

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 3, 2020

The Lord being with you.

Now, you may not make the front page news today, and you may not get on cable news, but I want us to see how you can make God's scrapbook of very special people, and how you can do something today that will last forever.

I'm looking at the Old Testament prophet Malachi, who is writing at a time not so unlike our time, a quick look at your Bible and you see that the prophecy of Malachi... It's the last book of the Old Testament, written about 430 BC, as Malachi is writing at a time when moral rot has undermined and weakened the nation. Check it out, it's all there. In Malachi chapter 3, here in verses 14 and 15, it says that people are saying, people are saying, it does not pay to serve the Lord. It is the evil who prosper and are happy. Sounds a little bit like how many people are thinking and talking today, as there are people who think that life is all about making money, that it's about living the good life. Why to their way of thinking, it's worthless to serve the Lord, and in fact, they're saying that people who serve the Lord... Well, you know, they're just narrow-minded and ignorant.

Okay, all of this brings us now to Malachi chapter 3:16, where there are some people who are standing against all of that, people who stand against the culture, I read, then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. I can imagine them getting together for Bible study, getting together for coffee and talking about the Lord and praying, maybe even doing zoom conversations about God and the life of faith. Those who revere the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was before the Lord of those who revere the Lord and thought of his name. They shall be mine, says the Lord of host, my special possession on the day when I act. Malachi tells us that at this time of the moral collapse of a nation, that there are people who are stand out, people who stand and revere the Lord. And they get together to talk about the Lord and to encourage each other to stand faithful.

Now, you look at the Bible, you look at history, and you will see that always in the darkest times, there has been a remnant who take their stand for God, and Malachi says God is watching, God is paying attention. Malachi says the Lord took note and listened. A book of remembrance was before the Lord of those who revered the Lord and thought of this name.

See, God loves it when you get together with others to talk about him... It makes God smile.

Yes, I know that we're in a time of social distancing when you can't always go to church, but you're still talking on the phone about God, you're still sending emails about him, you're still getting together through Zoom, through podcasts, maybe social distancing, but you're talking to others about God, talking about what it means to be faithful to Him. And Malachi says, the Lord took note and listened, a book of remembrance was before the Lord of those who revered the Lord and thought of his name.

Malachi is probably alluding to the practice of kings in his day, who would have a royal scribe with him, a recorder in order to take the names of people who had served the king faithfully, and a book

Water from Rock

of remembrance was made of those people, and what they did for the king, so that the king could reward his friends. Now Malachi says that not only is the Lord listening to you as you talk about him to others, but he says that The Lord is recording your words about him because, well, because they're precious to Him, and He wants to reward you.

I think here of the Book of Revelations, where it says that on the last day the books are opened. They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act. You claim the Lord today, and He'll claim you then. There is future reward for what you do for him today as today counts forever.

I was raised on the King James Bible, and I just have to say that I'm kind of partial to how the King James translates this verse, and they shall be mine saith the Lord of host, in that day, when I make up my jewels... I like that.

That those who take their stand, they are God's treasured possession, his jewels, as they are precious and beautiful to him. You and I are living in a time like that of Malachi, and Malachi shows us the way to being faithful, revering the Lord, talking to others about him, encouraging one another to hang in there. When the fire in the fireplace burns slow, you know you need to bring the cots together, so let's keep on getting together with others to serve the Lord, whether on the phone, through email, through Zoom, through podcast, safely, social distancing in small groups.

Why, you know, early Christians even found a way to do it in the catacombs. And I wanna thank you for letting me talk with you today about the Lord, because I like to do it, and I like to think it makes God smile.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler, the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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