“The Church of God: The River City”

**Ps. 46:4; Isa. 55:10-11; Rev. 22:1-2**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Sean Hoisington, Hayden Bible Church, 9/5/21)

 God’s word is the life-flow of His church. His word, the Bible, is a life-giving river. Wherever this river flows, good things happen. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 gives us a good synopsis of what the Bible is all about. It is all breathed out from God. It is inerrant. It is infallible- it accomplishes its purposes. It is immutable- it never changes. It is the only valid source of Christian doctrine. When His word is sent out, it never returns to Him empty (Isa. 55:10-11).

 In the city of God, we **repent** at the hearing of the truth, God’s word. This is due to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. God’s word brings life where there was only deadness. Have you repented? Have you turned from a life of slavery to sin, to a life focused on bringing glory to God? Repentance is a yielding to the lordship of Christ. Read Acts 2:36-38. When Peter reached the crescendo of his sermon, the people were struck to their core. They asked, “What shall we do?” Peter told them, “Repent,” and thousands gave their lives to Christ that day. (Q1)

 In the healing waters of the word we are **born** of the truth. Read John 3:5. As Nicodemus learned, we can’t do it; only God can do it. What’s more, this new birth abides forever (1Pet. 1:23-25).

 We are **sanctified** by the truth. God’s word is profitable and beneficial to lead us to holiness. To put it another way, we are matured by the truth. God works through His word to make us ready, as we drink deeply from the crystal, clear river of His word. Real growth comes from the ministry of the word. It is our central, sufficient supply. When our vision gets blurry, His word helps us see rightly again. It is the real source of lasting success. (Q2)

 We **sing** the truth. The woman at the well (John 4:1-42, esp. 23-24) had grown up with dry, mechanical worship. Like the pharisees (and some of us) God would say, “In vain do they worship Me.” God wants a heart enamored with Him, born again through Him. The worship He wants must be holy, for Him alone, and based on the truth in the word of God. This is what pleases Him.

 We **proclaim** the truth, so Christ will have the prize for which He died. (Q3) We are His hands and feet as we preach the good news (Rom. 10:13-15). In Matt. 28:18-20, Jesus said that all authority had been given to Him. Then he commanded us to go out and make disciples. Our primary task on this earth is the preaching of the word of God, the life-flow of His church. Will you proclaim Him today? (Q4) (Q5) (Q6)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the marks of a repentant heart?
2. How do we become mature followers of Christ? What is the “practice” talked about in Heb. 5:14?
3. What is the prize for which He died?
4. How has God’s Spirit-enlivened word helped you or changed you?
5. Read Rev. 22:1-2. How does this river, the word of God, heal nations? How could it heal our nation?

 “Wonderful Words of Life” (Bliss)

1. Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life;
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of life.
Words of life and beauty
Teach me faith and duty;
	* Refrain:
	Beautiful words, wonderful words,
	Wonderful words of life;
	Beautiful words, wonderful words,
	Wonderful words of life.
2. Christ, the blessed One, gives to all
Wonderful words of life;
Sinner, list to the loving call,
Wonderful words of life.
All so freely given,
Wooing us to heaven;
3. Sweetly echo the Gospel call,
Wonderful words of life;
Offer pardon and peace to all,
Wonderful words of life.
Jesus, only Savior,
Sanctify forever;