

Streams of Living Water: Part Two

Jesus on the occasion of an autumn Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem which included both water rituals and torch-lit processions – hence his assertion that he is “the light of the world” – also gives us these immortal words (in John 7:37-38):

*If anyone is thirsty,
let him come to me and drink.
Whoever believes in me,
streams of living water will flow from within him.*

From the annals of those who have encountered God come experiences like these – feeling born again, liberated; God’s love pouring into us and joy and vitality pouring out of us; feeling One with Infinite Life; opening ourselves up fully to the divine flow, surrendering to God’s stream of life and letting it flow through and around us; a sense of liquid fire (light) flowing from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet; an intense, penetrating, healing warmth flooding our bodies, being wrapped up in a cloud of joy and deep-soul gratitude, jubilation, euphoria, ecstasy, elation; being washed over and over again – immersed in the softness and gentleness of the love of God; letting go, experiencing the release, the relief; dying so as to be finally truly born; the stress and tension, the fear and anxiety, the shame and guilt washed away; giving our convulsive little egos a rest and discovering with joy the way in which all we let go of comes back to us enhanced and redeemed, the houses and fields, the brothers and sisters, everything, restored to us a hundredfold, as Scripture says.

Our whole being floods with ecstasy. Time becomes eternity. We feel filled with previously unimaginable power. We feel we can touch the heavens. We are utterly released from the past, released from the preoccupations and the bondage of the self, and completely at peace with the universe and its Creator. We are so warmed and energized by sheer gratitude that we overflow with kindness. We have been made new, and we wonder if somehow we might find from this new-found vitality a way to transform the world.

And then even when this moment leaves us, and such moments do, they come and go, but we can still see now the high-water mark of our spiritual potential.

O.K., did you catch all that? This section may call for reading again, and maybe again.

But now for the phrase: “Streams of living water will flow from within him [you].” What does that mean? Well, we all know what it’s like when we feel dry and dusty, exhausted, weary, low on life force, without energy or drive – how when someone in need shows up we have absolutely nothing to give them. When something unexpected happens, we have no resources to meet it. When there is something we know we should be doing, we can’t. We have no will to do it. We intend to feed the hungry, we intend to give the thirsty a drink, we intend to give the homeless a room, we intend to give the shivering clothes, we

intend to visit the sick, but we don't. We ourselves are too thirsty, too dry, too low on life force.

But now just suppose that we are washed over and over again in the love of God. Suppose we are fully open to the divine flow. Suppose we have died so as to be finally truly born. Suppose we are fully released from the past, released from the dark little preoccupations of our fragile little egos, made new, mindfully aware of the Spirit of God within us. What happens then when someone in great need turns up right in front of us? What happens then when there is some great cause to take on? What happens then when others around us seem tired and discouraged? What happens then when we realize there is some more soul work we have yet to do?

So we look at the great challenges that face our society, and at the incredible pace of change, especially technological change, in our time, and at the creativity, collaboration and critical thinking it will take to skillfully work our way through these changes. Now we could throw up our hands in despair. But what happens when we are fully in the flow of the Spirit of God within us and around us?

We are called then to an end to our desperate thirstiness. Nice, huh! We are called to streams of living water that well up to eternal life. And now we can see the tears of others, and we're not so soul-weary we can do nothing. We can feed them. We can give them a drink. We can give them a room. We can give them clothes. We can stop to visit them; we can stop to really hear and understand them. Perhaps we can even find brilliant, collaborative solutions to the great challenges of our times.

May streams of living water flow from within you. May you find your way from the tiresome preoccupations of your ego to encountering the presence of God. May you see that God is not well-hidden. May you see that God is everywhere.

– Dale Pauls