

## WADE IN THE WATER

"Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water...God's gonna trouble the water." One of my favorite spiritual choruses that keeps me in the scriptures particularly this one in John 5 where the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible omits the old saying that angels stirred or troubled the water in the pools next to the Sheep Gate. That spiritual calls people to be healed, God's gonna heal you if you wade in the water, the water of baptism, the water of forgiveness and mercy, the water of life as Revelation describes it. Do you need healing today? Of course you do, I do...we all have broken parts in us that need to be made whole. You may have physical problems that need to be healed, wade in the water, God's gonna

trouble the water here for you today. You may not have the best relationship with your kids or your friends or maybe even your own parents, that relationship may even be severely strained and broken... come and wade in the water of God's mercy and love this morning, and find the forgiveness and the power to move forward through Jesus.

How? Well, water is not magical, it doesn't possess any powers other than two oxygen atoms combined with one hydrogen atom. Yet water is the stuff of life! Why do you think that most of the population centers in the world are built next to water? Because without water, all life on this planet dies. Water is life, and where there is life there must be water. I love going to the beach just to hear the ocean waves, I love to go boating and swimming and fishing

because somehow water is intoxicating and mesmerizing. I don't know why but maybe it's the water in me singing to and resonating with the water outside like a lake, river, or a forest creek. Therefore, the writer of Revelation paints a picture of a river of water flowing down the middle of the New Jerusalem, not a muddy river, but clear as crystal. And that water is life!

So when I sing the chorus "Wade in the water..." and talk about God healing you as you immerse yourself in Christ's water of mercy, forgiveness, and grace...I'm talking about splashing around in LIFE...life that only God offers to all freely. Life is what Jesus offered the lame man who couldn't get to the pools, Life is what Paul offered as he taught about Jesus to Lydia and the crowd gathered at the

river, Life is what flows from the throne of God forever and ever... even though we die yet we shall live.

"Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water, God's gonna trouble the water." All of us have come here lame, broken, blind, with dirty clothes in tatters and rags covered in all that which is sin and death...Christ is offering you and me LIFE this morning, healing for that which is broken, a new robe and a new way of living, thinking, serving, and speaking. And what is the tangible sign of this new life in Christ?...water! Water that cleanses, water that cools, water that satisfies our thirst, water that gives us life and life abundantly!

Where is this water? Well, you are knee deep in it already this morning...look around you...one of the healing

pools that God provides is the gathered community of faith, the church, so wade in the water this morning and be cleansed of all that clings to you.

Another pool is prayer. I love that song "Sweet hour of prayer" that calls me from a world of care, that bids me at my Father's throne, make all my wants and wishes known, in seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and oft escaped the tempter's snare, by thy return sweet hour of prayer. In a few moments, we are going to wade in the water of prayer and immerse ourselves in its silence and also hearing under the waters the voice of God.

I could go on and on listing the other pools of God's water of life like study of scripture, accountability groups, and serving others by works of love, all of these pools can

be found in the church, in people's homes, in Jennie Davis park where we feed hungry people, as we visit the sick in homes and the hospitals, and by providing our hands to work and our money and resources for God's service.

"Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water, God's gonna trouble the water." Jesus Christ offers you and me the opportunity this morning to wade in the life-giving pools of God's grace, to immerse ourselves in God's forgiveness and healing power, to be re-clothed in the mind of Christ...putting Him first in everything we do and say.

And as we live our lives this week out there ankle-deep in the muddy floods of greed, rumors, even violence and death, where stinky, dirty people are never satisfied with

what God has blessed them with, where the Big "I" of self is the force that drives people and saps them of their life...they will wonder why your clothes are not dirty, they may ask why your face shines like the sun: tell them, show them, pray with them, share where they can find the water of LIFE in Christ, and bring them to this place so they can wade in the water of God's love too.

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