



RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

PETER BELLINGHAM

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DON'T TURN BACK!

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you⁵⁴ Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.⁵⁵ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.⁵⁶ He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.⁵⁷ As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.⁵⁸ This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever⁵⁹ These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.⁶⁰ **Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?**⁶¹ When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?**⁶² What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?⁶³ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.⁶⁴ But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.⁶⁵ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.⁶⁶ **From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** (John 6:53-66 KJV)

We walk with God and we are content and comfortable in what we know of Him, but then He shows us something more of who He is, something more of His word. This word challenges us, it makes us uncomfortable, it surprises us. Like the disciples, we say, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Who can possibly accept it? We are shocked and surprised and we may even be offended by what God is saying to us. We say in our hearts, "But God, this cannot be!" And we are tempted, like the disciples in this account, to turn back and no longer walk with God. Maybe we do not totally reject Him at the outset, but in certain areas of our life we decide to take back control for ourselves and not give God freedom to be Lord. "Many people have turned back because they are afraid to look at things from God's perspective. The greatest spiritual crisis comes when a person has to move a little farther on in his faith than the beliefs he has already accepted." (Oswald Chambers)

But if we are going to walk with God we must be willing to accept everything from His standpoint, from His word. ⁸ *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 KJV) *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* (Romans 12:2 KJV) God calls us to renew our minds, to change our thinking so that we think the thoughts of God, so that we learn to walk in His ways. So we must humbly accept the Word that He plants in our hearts and walk in obedience to it.²¹ *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and*

*overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* (James 1:21 NKJV)

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God wants us to be faithful to the light we've already received and move on into a wider and deeper knowledge of Him. He wants us to trust Him in the areas He has already spoken to us in, to walk in obedience to Him in those areas, and continually be open to learning more from Him.¹² *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. (Philippians 3:12-16 KJV)

If we do turn back He will ultimately bring us back to the same point where we left off. At some point in the future He will cause us to have to face the same issue, the same challenge, the same aspect of His word and His nature. He loves us so He will not allow us to grow in an area until we have received and accepted what He wants to show us in that area. So He will bring us back to the same point until we have chosen to trust Him in that area.

And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. ²Please let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell." So he answered, "Go." ³Then one said, "Please consent to go with your servants." And he answered, "I will go." ⁴So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed." ⁶So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. ⁷Therefore he said, "Pick it up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it. (2 Kings 6:1-7 NKJV)

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The prophet was cutting down wood to help build a house, and the head of his iron axe fell into the water and sank. He was distressed because this axe was of particular value- it was borrowed from someone else. The prophet Elisha asked him exactly where the axe had fallen. Elisha cut off a stick, threw it in the water and the axe head (which was heavy and made of iron) floated to the surface so the prophet could pick it up and continue his work. This was obviously a miracle as iron does not float. Notice that Elisha did not pick the axe head up, he told the prophet to pick it up.

The word that God speaks to us is like the axe head that when we receive it enables us to follow Him and do what He is calling us to do. At times we drop our axe head in the water, when we do not want to receive in our hearts the things God is showing us. The axe head sinks and remains exactly where it was dropped. The work cannot continue while the axe head lies at the bottom of the river. In the same way when we do not receive what God is speaking to us, that area of our life is put on "hold" by God and we cannot grow in that area until we face the issue that we are running from.

Just like the axe head was of great value, so the words He speaks to us are of great value. God will bring us back to the exact place where we dropped the axe head, the exact place where our forward progression stopped, and give us the opportunity to pick up the axe head and continue where we left off. He may do this a few days after we first turned away from the Word He was speaking to us; He may wait for years until He brings us back to that point. But He loves us and so ultimately He will cause us to have to face things in that particular area of our life from His standpoint. He will engineer circumstances to cause us to have to face that same issue again. And then we will have the opportunity to choose to pick up the axe head- in other words we will have the opportunity to choose to humbly accept the word He is speaking to us. Or we can let it drop once more, until the next time God brings us back to that point. But we will lose out in the meanwhile as we will not be able to grow and mature in that area while the axe head lies at the bottom of the river. And a point can come in which God no longer will bring us back to that point- the axe head will remain at the bottom of the river and we will have lost for a lifetime the opportunity to grow and mature in that area. But that is another message!

Of course it is much better to humbly receive and believe the word of God and the things He is showing us. It is much better not to drop the axe head. It is much better to keep walking in the light we have already received and move forward so that God can show us more and bring us into more light. But as human beings we tend to struggle with some things the Lord shows us. At times we are tempted to be offended at His word. At times we are all tempted to turn away.

What has God been showing you that has been causing you to struggle and consider turning back? Let's not turn back. Let's humbly receive His word and move forward with him. In this manner He will lead you into greater and greater knowledge of Him, and greater and greater blessing in your heart, soul and spirit. ⁶⁶ *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* ⁶⁷ *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?* ⁶⁸ *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* ⁶⁹ *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:66-69 KJV)*
