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Pastoral Nature Notes
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Deliverance of Rippling and Trickling

As it has finally begun to warm, I took my supper on the apron of the garage enjoying the relative warmth of spring. While imbibing my left-over pea soup, I could hear the water trickling off of the garage roof. In front of me that formerly solid snow base of the gravel driveway had become as mushy as my pea soup. Water was just beginning to form those stream-like curves amidst the remaining, snow packed, base. These events while quite messy are a sign of deliverance from the frigid grip of winter. The rippling and trickling are the first sign of the deliverance of Spring!

I was taken back to my childhood when I used to love to drain the water away from the driveway. Cutting connections to between channels to give water that path of least resistance and the quickest possible exit. Yet as I did this, I would stop from time to time and watch the water, and how it would dance over the intricate patchwork of pebbles. As it moved the water rippled and patterned at its surface that a glassy mirror of the pebble patchwork below. At times it could seem as if water itself were alive. Yet upon catching some in a cup it became completely inanimate.

This is one of the universe's greatest natural mysteries. Water, its beauty, its precise chemical makeup, its ability to move, its ability to shape and form: sometimes powerfully, is one of the under recognized natural wonders of the world. The small trickling and rippling on the driveway can at times be barely audible. However, as it makes its way down the watershed it joins other trickles. These begin to form seasonal streams which joining other seasonal streams and water from underground springs together they make for streams and small tributaries. Tributaries along the way join and become immense rivers like the Mississippi, the Amazon, the Nile, and the Volga. Yet they all begin somewhere, and a large river is nothing without its tributaries. All large rivers begin with the small rippling and trickling.

Ezekiel 47 captures this in a theological way. In his vision he is taken to the Temple and there he is shown a flow of water out the east side of the temple below the altar. Then being taken outside the walls of Jerusalem he sees a trickle out the southern side. Then with each measurement the trickle becomes greater. Until it may only be crossed by swimming. From there

it flows down the Judean Mountains to the Jordan valley the salt flats. There trees grow and it makes the Dead Sea fresh! Really? The Dead Sea is 33% salt! Now I have been to Jerusalem there is no such stream and no such plants or any purifying of the Dead Sea.

What are we to learn from all of this? Water is like the oil of life. Just as an engine cannot remain running correctly without lubrication, so too life cannot run without water. Water is the lubricant, the nutrient medium, the purificator needed to sustain life.

Ezekiel is seeing something deeper in the rippling and trickling water flowing from the temple. He sees this stream as God's grace. God's grace flowing from the temple lubricating, purifying, nourishing a lifeless, rocky, salty, fallen world.

Ezekiel's vision is not just a vision; however, it did literally happen just outside the Gate of Jerusalem near the Temple. John 19:31-36. A flow of water. It is coming out rippling and trickling over the ribs and obliques of God made man! Jesus Christ! Before dripping to the ground to form a stream of God's purifying nourishing and lubricating grace. It is laden with nutrients: the blood of Jesus our savior which contained the fullness of his human and divine life.

The rippling and trickling water of spring not only signal the deliverance of frigid, icy, lock of winter, it also reminds of the springtime we live in though God's deliverance from the lock of sin through the rippling trickling water from the sacred side of Jesus. This grace of the savior when embraced by us will reflect that life of God inside of us to others. Just as the water mirrors the unique patchwork below through its rippling and trickling.