

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 1, 2020

That the Lord be with you.

I wanna take a moment to tell you about my mom and an important spirit of truth that I learned from her. Why anyone who knew my mother, one of the first things I think anyone would ever say of her is that she had a green thumb. I really do think that grass really did grow up green or on our side of the fence because my mom had a way of making the desert bloom with Roses, daisies, poppies and more. Why my mom could coax beauty out of the stubborn clichy soil of Arizona. And I remember many a Sunday morning that my mom would go out into the yard and she would cut these most beautiful flowers and she would arrange them and take them to our little church for the worship service. Why people who knew Bernice Smith knew that she had a green thumb. What most people did not know was at one of my mom's secrets as a gardener, was my mom had a compost pit that was out behind the house, and into that compost pit, my mom would put cuttings from the garden, grass clippings, piles of dead leaves, kitchen scraps, she would take all that stinking stuff that today we would call biodegradable waste. And my mom would look for it, she would hunt it down to put it into her compost pit, and then my mom would put some dirt over the pile and should sprinkle some water over it and she would wait. And she would wait and chemical changes would begin to happen in that compost, there was a metamorphosis, a transformation of all of that junk that stuff into rich lush life-giving soil in the desert that made her garden green. That was my mom's compost pit.

Today, I'm looking at a Bible text that every time I read it, I just think of my mom's compost pit because it's a verse that tells us that God has His compost pit, God's compost pit of redemption. Romans 8:28, and we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. And we know that in all things. Not some things, not most things, but we know that in all things, God works for the good.

Please notice here that the Apostle Paul is not saying that all things in our lives are good, he's not saying that all the things that happened to you and me are good because that obviously isn't true, there's a lot of sin, there's a lot of injustice, pain and grief. Rather, what our text does say is that all things God works for the good. You see, it is God who makes it turn out good, God knows how to take out the garbage, God knows how to take the trash of our lives, all of our failures, our regrets, our heart aches, and God works them, and he works them for good. I mean, that's stuff that I just prefer you not know about me, and that's stuff too perhaps you don't want anyone to know about you. God knows how to take all of that to the foot of the cross and work it for good.

But wait a moment. So I mean, what is the good? What is the good towards which God is working all things?

Well, let's read it again. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. You see, God has a purpose in this who have been called according to His purpose. For those God for new, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is to make us like Jesus. The purpose towards which God is working all things Paul says, is to be conformed to the image of Jesus. To transform you and me to be more loving, more compassionate, more bold people to share in Jesus life and His glory.

Water From Rock

Now, you and I could probably take the good things in our lives and do something with them, but God knows how to take even the bad stuff and work it for His loving purpose for you and me in making us like Jesus. Now, some time ago, I was in church on a Sunday morning and it was time for the offering, and as the offering plate was being passed, it was like the Spirit of God nudged me and whispered to me Hey, Tim. It's not just your money, I want, it's not just your gifts and talents that I can use, but I want you to give to me your failures, your heart breaks, your regrets, give me all of that ugly stuff and just watch me go to work to bless you and to bless others.

And that's why we call him savior.

My mom had her compost pit where she took the trash, the scraps, I mean, the stuff everybody else threw away, my mom would take that and she would work it for good. Hey, well, I'm here today to tell you that God has His compost pit of redemption. When God can take all the really ugly stuff in our lives, the garbage, and he can work it, and he can work it for our eternal good and for His glory. Hey, that is after all the gospel.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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