



WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT

FLOW, PART 1: FULL DEVOTION

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We are spiritually thirsty people. Jesus came promising spiritual water in abundance. Yet if we're honest—even though we know him and have been saved by him—many of us still thirst. To close the gap between our hopes and our actual experience, we fall prey to many spiritual traps. Sometimes we try harder. Sometimes we pretend things are better than they are. We make rededications or change churches or seek spiritual highs. After a while, we may even give up hope. But if the Bible is true and God has provided for our thirst, there has to be water somewhere. A spiritual river—a fountain of endless spiritual refreshment—runs through life, according to Jesus. We must find that flow, and step into it. It is not something we can manufacture, but like ocean waves, God keeps sending us one opportunity after another. Learn how to tap into God's power and drink deeply of his living water.

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Remember that what Jesus means by ‘thirsting’ is anybody who has unsatisfied desires, anybody who feels restless, anybody who feels discontent about anything at all. It doesn’t mean that you have deep spiritual yearnings.

‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flowing from within.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Let anybody who is dissatisfied, unhappy, discontent, who didn’t have a real good day, who hadn’t had a real good life, let them come to me. Then the Scripture said that such a one *will have streams of living water flowing from within* him. The old *King James Version* translates it, *And out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.*

The belly has become a real important part of the body in our day. There are a lot of ads and stuff for people’s abs—to have abs of steel and stuff like that.

Jesus uses their word ‘koilia.’ Out of your belly, the center of your being. That place that gets all tied up in knots when you’re anxious or afraid. That place where the butterflies fly when things aren’t going too well. That place that feels empty or hollow when you’re dissatisfied or unhappy or feeling alone.

Jesus says anybody who’s discontent—that’s the only criteria. Anybody who’s unhappy, dissatisfied, and comes to me and trusts me and begins to follow me right down in your gut, in your belly, you will be flowing with energy, hope, love, and power.

What does he say that this picture of flowing water, this river of living water, stands for? By this he meant the Holy Spirit. This new kind of life is tied to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. He’s in you, Jesus says.

Turn to John 10:10. Jesus is teaching, and he uses another picture but describes the same reality. Here he uses a picture of a shepherd and some sheep. He says, *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they—my people, my sheep, anybody who comes to me—may have life, and have it to the full.*

Have it with abundance, and have it running out of their ears, he says.

In this passage, who does the thief represent? Satan, the Evil One. In other words, Jesus says we ought to expect some opposition. This life may not be without challenge or without barrier, because there is a thief who wants to rob us of it.

If you turn to any book in the New Testament, you’ll see this picture of an amazing life offered through Jesus by the Spirit. Let me give you one example from 1 Peter. Peter says to the people to whom he’s writing, *Though you have not yet seen him (Jesus), you love him ... and are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy.* (1 Peter 1:8) He says of the people to whom he’s writing, *You have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love... for your brothers...* (1 Peter 1:22) A community of sincere and authentic love; no faking.