

REFLECTION – STREAMS OF BLESSINGS May 25th 2025

Psalm 67 & Rev 21:10, 22—22:5

- *Put your ducks in a row and don't count them before they hatch.*
- *She's a rising star, and with the right guidance, she'll spread her wings.*
- *Life is a rollercoaster—you need to take it one step at a time.*

If I were to say any of those things I would be using a mixed metaphor, and they're all metaphors that you would understand and dare I say have probably used yourselves. I used the first one just last week and the person I was talking to knew immediately what I was talking about.

This leads me to our readings for today. When we reflect on our readings for this week regarding the light-giving stream as metaphors for blessings, we allow ourselves to delve into a deeper understanding of how they can influence various aspects of what makes us – what makes us who we are. From the psalm we're called to recognise God's love and the joy that comes from being blessed. Psalm 67 is an invitation not for individual fulfillment alone, it's for collective rejoicing – that for us all to find a space where we can rejoice together. Similarly, from the Revelation reading we hear a depiction of a city of divine light, where the river of life flows and nourishes the presence of God, symbolising the ultimate fulfillment of God's blessings on earth.

So much of the scriptures include metaphors, so we shouldn't be surprised that here we can hear a metaphor once again. If we could envisage the 'light-giving stream' as a metaphor for blessings, we can picture how these blessings flow like a river through the different dimensions of our lived experiences, thoughts, actions, relationships, and others. When we consider 'light' from our faith perspective we think in terms of knowledge, purity, and Christ's presence with us. Light over darkness, (the candle on the Communion Table each Sunday) A continuing stream of thought can be seen as the conduit through which the love, grace, and mercy of God touches every sphere of our existence. A conduit joins things together so they can work together rather than like a silo in isolation.

So, what are some of these dimensions of life that blessings flow through – what do they look like?

Thoughts: If we see blessings as light flowing through our thoughts, it can inspire a mindset of gratitude and positivity. This stream can bring clarity and wisdom, helping us to focus on the good in our lives and in others. By allowing ourselves to be influenced by this stream of thinking, we enable ourselves to turn negative thoughts into positive thoughts. As we do this, we're also cultivating a spirit of hope and resilience.

Actions: The blessings we receive can empower us to take meaningful actions – being passive is no longer light-giving. When we're aware of the blessings in our lives, we may feel a calling to share them. This might motivate acts of kindness, service, or justice – aligning our actions with Christ's call to love and love generously. When we're all participating in the collective blessings as a result of them freely flowing from our actions, this can be the catalyst which a community needs to change.

This leads us directly to **our relationships**. The light-giving stream has a huge impact on our relationships. As we recognise the blessings in our lives, we grow and nurture the various ways we connect with each other. We become more inclined to engage in deeper conversations, offering support and friendship to others as we also learn to trust each other and Christ as we mutually share each other's blessings which we have received – we receive blessings, and we bless others. As we begin to recognise blessings, we will also see a strengthening occurring within our community atmosphere where greater understanding, forgiveness and cooperation with each other flourishes.

Jesus was very pointed in his thoughts of what it is to be a **faith community**. Within our context of St Ninian's faith community, the stream of blessing serves us as a unifying force. When we gather to celebrate, fundraise, enjoy a movie morning, potluck lunches, shared suppers, fellowship, and definitely not least of all worship God, when we do this together the blessings we have received – whether they be answered prayers, healing, or success- we create a community that is thriving on the hope found in shared experiences and genuine gratitude. Here, we can actively participate in the nurture of each other's faith journeys – encouraging gifts of teaching, stewardship of property and financial, faithfulness, trust, love, grace and encouragement as we collectively seek to grow closer to the risen Christ Jesus.

As one thing just about always leads to another we reach into **our neighborhood** where the stream of blessings reaches having the power to influence the way we engage with those around us. By recognising the blessings, we enjoy – such as safe spaces, friends, our community events/activities, we are reminded of our responsibility to be participants in our neighbourhood. Not to be passively waiting for things to come to us, but to go out into the neighbourhood and participate with and in it. The first step will be the hardest and then it just gets easier.

If we can extend the metaphor a little bit further, the blessings can ripple out to affect **local, state and perhaps national governance**. As a church we reflect Christ's justice, equity, and harmony across our territory, state and nation. We do this by sharing the blessings we've received, not just with our buildings, we include our voices and hospitality wherever we have the capacity to do so.

One last thing, imagining this stream of blessings as the global force invites us to **engage with the wider world**. Issues such as poverty, climate change, and injustice such as modern slavery resonate differently when we see them through the lens of blessings. We can choose to be active participants in international aid, environmental care, and the all-important efforts for global peace. By sharing our resources and supporting global initiatives, we become channels of blessings that ultimately nourish others and us as we continue to serve Christ -- the light-giving water and the light of the world.

What does being active participants in blessings look like?

To be active participants in the blessing and receiving of blessings requires faithful intentionality and honest openness – no room for deceit or a manipulation of the truth.

Practice Gratitude: regularly engage in an attitude of gratitude. Recognising what we're thankful for opens the door for more blessings to flow into our lives.

Engage in Community: be involved in community services, volunteer activities, or neighborhood initiatives. When we do this, we not only bless others, we allow ourselves to be blessed through them.

Nurture open and honest relationships: spend time and energy into building relationships which are deep and meaningful. Offer to listen or provide help when needed – this will amplify the blessings all involved experience. Always remembering the commandment to love one another as Christ has loved you and to love God above all else.

Put mindfulness into action: reflect on how your decisions and actions impact those around you. Make prayerful choices that consider the well-being of all those around you. When making decisions, involve the Spirit in your considerations; then take the Holy Spirit's advice.

Pray: Let prayer be your first act, rather than your last. Seek out not only blessings that will help you first, seek out blessings for the well-being of others as well.

Embracing the metaphor of the light-giving stream as blessings encourages us to see how interconnected our thoughts, actions, relationships, and societal contributions are. By actively participating in both blessings and receiving, we contribute to a much broader cultural movement that promotes love, Christ's compassion, and unity, always embodying the faith in Christ we cherish while actively living in the fragrances of blessings derived from the stream that flows through our lives.

AMEN