

Sermon: What Happens When God Moves?**Text: Ezekiel 47:1-12****Discussion Questions:**

One of my favorite interview questions, when interviewing a possible candidate for a position, goes something like this:

If money were no issue, and you were guaranteed to succeed, what would you do if you held this particular position?

Now let me ask you a few questions about this question—

- Why do you think I like this question so much?
- What are some things that answering this question reveals about a person?
- What are some things that this question removes?
- Why do people have such a difficult time thinking beyond their fears?
- Just for fun, let's imagine you were applying for a pastoral position here in Chambersburg. How would you answer this question? What is the one thing above all other things that you would want to see God do right here in our community?

Examination:

- Read **Ephesians 3:14-21**:
 - What posture does Paul take as He goes before God? (v. 14) Why do you think he assumes this position?
 - What do you think it means that every family in heaven and on earth derives its name from God the Father? Why do you think this is something that Paul even mentions—in light of the fact that he's about to utter a prayer?
 - Paul's first request as he prays for the Ephesians is *"that out of God's glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."*
 - Wow! What an amazing prayer! Paul is celebrating the magnificent work that God can do in each of our lives as Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts. This is all about the transformation of our inner selves. This is about the joy and peace and grace and hope that can fill our hearts and minds! So here's the question—where does this transforming power come from?
 - The answer is: God the Father's glorious riches!
 - Have a discussion about God's glorious riches. How vast do you think God's glorious riches are? What do these glorious riches include?
 - What is God willing to do with these glorious riches? Where is He willing to PUT these glorious riches? How do we gain access to these glorious riches? What do these glorious riches accomplish in our lives?
 - The second thing Paul prays for is *"that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge."*
 - Paul wants us to understand the all-consuming and never-ending love that Jesus has for us. Let that sink in. The love that Jesus has for us goes beyond knowledge. It is more vast than we can fathom. Talk about what this means.

- The third thing that Paul prays is *“that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* This is being more full than full. Paul is asking that we literally overflow with the fullness of God. That God’s glorious riches fill up our hearts to the point that we can’t contain these riches—and they come spilling out and into other people. Again—talk about this? Is this even possible? What does it look like when this happens in a person’s life? What does it feel like? What can God accomplish when this happens?
- Paul summarizes all three of these request in verse 20, when he simply says: *“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us...”* This summary is simply restating everything that Paul has just been praying. We serve a God of infinite riches. These riches can be poured out into our hearts when we come to God in faith. The result of this faith is an infinite love that gives us an unshakable confidence. And this power is able to accomplish more than we can ask or even begin to imagine.
- So I return to the question I asked in the opening discussion questions: What is the one thing above all other things that you would like to see God do right here in our community?
 - Is God able to do this (whatever it is you dream of happening)?
 - How might God do this?
 - What will it take for God to do this?
 - What will the result be if God does this?
 - Can you envision of future where God is doing this? If no, why not?
- Read **Ezekiel 47:12**:
 - The prophet Ezekiel is given a picture of the future. In this future, there is the smallest of streams that begins to trickle out from underneath the altar of God. This stream grows and grows until it becomes a mighty flowing river that miraculously transforms the Dead Sea (a place where there exists NO LIVING THING) into a place of vibrant life.
 - According to verse 7, what is the first sign of life that is produced by the river?
 - According to verse 8, what is the second sign of life?
 - According to verse 9, what happens next?
 - In verse 10, the blessings of the river expand to include what activity?
 - Finally, in verse 12, what is produced by this mighty flowing river?
 - The great English preacher, C.H. Spurgeon, declared that this vision applies to the transformative impact of the Gospel—both locally as well as globally. He says: *“We bless God that the day of small things which dawned at Bethlehem has already grown to a day of great things, and our faith fully expects to see greater things than these.”*
 - Do you agree with him?
 - When he spoke of great things happening in the world, he was living nearly 150 years ago (147 to be exact). What “greater things” have we seen happen in the years since he said this? What great things are yet to happen?

Application:

The application today is obvious. What is God able to do, right here in Chambersburg, when God’s people take discipleship seriously, and when the glorious riches of God’s unlimited power overflow from our lives and into the lives of others? What do YOU believe God will do? Make a list of all of the things that you are willing to believe that God will accomplish in the next ten years in our community. What can God do through you?