

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 15, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever wonder where all this is headed, I mean, what we're seeing day after day on the news, a worldwide pandemic, economic chaos, and then on top of all that, what seems almost a demonic outbreak of violence and lawlessness in our country. Where is it going? What are we going to end up? Henry Ford is reputed to have said, his exact words, "History is one damn thing after another." And it might feel that way sometimes. And you know if you take God out of the equation, it's not gonna make any sense, so let's take you a few moments a day as followers of Jesus, to get our bearings. I remember when I was a boy going on road trips with my family, that sometimes my dad would pull the car off the road and unfold the map and say, I need to get my bearings. I need to figure out where we're headed. So let's get our bearings today, and there's a wonderful Bible passage, it helps me get my bearings when I'm wondering, What is God's plan? Where are we headed?

I'm looking at Ephesians Chapter 1:9-10, that I read, "God has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, that He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to gather up all things in Christ, things in Heaven and things on Earth." Notice here that it says that God has a plan, that there was a divine purpose at work here. That God plans his work, and he works His plan. God has a long-range plan, and it's not only a plan for your life and for my life, but God's plan takes in the whole cosmos. It is a plan that we could not have figured it out, I mean... It's above our pay grade. It is a plan so big, so wondrous, but God has revealed that plan to us. It is a plan so great that our finite minds can barely take it in. Now Paul calls it the mystery of God's will, and God takes us in as his intimates into this mystery, in telling us about his plan, and God tells us that His plan has to do with the fullness of time. It is a plan that when the times are fully completed, when history has finally run its course at the consummation of all things, God's plan says that God will then gather up all things in Christ, things in Heaven and things on Earth, that means every person... Everything, no exception.

So here we begin to get our bearings, and the God has an internal purpose, a plan, and that is to bring everything, everything into harmony in Christ Jesus. And that means in all things, all things will one day come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, whether willingly or unwillingly. Paul speaks of this gathering up of all things in Christ over in the Book of Philippians chapter 2, Every knee shall bow in Heaven and Earth and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Because you see it, a sin that is dividing us today, it is sin that tears us apart, but God has a plan that in the fullness of time, God will gather up all things into harmony in Christ. Over the Book of Colossians, Chapter One, it says, For in Christ, all things in heaven and on earth were created. And in Christ, all things hold together. So it all begins with Christ. And with Christ, God will bring it all together, so that in the fullness of time, God will gather up everything that is broken, all that is divided, God will reconcile and bring it all together into harmony in Christ, who in his body joins heaven and earth.

William Tindale was the first person to take the Hebrew Old testament and the Greek New Testamen and to translate them into English. William Tindale was fluent in seven languages, and he worked really hard in trying to come up with just the right English word to convey Jesus bringing all things together through His cross. But William Tindale couldn't find the right English word to express that, so William Tindale, he invented it a word, he called it at-one-ment, at-one-ment that

Water from Rock

we have shortened into atonement, and that is the gospel good news, that on the cross, Jesus brought atonement. Atonement, bringing upon himself all of my sin, all of your sin, the sin of the whole world. Jesus took it as his sin, he paid the price, bringing at-one-ment, atonement, so that in the fullness of time, when history had run its course, God will gather up all things in Christ.

Now, what that means for us now who love Jesus, that that means that we are getting to be a part of Jesus vanguard movement in this world, and we get to tell people this good news of Jesus. We get to invite people to follow him, to be ready for the fullness of time. And by the way, we live and by the way we love, we get to show the love of Christ, breaking down the barriers of sin that are dividing our country right now, that in our lives and relationships, we have to be the prototype of the new heavens and the new world that God is going to bring together in the fullness of time. I don't know if you saw... Or if you remember the movie, *The Best Marigold Hotel* starring Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. But the movie reminds us that we all have ideas of how life should go, but the characters in the movie learn... Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end. Hey, but the Gospel tells us even better, a lot better, that in the fullness of time, it'll be better than okay, as God will bring all things together in Christ, so I'm not gonna let the bad news, get me down today, because we know as the world is coming to, it's coming to the day when Christ will be all in all.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening until next time.

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