

The Further You Go, the Deeper You Get

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[0 : 0 0] For those of you who don't, don't worry about it. Nothing to see. If you have your Bibles, please find the book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel, and chapter 47.

All the way to the end of that book, 47. If you're a Bible reader, and I don't mean if you've read through that book 30 times or 50, I mean if you read your Bible, and you're working your way through the book, and if you've read through the book of Ezekiel, I don't know if you remember much of it.

I'm not going to pretend that you're supposed to remember everything. You're supposed to get it all the first time through. That's not the case. And especially when you're reading through this latter, the end of Ezekiel, you're reading about the future temple in Jerusalem that's not even built, but the future temple that the Lord's going to sit in.

And it's a place that gives chambers and dimensions and gates, and it gives a court and measuring this and that and different land plots for the future.

I know when you read through Ezekiel, I hope you do, when you read through it, you're probably not just drawing out just truths and just wonderful meat to just sustain you through your Christian life.

[1 : 2 5] Some of these passages in the Bible can be drier, can be duller. Some can be just bursting with glorious truth. Others can be kind of tough to get through and find your mind just kind of drifting as you read about daily sacrifices.

But as we read, I want to read the first couple verses. If you read your Bible, you've read through this, this is kind of one that just sticks out because it forces you to picture what you're reading.

And I try to picture and understand some of the dimensions of this temple and the description of it, the measurements, and I try to not like diagram it, but I try to at least get a glimpse, and very few times do I have anything to really stick around.

But this part here sticks around. The beginning of this chapter sticks around. And so if you've read through this, you're going to recognize at least this part. So look at verse number one. The Bible says, Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house, speaking of the temple, and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward.

For the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. Then brought me he out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward.

[2 : 4 9] And behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand, that's a measuring line, went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters.

The waters were to the ankles. Is this jogging something in your memory? Are you picturing this? If you've never heard this one time, try to picture it. They're walking in water here. He brought me through the waters.

The waters were to the ankles. Verse number four, Again, he measured a thousand and brought me through the waters. The waters were to the knees. Again, he measured a thousand and brought me through. The waters were to the loins.

Again, he measured a thousand and it was a river that I could not pass over. For the waters were risen, waters to swim in. A river that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Dripping, soaking wet, the prophet is standing now at the brink of what is a large river.

[3 : 56] Started as just a little flow coming out from underneath this or from the threshold of the house. And now it's a river that he can't even pass over. It's so big. Now, as I said, we're reading about the future.

We're about a future kingdom age where living, healing waters are flowing from Jerusalem, flowing out of the temple, and they're healing the waters around the world.

If you know what takes place, you read that book of Revelation, some nasty stuff happens to the waters. There's death everywhere. And what we're reading about is when Jesus Christ is on this planet and he's reigning and has dominion over it all.

And this river continues and at some point it parts. According to Zechariah 14, the Bible says, It shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea in summer and in winter shall it be.

Joel chapter 3, prophetically again, says, All the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters and a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the Lord.

[5 : 05] And it's a very interesting thing here that God puts this in his book. The measuring of the gates and of the temple and of the courts and all of these things and the chambers and it's interesting that he records all of that and then just this little, this passage that we read, this thousand here going another thousand cubits and let's consider the description that we've just read and if you've pictured this in your mind, I hope you have.

A thousand cubits, he's going in increments as he goes out measuring and then checking the depth of the water. A cubit is, by all standards, roughly it's 18 inches, as we would call it, 18 inches.

And so a thousand cubits is 1,500 feet or 500 yards. If you can picture a football field, five of those in length. That's a pretty good distance to be walking and going into the water.

That's over a quarter of a mile. And what he does is measures a total of a mile and a quarter in length to where he says, this is a river that I can't pass in verse five.

I find it interesting that this is even recorded at all but to what purpose is this detail? To what purpose is this future measuring of this water that flows and how it gets deeper and increments and why?

[6 : 30] Certainly, of all the stuff in the scripture, what are we going to pull from this? I'll admit quickly, I don't know if there's some doctrinal truth here and some way to make some application or understanding to something.

I don't know at all. Totally eludes me. But what I notice here and what I want to pull out is a principle that applies to a lot more than just rivers or this one in particular.

A principle that I want to preach a message called the further you go, the deeper you get. The further you go, the deeper you get. And I think that's true in a lot of ways.

And some of them are negative, some ways positive, and I want to try to just put some things out there this morning to you that I hope will be a help to you, I hope it'll be a caution to you, or I hope it'll be something that'll spur you in some ways to do what you need to do.

So let's consider that and I think this river here that we've read and we've pictured in our mind will really illustrate quite well this truth or this principle that the further you go, the deeper you get.

[7 : 34] Let's pray together. Father, we ask that you'll bless this time. I pray that you'll free all of our minds from distraction, that you'll have access to our minds and to our hearts and that you'll work a work here this day.

Please be with those from our congregation that are traveling and that are away. Keep them safe and healthy. We ask that you'll bless our day together in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, let me start off with a negative one. If you were in Sunday school, you know that's how God operates. He gives you the negative first, so I'll try to stick with that. And let's consider this principle first about the river of sin.

Now, I know this has nothing to do with this glorious temple and the water flowing and healing the rivers and the seas and all of that and bringing restoration to earth.

I get that. But just as a principle, let's consider the river of sin. And let's consider that the further you go, the deeper you get. Because sin operates in such a way that it reminds me of what we just read here in this passage.

[8 : 37] In the beginning, sin calls you to just get your feet wet. Just come on and get your feet wet and check it out. It's harmless. It's so shallow that there's no real fear.

There's no real threat. It's so easy to deal with. It's not major. And you, stepping into that river of sin in the shallow end, you're in total control.

And your conscience, though, your conscience says this isn't right. Stay away. Don't touch that. You've been taught to stay away from this. But you're not even covering your toes.

It's no big deal. Sin says, you're fine. Sin says, this is fun. Your friends there say, this is the way you should be. This is where it's at.

There's no consequences to alarm you. And you can get out whenever you want. It's the river of sin. And you don't even know and you don't even consider that there's dangerous waters.

[9 : 40] But they're a good mile and a quarter so far away you can't even see them. It's not a threat. And so sin encourages you just to get your feet wet. Just to step in.

That reminds me of the first time that someone, a young person, tries or tastes alcohol. They generally, or never, go on some two week bender where they lose their job and lose their car and lose their family and lose everything in life.

For the most part, it's just one little getting your feet wet try and it's disgusting. But you're around other people and they're having a good time and you end up having a good time and you look back and you talk about it and you think it was so much fun and remember that time, remember what we did, remember who said, remember when he did this, remember he went out and puked outside, ha ha ha ha.

And you think it was just great. And you don't realize that you're getting your feet wet into something you need to get out of. The river of sin. It reminds me of the thought of people, again, with touching things, substances, drugs, that they should never touch.

Things they've been cautioned about in their life and yet, there it is. And your conscience says, don't take that pill or don't smoke that or don't touch that.

[10 : 58] Get away from it. Stay away from it. Staying from it. And yet, the sin says, get your feet wet. Try it out. And you do and you don't get strung out and you end up talking about it fondly of what a memory, of what a time.

That was fun. And so your feet are wet and it seems as though there's no real apparent harm done. And so the river of sin encourages you to explore a little bit more.

And as the passage describes going a thousand cubits, each step, as I kind of did some math on here, you can correct me sometime if I'm wrong here, but as I figured it out, the closest I could get was each step is as close to about a tenth of a millimeter deeper.

A tenth, you know what a millimeter is? So ten steps to get a millimeter. That means a hundred steps to get a centimeter. A centimeter is about the width of your finger.

It'll take you a hundred steps to get that much deeper. And that's the measurements here of this first thousand meters. It's to the ankles. And so you go a thousand cubits.

[12 : 13] And each step through that is just undetectable. You don't see that. It's only up to your ankles. It's slightly deeper, of course, but you're still in total control.

This river of sin is no threat to you. Who hasn't run through water that's just ankle deep? You could run through that. You're in total control. You could even fall down flat on your face and you're in no real harm, are you?

Because you can get up, you're bigger and stronger, and you can get out. This is nothing to fear. But it's not idle. This river of sin is not idle.

It moves. It's flowing downward. It's leading you on. It's got a slight push or pull to your ankles and to your feet to carry on and continue a little bit further. And so sin encourages you to go on.

Follow me. Follow me this way. And so in the passage, they go another thousand cubits. And now the water's up to the knees. And that's a considerable change.

[13 : 15] It's six times steeper, this next portion of the river. And it's not scary just being in up to your knees, is it? Surely you can handle waters up to your knees.

This is a lot more of a steeper change. It's about 20 steps to a half of an inch. About one cubit deeper is where you're at now.

Water that's up to the knees. And up to the knees is way deeper than where you started, where you weren't even getting but your toes wet. You can still move. You can still maneuver.

You're still in control. And maybe not even alarmed yet. But the river of sin pushes stronger on your legs. Stronger than it was when it was just at your ankles.

And the river of sin says, just go with the flow. Just carry on. You've come this far. You've got this. And while you're there that far down, you're, let me see here, you went 2,000 cubits, you're halfway.

[14 : 18] Halfway to something you can't handle. And it's only up to your knees. Surely you could take this. I want you to consider something just by way of application here to a parent, to a man or woman, a mother or father that walks in sin or allows sins into their home.

I want you to realize that while you think it's not a big deal that it's only up to your knees to a child, that could be devastating. Waters up to your knees could be up to their neck.

Waters up to your, that could be over their waist. And you may think this isn't such a big deal. It's a lot stronger on them than it is on you. You could be leading your children into danger that neither you nor they can handle.

and the younger ones can get destroyed a lot quicker by something you think you can handle. Just consider that. Now moving another thousand cubits into this river, we move from the knees up to the loins and that's roughly another cubit deeper.

Similar degree of depth with each step. And so this is nothing new. The river's been consistent. The drop is ever so slight that it seems no harder than the previous.

[15 : 30] But when you stand out in that kind of water that's waist deep and moving past you, it's noticeable that it's harder to walk in these waters. It's harder for them to get out into that water than it was when it was just at the ankles.

This waist deep water is nothing to play with. It's not exactly fun anymore. It's starting to put some real effort. It's starting to take a toll on me. The river of sin will do that.

And you realize standing out in water that deep it's a lot easier to keep on with the water than it is to go against it. It's a lot harder to go back upstream and to get out than it is just to go with the flow and follow it further.

And what sin tells you when it's up to your loins is that you can't turn around now. There's no way you can fight this current. There's no way that you can deal with this. It's too much.

You're in too deep. It's all over you. And the river pools. The current's too hard and then go another thousand cubits.

[16 : 37] Another thousand cubits to where it's a river. A river that's deep that Ezekiel says it could not pass over. You ever hear those phrases that you're in too deep or someone say he's in over his head?

Well it didn't start that way. It started with the river of sin just putting your feet in that water. Just getting the toes wet. And it ends always ends to a place where you can't get out of.

The Bible says that foolish and hurtful lusts that these drowned men in destruction and perdition. The river of sin lures you into its deceptive currents and it eventually takes you to a place that you can't get out of.

There's a quote I assume many of you have heard this quote. If you haven't it's worth hearing and believing. The Bible or it's not the Bible it's some quote that says sin will take you farther than you want to go. It will keep you longer than you want to stay and it will cost you more than you want to pay.

That's the river of sin. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. And this book God told us that sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. It surely will cost you.

[17 : 52] The river of sin doesn't lead to happiness. The river of sin doesn't lead to peace in your life or in your heart. The river of sin does not and never will lead to eternal life.

Its pleasures are temporary and its consequences are immense. It takes you away from those things like peace and happiness. It takes you away to where you can't get back to them.

It takes you to destruction and despair and disease and regret and pain. And the further you go the deeper you get in the river of sin.

God tells us to fear sin. A healthy fear of sin is a real good thing. Good advice from the Bible. When it's small fear it. When you think about getting your feet wet fear it.

Get out. You try it once get away from it. Abstain from it. The Bible says flee youthful lusts. Don't trust yourself.

[18 : 49] Don't believe your heart. Believe what God said. Don't believe your friends. Believe what God said. You will end up in ruin. Sin is deceitful and nobody in this room is immune to it.

Nobody can get away with it. Be sure your sin will find you out and it's going to find you in deep waters that you can't pass. There's the river of sin.

So now let's shift gears. Let's shift gears to a total different topic and show you that this is a principle. The further you go the deeper you get it can apply to more things than just sin.

And while that can be ugly and it's something that you need to consider and be alarmed on and maybe God could use that thought to just keep you from the mess that your heart or your friends will take you to.

Let's look at another topic here. Another way this principle can be applied. I think it can be applied to the scriptures. Think about the river of the scriptures. This is a total different thing.

[19 : 48] I realize it. I hope you're with me today. You can switch gears pretty quickly here. The river of the scriptures, this flowing fountain that proceeds from the house of God is a picture of that flowing truth proceeding from the throne of God and it can picture for us the word of God.

It can illustrate this principle. The further you go the deeper you get. It applies to the scripture just like it applies to sin. Think of it. your first introduction to this divine holy living book, your first introduction to this book probably didn't have any major effect on you.

You probably barely even noticed it, if anything at all. This book was confusing to you. This book was mysterious. This book was, well, it was big.

You had no real understanding of any of this. And to tell the truth, it was kind of weird. The language it uses, the names that are in this book, we don't talk like that.

We don't name our children Ezekiel too often. There's some strange things to this book and it's old. And for that reason, it didn't really have much of an effect on you.

[21 : 08] But if you stay in it and you got around it a little bit and someone witnessed this to you, or you showed up to church and you heard the Bible, Bible, Bible, as it was taught and preached, step by step, you don't even realize it, but your feet are getting submerged.

You begin to recognize books of the Bible. You begin to understand certain words and certain statements become more familiar to you. Before it was just Jesus and Mary and Moses.

Jesus and other than that, I don't really know much about it. But now there's words like sin and salvation and the gospel and heaven and hell.

And these words are starting to sink in a little bit and they're causing you to think. And you never really thought about this stuff before. It was just over there, religion, but now it's starting to get in.

And now your feet are, you're into the ankles. You start to think about God is a person that gave his son to pay for my sins.

[22 : 20] And it's still pretty shallow. And maybe there's no noticeable effect in your eyes. You could take it or leave it. You're not so sure about it.

But if you continue in it, the deeper you go or the further you go, the deeper you get. If you continue in it, you see your need for Christ. You receive him as your savior.

You get up to your knees in this book and it's no longer so mysterious and weird and sacred. It starts to make sense. And the Bible starts to give you a new perspective on life, on every day, on when you wake up.

It begins to reveal God to you. something you've never understood or thought on much. It begins to, it's like this book actually applies to me.

This old book that's got these weird names and weird words, it applies to me. It's starting to make sense to me. It gives you that entire new clear perspective.

[23 : 26] You realize this book is something different. different. In all of your life, you've just been, you've been educated in the world. You've, you've had experiences in the world.

You've met people and known people and built relationships. And, and this thing though, there's something very different that's coming out of the pages of this thing.

And the further you go, the deeper you get. There's something special. And then you begin to learn doctrine and you get into the loins. And you begin to learn life lessons from the stories and the characters in this book.

They begin to have real meaning to you. You see an accurate account of history. You see a prophetic view of the future. You read on your own in God.

God opens your eyes to something averse. it grabs your attention and it's like your understanding to its truth is there.

[24 : 29] It was never there before. And it affects your heart. And you're waist deep in a book that is beginning to affect the direction of your life.

It's moving you forward. It's moving you deeper. If you continue in the pure words of God, you're illuminated finally to its depth. the deep things of God.

It's what Paul calls them in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. You realize now how little you know. You realize how insignificant you really are.

Before, when you were just dabbling with your toes in it, it was if you could see you from head to toe, you can see you. But now, down in those deep waters, there's not much of you to be seen.

And you realize, I'm nothing. I'm so small. I'm so frail. And the word of God is so powerful and so real.

[25 : 27] And God's ways are higher than mine. And his thoughts are higher than mine. You see his great love. You learn his mercy. The Bible says, my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

And one more thing you realize when you get down in those deep waters, you realize this book's alive. It never dawned on you before, but once you get into the depth, this thing's living.

It's a discerner of the thoughts and intents of my heart. It wasn't like that at the beginning. And it takes time, and it takes discipline, and it takes dedication to get something out of it, but it's worth it.

That book will change you. This river of the scriptures, the further you go, the deeper it gets. God has given the word of God to us.

That's all he's given to us is a book. And what that tells me is all I need is his book. That's all I need. I need to get in it. I need to fall in love with it.

[26 : 32] I need to learn it. I need to study it. I need to apply it. I need to make it my life. Some of you need to get out of the shallow end of this river. Some of you, when I said Ezekiel 47, you were like, well, where in the world is that?

Some of you, as I even mentioned, just the thought of reading through the Bible, that's never really thought of that. You know why? Because you're just, you're in the shallow end. You don't even understand how deep this thing goes.

You don't understand what it can do to you. How it can take your life a different direction and get you away from the way it is now. You put some time into this book, you can search out the manifold riches deep in the scripture of truth.

I wonder if you're even familiar with Ezekiel 47, if you've ever read this passage. I feel like it's one of those passages that if you've read it before, you kind of, it jogs your memory. That's unique, this thousand cubits and deeper and deeper.

It's such a unique spot in the Bible, you kind of would remember that. Most likely. I wonder if you've even read it before. I wonder if you haven't read it, why not? You live in the United States of America, you have complete access to the words of God.

[27 : 49] You could have a, right now, well, I was going to say within one hour, you could have a copy of the Holy Scriptures in your hand, but really in one minute.

They're here at the church, I'll give you one if you don't have one. But if you don't have a Bible, Bible, you don't have any excuse to not have access to it. You could, you could, next day it from Amazon, it'll be on your porch.

You have access to the words of God. And beyond that, you have time to read and study the Scriptures. You're not going to get any points with God when you stand up there and tell him how much time you spent on your phone, or caught up on all the episodes of such and such.

You're not going to get anywhere with God when, when he asks you about his book. How deep did you go in the river of the Scriptures? What are you going to tell him?

You know, look at him and be like, well, but I read all of these novels. I spent all this time at work and did all this great for these people and made the river of the Scriptures.

[28 : 54] It's something you ought to be in. And you ought to be in deep as you can go. So, it'll show if you are, and it'll show if you aren't. Now, this is a principle, as I said, that the further you go, the deeper you get.

And it can apply in the river of sin. It can apply, as I said, the river of the Scriptures. It can apply in a lot of other ways of which I'm not just going to keep going one after another. But I think it can apply in things like relationships.

Relationships with others. It can apply in your career and how dedicated you are there. The deeper you get into it, the more it kind of takes control of your life.

Or some of you are lifers at jobs and things, and you couldn't get out if you wanted to. There's a lot of ways this will apply. It can apply to your love for the Lord Jesus Christ. The further you go, the deeper it should get.

And sadly, some Christians' love is shallow, and then others, it's deep. And there's probably steps all in between that we could represent here. Some have reservations, and others wouldn't have it any other way.

[30 : 00] I'm all in. I wonder if we illustrated by standing in this river where you're standing in your love for Jesus Christ. If you're in the shallow, the deeper where. I wonder if you could picture that.

And I want you to realize that if you're in the shallow end of your love for Jesus Christ, you're just into the toes or the ankles, then there's an awful lot of you showing. But if you're in where it's deep, there's not much of you showing at all.

There's not much of you to be seen. The deep love of Jesus is all there is. There's a song in this hymnal. I'm going to read you a verse or two from it. It's called, Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus.

It's hymn number 61 here. And the first verse says, Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free, rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me.

Underneath me, all around me is the current of thy love, leading onward, leading homeward to my glorious rest above. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best.

[31 : 03] Tis an ocean vast of blessing. Tis a haven sweet of rest. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus. Tis a heaven of heavens to me. And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee.

Another songwriter said, sweeter as the years go by. Richer, fuller, deeper. Jesus' love is sweeter, sweeter as the years go by.

This thought can apply to your love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And the further you go with him, the further you walk in your fellowship and relationship with Christ, the Son of God, the deeper you'll get.

It can also apply to another way. I'll say this in close. It can apply in your involvement with your local church or in ministry. We'll call this the river of service. The river of service.

And some people, some Christians will stay where the water is not taking much effort from them at all on their part. They're in, but they're not in very deep.

[32 : 04] Others are all in. They're surrendered from head to toe. They're in the river and let it lead them wherever God takes them. They give all they have to the Lord's service.

They've given of themselves and they just want to serve Jesus Christ. The further you go, the deeper you get. The more you're involved in serving Jesus Christ, the more that love for him is displayed and revealed, the more you just, I don't really want to give myself to other things that don't matter.

You start to see him as vain. You start to count the cost. And if I give my time and life to this, what am I going to have to show for it at the judgment seat of Christ? So I'll give my life to Jesus Christ.

The river of service, the deeper you get. I wonder about you this morning. Have you given yourself to the river of service? Are you into the ankles?

Are you into the knees? Or are you all in? I'll tell you this, you're not all into that river if you're messing around in the river of sin.

[33 : 11] Sin is a dangerous river to be messing with. And if I'm you this morning, I'd say if you're dealing with some sins in your life and in your heart, you better respond to your conscience.

You better respond right away when God says, this is wrong. Don't touch that. Abstain. Because he's doing it for your good. You're not stronger than other people.

And that river of sin will lead you to very real, lifelong consequences. You need to get out. There's the river of the scriptures. And I believe you'll get out of these scriptures, which you'll put into these scriptures.

This book is more than you'll know. It's above all of us. It's infinite. My Bible teacher said that book has no bottom.

It just goes and goes and goes, just like God, eternal. The more you put into it, the more you can get out of it. You'll not exhaust its truth and its treasures.

[34 : 16] But some of you don't even know anything about that because you're just not in very deep. If I asked you about the whereabouts of some superstar, you could probably give it to me. If I asked you about some issue in our land, you could talk about it.

But if we wanted to talk scriptures, just not in that deep, are you? Now, I know we're not going to just have theological debates at every fellowship we have. And on the way out the door, we're going to talk some deep things.

That's not the point. It never has been and shouldn't be. But where are you putting your affections? The further you go, the deeper you get.

I think you see the principle. I think I explained it. I think you understand it applies in a lot of ways and can. And this river here that we're reading about, I have no idea what doctrinal truths and things that, why it's in there, why the detail.

But it's a principle that we can draw from, that we can use and we can be cautioned of, and as well, that can draw us to the things that we ought to be giving ourselves to. The scriptures, our service, our relationship with Jesus Christ.

[35 : 24] I'm not going to have an invitation this morning. We don't have a piano player and we're just going to have an invitation.