

There is a river (Quality: Good)

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- [0 : 00] We find our text this morning in the 46th Psalm and the fourth verse. And we have these words.
- There is a river, the streams were of, shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
- In many Bibles that we possess, at the head of this Psalm we have these words.
- The confidence which the Church has in God. This truly will be the theme of our address this morning.
- The confidence which the Church has in God. For truly this is the whole tenor of Scripture.
- [1 : 06] That it might create in our own hearts an assurance and a confidence of the divine purposes of an eternal God being fulfilled in this world.
- And not only that the eternal purposes of God in the world may be fulfilled. For that all the promises relating to the Church of God.
- Relating to every individual that's quickened by the Holy Ghost. The Lord shall surely be fulfilled in the experiences of God's people.
- Whatever may be fulfilled in the world. Whatever may be the difficulties in your experience. Whatever you may be called to pass through by the divine providences of an eternal God.
- Everything that is recorded in the Scriptures will surely be fulfilled.
- [2 : 21] As John said of his Gospel these words. So it is of every passage in the Scriptures.
- These things are written. Ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ. And that believing ye might have life through his name.
- So when we come to the words of the Psalm. We see the work of an eternal God on behalf of his Church.
- To create that confidence in our lives. That everything in the dispensation of God towards his people.
- Will assuredly be realized in our experience. So the Psalmist comes with the words in the first verse. God is our refuge and strength.
- [3 : 29] A very present help in trouble. Here is the declaration of what God Almighty gives to his Church.
- In order that they may receive that divine consolation. But right throughout this Psalm. There is that purpose of God.
- To create confidence and assurance. In our hearts. By a sovereign power. For this Psalm has been called.
- The song of holy confidence. The song of divine grace. And whenever the Church has been in great distress.

And anxious about the things that would happen about them. They have always turned to this Psalm. As a source of strength.

[4 : 32] And hope. And faith. The Psalm has often been called. Luther's Psalm. Because whenever. Luther was in trouble.

As he often seemed to be. Wondering how the work of the Reformation would proceed. When he saw the great obstacles that he would encounter.

And often he was brought down low. And distressed. In body as well as soul. He would gather his friends together. And they would sing this Psalm.

With a boldness and a confidence in their God. And they would sing together. God as our refuge and strength.

The very present felt in trouble. Therefore. Will not we fear. That the earth be removed. And other mountains be carried.

[5 : 33] Into the midst of the sea. The first thing that the believer should ever notice. In his life. As he faces the doctrine of the Psalm.

That God himself. God himself. Is the hope. And confidence of his people.

In other words. Every attribute of an eternal God. Is exercised. For the protection. And blessing.

And salvation. Of his people. We. We as it were. Seek to divide God. Into certain attributes. And we speak of God.

Omniscience. Omnipotence. Immutability. And we go on. And on. To describe God.

[6 : 32] God. But God really. Cannot be described. By words. God is so pure. So holy. So majestic. So sovereign.

In his ways. And purposes. That the human mind. Cannot really conceive. The person of the God. Of the Godhead. But when we understand.

Experimentally. That God. That God. That God. That God. That God. That God.

That God. numbers but recognize this truth that God himself rules and overrules in his sovereign work on behalf of his church so that Moses himself could declare the eternal God is our refuge and underneath is the everlasting arms so if you are fearing or in distress anxious about the things of the future look to the Godhead look to what he is as recorded upon the pages of holy scripture and there we have a picture of an infinite eternal God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will doeth whatsoever he wills in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth this God is our God he will be our guide even unto death so the first thing that the believer is called upon to do in a day of desolation and decay concerning the eternal truths of God's word this is what the believer must ever do look to a divine and eternal God of whom it is said these words to the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good

God's eyes are always upon his people and another scripture declares the eyes of the Lord run to see the activity of God to be recognized by faith the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth for what purpose to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him so when we come to this psalm the first thing we notice is the power of an eternal God in protecting his people but notice the position in which the church finds itself it finds itself in the midst of a wicked and ungodly world godly men regenerate men amongst an ungodly and wicked generation so the psalmist goes on and he says and gives us a picture of the world in its present fallen corrupt state and he says therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea that the waters thereof roar and be troubled though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof he gives here a vivid picture of a fallen world a world a world that's in tumultuous recognition of the wickedness in which they dwell we live in a corrupt and false we live in a world that is totally opposite to the church of the living God which is the pillar and ground of the truth so the church finds itself in a world that's tumultuous and he speaks in words like this though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea as everything is turned upside down everything is corrupt and wickedness everything that you touch is vile and wicked and licentious but he says though the church is in such a condition we are not to fear we are not to be moved in any way whatever whatever the activities of the world this wicked ungodly licentious world a fallen world it's ruled by the devil in all its wickedness and apostasy and in this world the godly man is called to pass through but never fear he says

[12 : 18] God is our refuge and strength whatever the outward aspect of things might be and there are thousands and thousands upon the earth who are concerned about the state of their mortal welfare because of the things which men have invented to destroy the world mankind think that they can destroy the world in and of themselves in order to try to preserve their own method or system of life but remember God is in control no person can destroy this world even with all the atomic bombs that they make nothing can be destroyed without the permission of an eternal God God is in control but there are thousands and thousands and thousands of people who are in fear and distress so the church of God is exhorted as they turn to an eternal

God in the words of our text remembering that God is in control as he works all things in holiness righteousness and truth but the way in which the Lord works is set forth in the words of our text and I'd like us to notice particularly this morning the effect of this river amongst the church of God for he says for the consolation of the church that God reveals his divine purposes and the activities of his sovereign good pleasure in the words of our text and he says there is a river for the consolation of God's people there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high the believer is exhorted to examine to come to this river in order that he might experience the power of the flowing nature of this spiritual river it is not a physical river it is a spiritual river it is the river of God so holy is this river so pure as its majestic flow throughout this world that it works according to the sovereign holy purposes of an eternal

God read the last chapter of the scriptures the 22nd chapter of the book of the revelation and the first verse opens with a description of a river and he says there came he says the river of God but he calls it the river of life for in this river there is the power of eternal life that God gives to his people there is a river and he says it's clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God now when he speaks of this river as being clear as crystal he speaks of the impeccability the purity the majesty of this river and it's so holy so majestic it is called the river of God and the purpose of this river as the believer by faith appropriates the work of this glorious river that cancels out that wipes away sin it reveals the glory and majesty of God and his eternal love towards his church so we must ever realize there is a river in this world there is a river the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God in anticipation of the majestic display of this river the old testament prophets continually set forth the nature and the being of this river notice to set of scripture in

Isaiah where Isaiah sets forth the wonder working power of the river notice what he says in the 41st chapter of Isaiah when the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue faileth for thirst I the Lord will I the God of Israel will not forsake them and then he displays these words in this wonderful expression he says I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys I will make the wilderness a pool of water and dry land springs of water you see it's a period of prosperity when the flourishing truths of the gospel go forth and wipes away sin and ungodliness from the hearts of God's people and he says

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the shudder tree and the myrtle and the oil tree I will set in the desert the fir tree and the pine and the box tree now God says all this that the people of God may consider what this divine truth sets forth that they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord hath done this and the Holy One of Israel hath created it this is the wonderful work of God in regenerating his people in making the dry land thirsty in making the hungry soul be fed with the finest of the wheat then he says in another part of Isaiah these remarkable words concerning the work of

[19 : 26] God in the midst of the church so he says in the forty first that is the forty first sorry then he says in the thirty fifth of Isaiah these words say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong fear not behold your God will come with vengeance even God with a recompense he will come and save you now these are the words of God to his church and he says say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong fear not behold your God will come with a recompense he will come and save you and the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped this is God speaking to his church to bring consolation faith and hope in their experience that the power of the gospel might be known under this metaphor that there is a river the streams thereof shall make glad the city of

God and in this river that flows perpetually that will never never cease to flow while this world exists flowing throughout time till eternity comes taking away the sins of God's people exalting the attributes of God and setting forth the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ for you will remember the words of Christ in the gospel of John when he saves that if any man fear as that hope in Christ he saves that out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water that is Christ's declaration of the work which faith produces in the soul that the spirit of God shall come with such force upon his heart creating faith and hope in the soul so much so that the believer lives in this book that out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water expressive of the power of an eternal

God producing regeneration faith and hope in God so you will notice how the spirit of God uses this metaphor and you remember the words which the Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman of Samaria he said if any man drink this water he shall thirst again the waters of this life what he says if any man drink of this water he shall thirst again but if any man drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst but shall bring eternal life so under this metaphor of water we see not only the manifestation of the grace of

God but we see also the marks of a true experience of grace does this water this spirit of God under the metaphor of water does he speak with mighty power to our souls is out of our experience is the manifestations of the grace of God flowing with divine power to our souls now the purpose for which we read the 47th chapter of Ezekiel is in order to show the effects of this water in the experiences of God's people Ezekiel as a bishop in the previous chapters he gives us a striking description of the church of God under the type of a temple and he shows the various aspects of this temple but in the 47th chapter he describes the waters which flow from this temple and you notice first of all where the waters came from it did not originate in anything which man did it originated in this water from the holy throne of

God in the temple and Dr. Gill gives us a vivid description about the water flowed from the east and from the west and so on but this water flowed from under the door from the temple of almighty God and you notice how this water flowed it flowed in a particular way and Ezekiel says these words he brought me again unto the door of the house and behold he says 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 the right side of the house at the south side of the altar and then the water began to flow and Ezekiel saw a man which many believed to be

[25 : 44] Jesus Christ and this man took him into the middle of the river where the water was flowing and lo and behold the man who was with Ezekiel measured the waters measured a thousand cubits and a thousand cubits is roughly a third of a mile so he measured him a thousand cubits so the first thousand cubits the waters only came to the to the to the ankles sorry I think I got it wrong there the waters ran out from the right side and he measured a thousand cubits and he brought me through the waters the waters were to the ankles then he made another thousand cubits and lo and behold he says the waters came up to the knees you see as he made progress the waters became deeper and then when he came to the third one thousand cubits lo and behold the waters were to the loins but the marvelous point about this was this as as he progressed down the river he came to that place when he could no longer stand in the water and he describes it like this waters to swim in waters that

I could not pass over in other words the three depths of water intimate the experiences of God's people and Philpot himself as assumed that these three depths of water give us three different stages of Christian experience the first as John describes the three stages he says little children young men and then the fathers of the church and I often wonder when I'm preaching to certain people what is the depth of experience that they possess in the Christian faith you've been attending the chapel for many many years but what is your depth of experience in the things of the holy scriptures what have you experienced how deep is the truth which you possess maybe to the ankles it may be to the knees it may be to the loins but the believer should get that experience by grace he should so meditate upon the scriptures that he as it were is overwhelmed with the greatness and majesty of the holy scriptures let the word of god dwell in your hearts richly in all wisdom to have a sublime experience of the workings of the holy spirit of god teaching you the eternal truths of god's words so this was the experience of ezekiel waters to swim in waters that i could not pass over and we are reminded of the words of in the official to the romans where the apostle paul is obeying the majestic judgments of an eternal god and he says oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of god how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out have you so meditated upon the holy scriptures that your hearts have been overwhelmed overwhelmed with the truths which the word of god contains waters to swim in waters that i could not pass over but then his experience was not only confined to this matter but there was something else that this man led him to he led him it says to the brink of the river to the sides of the river and what did he see he saw something that he had never seen before he looked at the sides of the river both banks of the river and there was multitudes of trees both sides multitudes of trees he'd never seen so many trees flourishing by the banks of the water and he noticed that trees always need water so where there's an abundance of water in this river there was an abundance of trees trees now trees are a mark of a godly character and these trees are an abundance of fruit so much that it seems to be overwhelmed with the abundance of fruit which they contain well mighty say waters to swim

in waters that I could not pass over as he saw this display of the power of God for you will remember that trees are symbolic of a regenerate man it's a sign of a man that knows the holy scriptures remember the first son he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water there's the right place he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water bringeth forth his fruit and his season his leaf also shall not wither whatsoever he doeth shall prosper a picture of a of a man engage continually in meditating upon the holy scriptures he be like a tree all that each of us have that nature that disposition that the word of

God was our constant meditation then we be like this man the first son you notice that so many they get hold of the scriptures they read it for a few minutes and then they put it down but there should be some excuse for some remember the Ethiopian eunuch a man that not yet fully experienced the grace of God but he is in his chariots reading the scriptures reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah that priceless chapter concerning the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and as he read it like many of us in our young days we read the scriptures but we didn't understand them we didn't understand them the

Lord sent Philip to him and as he was reading the scriptures Philip said to him understand us what thou read us he said how can I unless some man should guide me what a pathetic utterance how can I unless some man should guide me and from that time Philip opened to him the holy scriptures what a revelation came to his soul as he understood that the person described in those words was the Messiah the son of God what a divine revelation to the soul he should be like a train I wonder what you're like in your

[34 : 29] Christian experience right in chapel but what are you like at home it's a solemn thing my friends in facing the word of God that we are consistent in every aspect of our lives for the scriptures record that whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do you should do all to the glory of God every aspect of our lives should be controlled by the authority of scripture for remember those solemn words of Christ every tree which my heavenly father hath not planted should be rooted up can there be more a more solemn scripture before us as we survey the words of our text every tree there's no exception every tree which my heavenly father hath not planted should be rooted up there's no place in the church of God for hypocrites or for inconsistent people it's for the word declares concerning the words of our text that there are some places listen to these words there are some places where the water never flows it never comes listen to the words in the 47th chapter of

Ezekiel that shall come to pass that everything that liver which moveth whithersoever the river shall come shall live there was the greatness of that experience that whatever the gospel flows whatever the word of God comes and comes with divine power to the soul it lives it lives there's the significant aspect of a true experience he lives notice as I say there are some places where the river does not flow and the word says there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come there they shall be healed and everything shall live whither the river come up but in the 11th verse he says these words that the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed they shall be given to salt us remember every soul upon the earth is not converted many many thousands of people live without

God and without hope in the world they never open the word of God from the beginning of their life to the end they're destitute whatever of divine truth they live in the shadow of darkness and that is the only hope they have they're in darkness impenetrable human darkness and the waters do not flow and because the waters do not flow the people remain unregenerate beloved remember the words of our text before us today it says there is a river but notice from this river certain things flow it's not a dormant river it's continually in exercise and it says there is a river the streams thereof shall make glad the city of

God what are the streams what are the streams the streams that flow from this city are the doctrines of the holy scriptures and they flow incessantly towards the church of God in various ways but primary in the preaching of the word for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God the streams are the doctrines of grace the streams are the doctrines of what we describe in the scriptures as the doctrines of eternal love towards his people and it is declared in these words that we understand the doctrines of grace so much so that we revel in the teachings of God's word for the doctrines of grace are the nature of God set forth in the holy scriptures and emanating from the throne of God from the person that the

Godhead is all the doctrines of God's word we speak of the doctrines of divine sovereignty the doctrine of imputed righteousness the doctrines of eternal love the resurrection from the dead the deity of Christ the person of Christ and so on so on the doctrines of grace here the streams flow and it beholds the believer to understand what he is being taught in the holy scriptures to take earnest heed to the things which he hears lest at any time he should let them slip there is a river let us be ever aware of this glorious river from which eternal life flows there is a river the streams thereof shall make flood the city of God there is a slackness in the believer's experience when he does not live in the city of God there is a slackness in the believer's when he does not live in the