

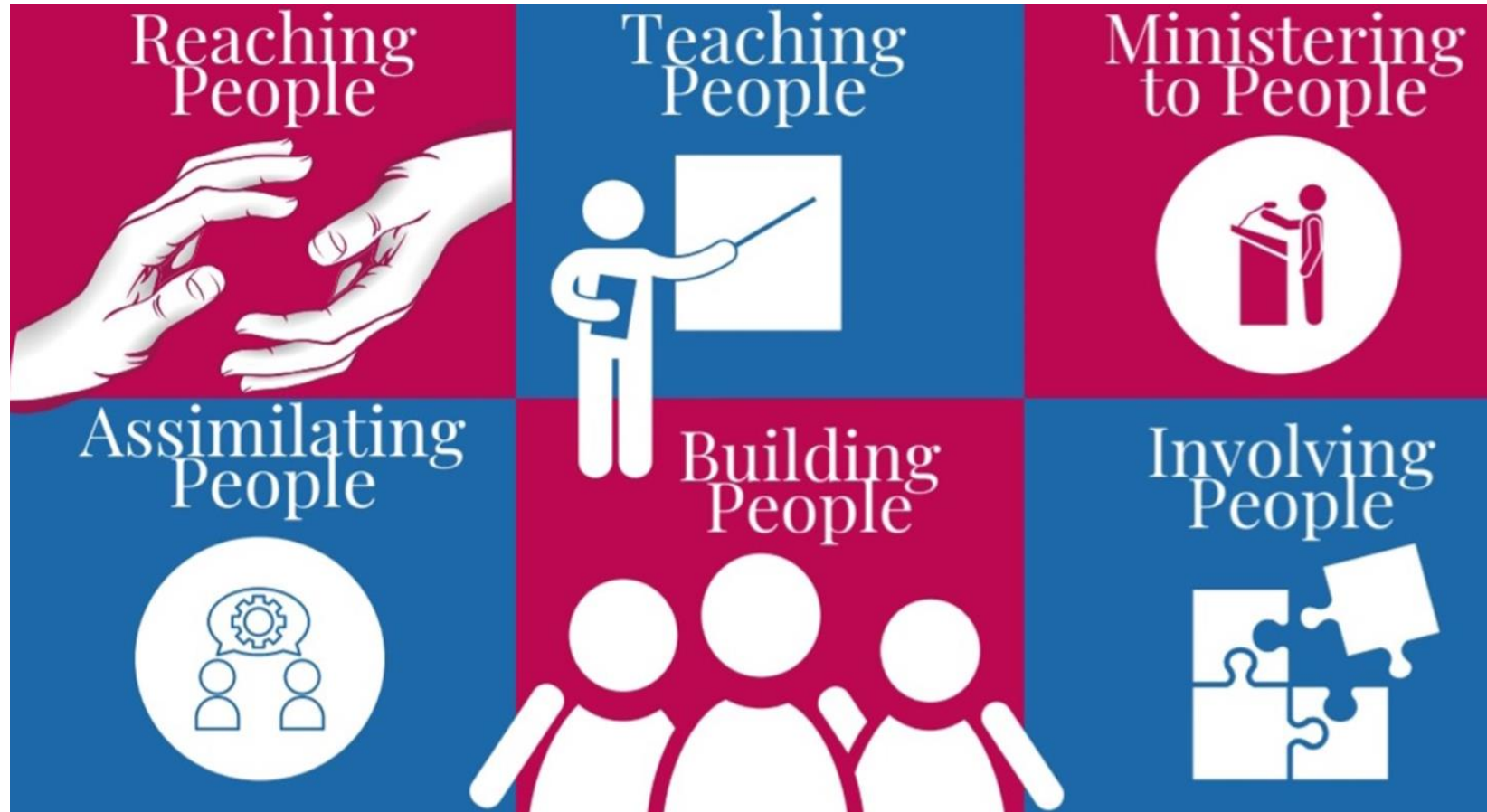
Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C Sunday School

Lesson 11 November 10, 2024

A TRANSFORMING STREAM



Sunday School Core Values



Sunday School Responsive Reading

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

Sunday School Responsive Reading

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

Sunday School Responsive Reading

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

Sunday School Responsive Reading

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

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- ▶ Bible Basis: Ezekiel 47:1-12
- ▶ Bible Truth: In Ezekiel's vision, water is the symbol of God's presence and blessings that flow to God's sanctuary and are available to the earth and its people.
- ▶ Memory Verse: "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezekiel 47:9)
- ▶ Lesson Aim: By the end of this lesson, your students will: **KNOW** about Ezekiel's vision of life-giving water; **APPRECIATE** our covenant with God as an ever-deepening river of blessings; and **COMMIT** to communing with God daily.
- ▶ Background Scriptures: Ezekiel 47; Psalm 1—Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1-12, KJV

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, 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 from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1-12, KJV

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1-12, KJV

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Lesson Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1-12, KJV

10 And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

11 But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

What we know about Ezekiel as a person is found only in the book of Ezekiel. He was born to a priestly family during a time of political upheaval both nationally and within the surrounding kingdoms. Among the Israelites exiled to Babylon, Ezekiel was called to be a prophet of God while in Babylon and was active for twenty-two years. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 587 B.C. occurred during his lifetime. Ezekiel's vision of the river is the third major vision in the book of Ezekiel. Visions are, in essence, waking dreams.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

They were seen by numerous Bible characters including Abraham, Peter, and Paul (Genesis 15; Acts 10; 2 Corinthians 12). Visions contain messages from God concerning the individual experiencing the vision or for the larger community of His people. Most of the time visions contain things that are beyond the scope of what could happen in real life. They are rich with symbolism and usually have to be interpreted in much the same way as dreams. The LORD seemed to communicate to Ezekiel major portions of his prophecy through visions.

Teaching the Bible Lesson

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will understand that sometimes people feel like they are stranded on a high cliff and are forced to leap into dangerous and unknown water.

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Ezekiel

The first three chapters of Ezekiel detail the calling and commissioning of Ezekiel as a prophet of God. The rest of the book of Ezekiel can be divided into three main sections. The first section, chapters 4-24, is prophetic messages of judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem, ending with the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem in chapter 24. The second section, chapters 25-32, is prophetic messages of God's judgment of foreign nations. The third section, chapters 33-48, is predictions of Israel's restoration and redemption, and include details concerning the Temple, the sacrificial system, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Ezekiel

These last chapters also point toward the re-establishment and exaltation of the kingdom of God. It is in the context of this last section that Ezekiel receives a multi-part vision of the new Temple of God that is to come during the future thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. In today's lesson, we will examine the last part of Ezekiel's "Temple tour" where Ezekiel is standing just inside the gate of the Temple and sees the river flowing from under the Temple.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will see that the vision indicates that covenant with God is an ever-deepening river of blessings.

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life
Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

Ezekiel's third vision begins as he is standing in the inner court of the new Temple in Jerusalem. He sees water coming out from under the Temple, flowing from the side of the altar. In Revelation 22:1, we also see "the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (NIV). It is significant that this river proceeds from where God dwells. God's presence has been associated with water elsewhere in Ezekiel (1:24,43:2). Likewise, the flow of God's Spirit, through Jesus, brings energizing life and healing to those who will accept Him.

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, 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 from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

After Ezekiel's guided tour of the Temple(Heb. bayith, BAH-yith), he is brought back to the entrance of the Temple building to the inside of the inner court. Upon reaching the gate of the Temple, he sees waters that has their spring under the threshold of that gate. These waters, which look toward the east and pass to the south of the altar of burnt offerings on the right of the Temple, run from the west to the east. The most important fact about the river is its Source.

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A TRANSFORMING STREAM

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life
Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

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The river issues directly from the presence of God Himself. This is the reason it can give life and sustenance, for they are both gifts of the living God. The river has its spring out of sight-the fountain head is invisible-but it proceeds out of the sanctuary of God. We need to remember that all renewal in the church and the world flows by God's wonderful grace from His presence and is not something that can be generated or controlled by humans.



I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.
4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. 5Afterward he measured a thousand ;and it was a river that I could not passover: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

The divine messenger takes Ezekiel to explore the extent of this stream. A measuring line is used to mark off four one-thousand-cubit intervals, approximately one-third of a mile each. At each interval, Ezekiel is taken out into the stream to examine its depth. The waters increase so that they become a river in which one could swim. What an amazing transformation that a river so tiny at its source could become a mighty river in just over a mile!

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

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4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. 5Afterward he measured a thousand ;and it was a river that I could not passover: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

The depth increases at each interval from ankle deep to knee-deep to waist-deep, and finally to a depth in which one must swim. At the four-thousand-cubit mark, the stream has become a river of such magnitude that it cannot be crossed. The river appears so torrential or so wide that it is not possible to swim across it. A miracle is no doubt at work, something like the unspent jar of meal and unfailing cruse of oil in 1Kings 17:12-16 or like the growth of the kingdom of God from mustard seed to a spreading tree (Mark 4:31-32).

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

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We all have plenty of room for improvement! With each step of obedience, Ezekiel finds himself going deeper into dependence upon the grace of God. With each venture of forward progress, more of Ezekiel is submerged in the river with less of him being visible. The Christian life is progressive in nature, showing growth that is both measurable and discernible. God does not make us grow. We must choose to walk on into greater maturity.

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A TRANSFORMING STREAM

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life
Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

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4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.
5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Ezekiel has gone so far from the shore that he can no longer walk back. Wherever the river flows, that is where he is going. The current is so strong and the volume of water is so great that Ezekiel is in over his head. Still God is carrying him and there is no danger of the prophet drowning. God is still in control of the water and the life of the prophet.

I. THE RISE OF THE RIVER

The Water of Life

Ezekiel 47:1, 3-7

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. **7** Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

Ezekiel must have been left in such utter amazement that he continues to stare at the scene. He is brought right back to the brink-back to the starting point. But there is more to see. Ezekiel sees a new sight that he had not noticed before. Both sides of the river are lined with trees. The purpose of the river is becoming clearer. Its basic purpose is to bring life. Many trees line its sides. Every kind of fruit tree grow on both sides. There is an oasis of trees growing in the wilderness of Judah, between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. What a sight, and what a miracle!

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Strength of the River

As the river flowed from the Temple and over the mountains, instead of eventually waning to a trickle, it gained in depth and strength. Ezekiel, in his vision, waded into the river. It was ankle deep (v. 3). A little farther downstream, the river was knee-deep, then waist-deep (v. 4). One final check revealed that the river was so deep that "no one could cross" (v. 5, NIV). And so it is with our spiritual life. When we first begin our relationship with God, we wade out ankle-deep. We learn the first things about God.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Strength of the River

As we begin to mature, we search out the deeper things of God that require some "knee-deep" wading into the river. And then there are some things that we will never fully understand, and we must be content to say with the Apostle Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33, NIV). When we are in covenant with God, His river in our lives grows ever deeper as we spend time communing with Him and getting to know Him better.

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters
Ezekiel 43:8-12

The waters that proceed from God have a healing, restorative effect. Even the lowest, saltiest body of water in the world, the Dead Sea, will be made fresh by the healing river of God (v. 8). In place of this "dead" water where no life can be sustained, there will be "swarms of living creatures" (v. 9, NIV). This signifies great provision for humankind- fishermen will stand along the shore from one end of the country to the other to fill their nets with the abundance of fish (v. 10). Fruit trees of all kinds will bear bountiful crops- a different kind of fruit every month, because "the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing" (v. 12, NIV).

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters

Ezekiel 43:8-12

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

The guide does not leave the prophet in doubt concerning the interpretation of what he has just seen. Ezekiel learns that the river, which he has just seen, eventually flows into the sea.

"The sea" is a term commonly applied to the Dead Sea (cf. Deuteronomy 3:17). The waters are miraculously healed. The word "healed" (Heb. rapha', raw-FAW) normally refers to the healing of a diseased body. However in this case, the miracle involves the neutralizing of the corrupting chemicals in the water so it becomes fresh and life is no longer suppressed.

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters

Ezekiel 43:8-12

9 And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

The thoroughness of the healing is evident in the phrase "whithersoever the rivers shall come."

Everywhere else, the river brought its life-giving power. Every living thing will abound in the "healed" waters. The absence of living creatures in the Dead Sea has been remarked by ancient and modern writers. In the same way, the living water that Jesus gives brings life to those dead in trespasses and sins (cf. John 4:14). Ezekiel's river is similar to the rivers in the Garden of Eden and the eternal state (cf. Revelation 22:2-3).

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters
Ezekiel 43:8-12

10 And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

Ordinarily, the salt and minerals of the Dead Sea permit no life in it of any kind, but in the ideal (coming) age, it will miraculously teem with life. The entire Dead Sea and Arabah plain, where the Dead Sea is located, are healed by these waters, causing the Dead Sea to swarm with marine life to the extent that fishermen fish its entire length from Engedi to Eneglaim, catching a great variety of fish.

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters

Ezekiel 43:8-12

11 But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

The guide informs Ezekiel that there will be exceptions to the remarkable picture of life that he has just seen. The Arabah blooms (cf. Isaiah 35:1-2, 6-7; Joel 3:18); only the swamps and marshes are not healed. They are left to provide salt for the people. These are places to which the living water does not reach and indicate that life and health are solely due to the stream, which proceeds from beneath the throne of God.

II. THE RESULT OF THE RIVER

The Healing Waters

Ezekiel 43:8-12

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

The vision ends with a focus on the abundant growth of the trees and their benefits for human use. Both banks are filled with "all" (Heb. kol, KOLE), literally "every" tree, to suggest profusion and variety. Their fruit provides food, and their leaves provide healing. The source of the land's redemption and healing comes from God and His throne. He will heal the land in the time of the consummation of the kingdom. Ultimately, the river of life in Ezekiel, as in Revelation, anticipates the new creation. In this new creation, God will have lifted the curse from the earth forever and will dwell in life-giving abundance with His redeemed people gathered from all nations.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Flowing Waters

How we wish the water of the sanctuary would flow over us-that healing, reviving presence of God in our lives. How we need His grace, His healing, His forgiveness to wash away the stagnant, dead waters of our lives. Only when we bask in His presence and soak up the living water of His words will we become bountifully fruitful servants of God. Our fruitfulness is not just for us. The fruit we bear is to serve as food to those who are hungry for the Gospel. Our green leaves of revival and purity will be for the healing of others who are sick or wounded. Wash us in Your living water, O God!

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will be encouraged with images and symbols of
God's enduring provisions of the water and the bread of
life.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

According to scientists, 97% of all water on Earth is salty. Another 2% is ice, leaving about 1% for human use. Water conservation and pollution are major concerns in our world today, yet this is approximately the same quantity of water that has cycled continuously for centuries. God has blessed all of mankind-both saved and sinner-with the life-giving gift of water. We've all seen the pleas for help from poverty stricken countries where people are dying for lack of pure water.



BIBLE APPLICATION

God's people should not be hardened to the plight of these nations, but we should do what we can to help. God calls believers to hold out a cup of cold water to those who are thirsty-both literally and spiritually (cf. Matthew 25:35). God's living water is available to quench the thirsty souls of those around us. God's well will never run dry; His river will never be dammed up. But it is up to us to lead the lost and dying to the water's Source.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will find signs of God's presence and blessings in our surroundings.

STUDENT RESPONSES

What is happening in your life spiritually? Is your stream growing stronger and deeper over time, or is it drying up and becoming stagnant? This week, examine your life. Compare your life today to where you were spiritually a year ago. Are you in ankle-deep? Knee-deep? Ask God for a desire to go deeper into His river and commit to commune with Him daily.

Prayer

Dear God,

We bask in Your flowing water that refreshes our spirits everyday as we experience You healing, forgiving, and renewing us. Your tender care refreshes our spirits everyday.

In Jesus' Name, we pray,

Amen.

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A TRANSFORMING STREAM

Next Sunday
November 17, 2024
Lesson 12
Transformation Continued
(Ezekiel 47:13-23)

