

Love God. Live Free.

Early Fall 2023

Friends, Comrades, Allies,

Here at the end of September/beginning of October, I want to share this lovely passage with you:

Oh, the joys of those who do not
follow the advice of the wicked,
or stand around with sinners,
or join in with mockers.
But they delight in the law of the Lord,
meditating on it day and night.
They are like trees planted along the riverbank,
bearing fruit each season.
Their leaves never wither,
and they prosper in all they do. (Psalm 1:1-3 NLT)

I love, love, love this passage for so many reasons! I love the promise of flourishing and fruitfulness for those who root themselves in God. I love the offer of becoming “evergreen.” I love the hopefulness of this—especially in a time when just about everyone I know is running a little low on fuel.

I also love the passage because it echoes Eden and foreshadows Eden’s return. For listen to this now from Revelation, where John is seeing the City of God come to earth:

Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. (Revelation 22:1-2 NLT)

Here we also have a river, *The River*, filled with life. We have a tree here, too, *The Tree*, alongside that River, and the tree bears fruit each season, just as in Psalm 1, and is also evergreen. Scripture uses these “hyperlink” images and references to help us get the full picture. Psalm 1 is speaking of our humanity, comparing it to Eden, past and future, and promising we can be little trees almost like the Tree of Life itself!

Yes, please.

Yes, I would like that very much.

Follow me closely now: Eden was a place of supernatural abundance, for no evil or sin had yet touched it. The presence of God filled the place. The City of God is absolutely a place of supernatural abundance and provision, for the presence of God fills it. So the promise here “in the meantime” is that there is a supernatural provision for us now, from God, for our weary humanity!

How do we tap into it?

Psalm 1 speaks of being deeply “rooted” in God, our roots down into the river (which represents his provision, his very Life). According to the Psalm, we do so by what we are meditating on, what has our *attention* and *affection*.

**WILD
AT HEART**

That's big, and it's practical. Gosh—if you just spend three minutes a day loving Jesus, you will begin to tap in.

But I think there is more.

I want to put before you once again the concept of being “amphibians,” men and women who comfortably move back and forth between the natural world and the Kingdom of God. For while we move about in this natural world, we are also “citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives” (Philippians 3:20 NLT).

I'm bringing this up because we can't rely only on this natural world to replenish and strengthen us. It has many gifts—like beauty, rest, and play—but it is not sufficient. These trees also need to be drawing upon the very life of God.

Our family was on vacation in the Tetons this summer, a place of deep beauty and play we adore. Swimming the lakes, rafting the river, hiking the forest. It was Edenic. Then we got devastating news of a death in the family. All the joy suddenly felt very fragile. In the early morning, Jesus told me to go down to the river by myself (the Snake River, which flows out of Jackson Lake). As I stood there among the natural beauty, he said, *You need to be an amphibian, John. The spirit of death is here. Start praying for the River of Life to wash you and fill you.*

I prayed for a long time as the Spirit led me, first washing my own heart and soul, then Stasi's, then our family. I was tapping into the “rest” of the Kingdom of God, the supernatural provision—because the natural was not enough. The River of Life is ours right now, and we need it, along with all of the provision of God and his marvelous Kingdom.

Some friends, also on vacation, texted a mayday prayer alert. They were in an accident. Jesus immediately had me summon angels to go to them and help them. That is another expression of being an amphibian, of living in two realms, two worlds. Angels are here to help us. Other friends found themselves beset by a sudden rush of chaotic events. “Chaos is here,” Jesus said. “Bring my Creation Glory against it.” That is yet another example—calling upon the Glory of God in our need. For his Glory filled the temple, and we are now the temple (1 Corinthians 3:16). So we can be filled with the Glory of God!

We are living at a time when the natural “graces” this world provides are not sufficient to the pressures (and the warfare). By all means, get out for a run, ride your bike, listen to beautiful music, work in your garden. Those things help. But we must also draw upon the Kingdom of God. We simply must.

Offered in so much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, flowing style.

John

PS. Fall is the time of year nearly all of our donation income comes in. Would you pray about making a gift to us, so that we can carry on this beautiful global rescue of human hearts?