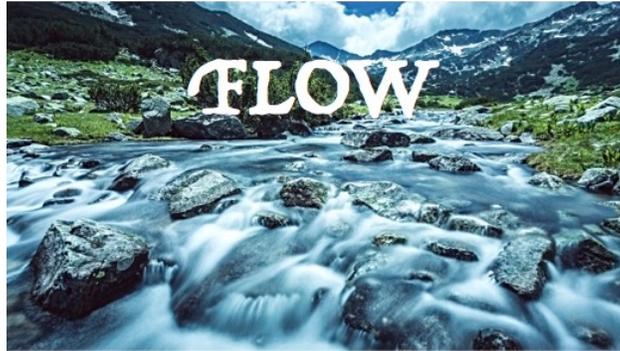


#1 March 1, 2017



*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.  
He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths/streams of righteousness  
for his name's sake.”*

– Psalm 23:1-3

## **River of Life**

by Pastor Mike Conan



My first few years of school were spent in portables in the middle of a vacant lot while our school was being built. I grew up on the Puget Sound in Washington State and, like here, it rained a lot, during the winter time for recess we used to play with the mud puddles. I remember watching with

amazement as the older kids would create streams on the side hill out of the rain flow using sticks, rocks and mud. It often rained so much that they would have to corral the runaway stream that always wanted to flow to the lowest place on the playground. By placing a big stick or digging a deeper trench for the water to flow through they could corral the stream and get it back on track.

Sometimes I wonder if this is how God is working in our crazy worlds. Our lives naturally flow in one direction and God puts things in our path to get our attention and bring us back to where He wants us. Over time as we grow and mature in our faith a deeper trench is dug that helps us stay on God's path better. I hope that this season of FLOW will be like that for us. I hope that we will find the flow of our lives to have a deeper foundation as we study His word and see the direction He would call us to move in together.

The Lenten season is the 40 days (not counting Sundays) before Easter. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word lencten, which means "Spring." It is a time to prepare for growth and to put ourselves into God's flow and receive life and direction. When we think of Lent it is a time to set ourselves apart to be Holy. We uniquely are God's children and uniquely are called to follow His Holy flow in our lives. He calls us to be different than people who do not know Him. Over these seven weeks before Easter we will look at God's stream for us. I encourage you to disrupt your normal routine and read these devotions and also consider "giving up" something for lent that pulls at your heart. You then fast from that thing for six days each week with Sunday being a day to enjoy everything, a taste of Easter. I am giving up junk food and my personal Facebook. If you have an attentive heart and Spirit I am confident that God's Spirit will meet you each day and you will discover more about the wonderful and beautiful call of our Lord to "follow me."

The crazy part of the God story is that God doesn't just move us along in His stream through His word and the Spirit. But, as we go down God's stream and are renewed by Him and His word we become a source of life to the world around us! He creates in us a stream of living water! In the Old Testament book of Ezekiel there is a vision of a river that flows from the temple into the surrounding community, symbolizing God's presence

bringing new life everywhere the Holy God and His people go. Jesus picks up the same theme when he describes the life that He gives to us and that in turn we can give to the world. In John 7:37-39, Jesus says:

*“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him*

*were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

I am excited to have over 13 people writing these daily devotions and hope that you will spend the 10 minutes or so a day renewing and rediscovering God’s direction in your life. We will be studying the 10 commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and the unfolding fantastic story of Jesus Christ. I can’t wait to see the fruit that the Spirit of God will bring as our lives flow in His ways, His power and His strength.

Let us go together to the throne of Jesus and be nourished and strengthened by His living water, that we may in turn have His living water flow through us into the world.

**Prayer for Today:**

*Lord, I want you to lead my life. I pray that you will show me anything that pulls at my heart that you may be calling me to take a break from for this Lenten season. I pray that you will help me set aside the time to be in your word and that during that time you would bring your living waters into my life and that I in turn could bring living water to all the people you will bring into my life each day.*

**Other Scriptures:**

Ezekiel 47:1-12  
Revelation 21:4-8

**Inspirational Video of rivers:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpdd-QPPzbk>

