



South Sub Church

January 4, 2026

Renewal from the River

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NIV)

The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ²He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. ³As 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. ⁴He 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. ⁵He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?” Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. ⁹Swarms 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. ¹⁰Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. ¹¹But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹²Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

Sermon Summary:

This stand-alone sermon traces humanity’s longing for renewal from Ezekiel’s vision of the life-giving river flowing from God’s temple to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. While human efforts at self-renewal ultimately fall short, Scripture reveals that God alone is the true source of renewal, bringing life where there is dryness and hope where there is despair. Through Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit, the promised river of living water now flows within believers, renewing hearts even amid suffering and waiting. Though God’s work of renewal is not yet complete, we live with confident hope that He will one day make all things new.

Ice Breaker Questions:

1. If you could visit any place in the world known for water (a beach, river, or city), where would you go?
2. What is something that helps you feel refreshed or recharged after a long or difficult week?
3. What is one new habit or resolution you are committing to this year?

Scripture Study Questions:

1. Where does the man bring Ezekiel at the beginning of the vision in verse 1?
2. From what specific location in the temple does the water begin to flow?
3. In which direction does the water flow as it leaves the temple?
4. Who measures the water, and what measuring tool is used?
5. How far does the man measure before each change in the water's depth?
6. What are the four increasing depth levels of the water described in verses 3–5?
7. At what point does the water become too deep to cross, and how is it described?
8. What question does the man ask Ezekiel in verse 6?
9. What happens to the water when it flows into the Arabah and the Dead Sea?
10. What kinds of living creatures are described as thriving where the river flows?
11. What grows along the banks of the river, and how often do they produce fruit?
12. According to verse 12, what purposes do the fruit and leaves of the trees serve?

Interpretive Questions:

1. Why do you think the river begins at the temple, and what does that suggest about the source of life and renewal?
2. What might the river's gradual increase in depth reveal about the way God's renewing work unfolds?
3. How does the transformation of the Dead Sea shape our understanding of God's power to bring life to what seems beyond hope?
4. What is the significance of the trees producing fruit every month, rather than seasonally?
5. How does this vision address the spiritual condition of Israel during exile, and what message of hope would it have communicated to them?

Application Questions:

1. Where in your life do you feel spiritually dry or lifeless, and what would it look like to invite God's renewing presence into that place?
2. What might it mean for you to step deeper into the river, trusting God as His work in you grows beyond your control?
3. In what ways might God be calling you to become a source of life and healing to others, as the river brings life wherever it goes?
4. How does the promise of God's future, complete renewal give you hope and perseverance in your present circumstances?