the benefit of that life, we thank you and give you praise, God's people said, Amen

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