

Chair Letter

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Streams of Living Water

'For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.'

Isaiah 44:3

For my wife's 40th birthday celebration we went to Rome. It was a wonderful time. We saw the sights, ate well, soaked up the atmosphere, and drank water! None of that was strange, but we were really, really grateful for the water! It was lovely, chilled water which we had in every restaurant and indeed from wells on some of our walks around the historic attractions. All this sounds unexceptional. The point is that we went to Rome in the middle of a heatwave. It was scorching. The sun and heat made us even more conscious of the preciousness and wonder of the water that quenched our thirst and made us cooler. Over this summer we have had some serious heatwaves in this country and it might be that you have had a similar experience of deeply valuing just a basic drink of water.

Jesus spoke about being living water in John 4. Then in John 7:37-39, Jesus speaks of the way that 'rivers of living water will flow from within them'. He was talking about the Holy Spirit, which would well up and pour out of his followers. Surely, sisters and brothers, this is the refreshment that is needed both within our own lives, but also for the world, as the Spirit moves among us and wells up from within, pouring out into the world. Is this not a picture of both renewal and revival?

It seems to me that we are pointed towards the importance of streams of living water which can transform the dry and dying into new life. I try to go to the gym five mornings a week. Apparently, this is a good thing to do, although if I am honest, it rarely feels like it! As a consequence, I have become one of those people that wanders around the gym with a bottle of water to keep me hydrated.

I wonder if we have become spiritually dehydrated Christians. Maybe we do not allow the refreshing water of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to fill our lives and flow out of them. God can use us as a kind of divine water company! Of course, God doesn't rely on us to spread his living water of renewal and revival, but he does graciously invite us to be conduits through which his living water can flow and be a blessing to us and to others.

I would suggest that much of the church in this country needs revival and renewal. There is too much dryness, too much withering. We need to encourage openness to the life-giving streams of the Holy Spirit, which can renew us and bring a new thing into communities around us. There is no hosepipe ban on the water of the Holy Spirit!

Let us pray and open ourselves to streams of living water to flow into us and into the people around us. Where might we be more open to that life-giving water of renewal in our lives?



