



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – November 21, 2020

The Lord be with you.

When your lawn mower is broken, you wanna get it fixed. When your washing machine is a broken you wanna get it fixed. When something is broken, we want it fixed. Okay, but what do we do when we are what's broken?

Some years ago, I was sitting in church, I wasn't preaching, I was broken, I was sitting on the back row. My wife Melody, had died after a long battle with cancer and I saw a Bible verse in the bulletin that it just reached out and grabbed me and said Tim, this is for you. Psalm 34, Verse 18, For David says, "The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit." In Psalm 34, I don't think David could be any more broken that he is right here. You can read all about it in First Samuel 21, as David is running for his life, King Saul is trying to kill David, and things have actually gotten so bad for David that he flees into the enemy camp, he flees to the Philistine, it's one train wreck after another, for David, in Psalm 34, and David cries out to God, and David writes in verse 18, The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. And we see the words broken-hearted, a lot of scripture because broken-hearted happens a lot in life. The Psalmist might be broken-hearted by sickness, by defeat in battle, by the death of a loved one, betrayal by a friend, and David has learned in all of that that the Lord is near to the broken-hearted. Well, of course, God is omni-present. We know that the God is everywhere, but when David says The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, David is saying that that God is near to help, that God is near in a special way, God is right there with the broken-hearted... I mean, God does not social distance from us when we are broken-hearted, God gets close.

Okay, then David takes us a step further, as David says the Lord saves the crushed in spirit, the Hebrew word translated, saves is the verb. Yesha, it's the verb from which we get the name, Yeshua. Jesus, the Lord saves. Jesus liked to call himself. Jesus liked to think of himself as what, as a physician. A physician who was drawn to those who are hurting, to those who are broken, as Jesus said that he had come to seek out and to save. That was his whole reason for coming. In Isaiah chapter 61, Verse 1, there's a beautiful prophecy about Messiah Jesus, in which Jesus says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me, He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted.

And you know, as I think back over my life, I can see now. I can see now that the times that God has really worked in my life had generally been those times that I was broken-hearted... But wait a minute, what about the broken-heartedness, what about the brokenness that we bring on ourselves, the brokenness that we suffer because of our own sin. And you know as a pastor and as a chaplain, I can honestly say that the greatest pain that I've ever seen in people is the weeping and brokenness



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by their own sin, and David deals with that in another Psalm, Psalm 51, as David is broken-hearted by his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and his sin of murder of her husband, Uriah. Now, what can David do with that broken-heartedness? Well, in Psalm 51, verse 17, David says, the sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit.

When you and I, when we are broken by sin in our lives, when we face up to that sin and we offer it to God as a sacrifice, when we're broken by sin and we offer it to God, it is an acceptable sacrifice that we offer to him. Remember Peter, weeping bitterly after denying his Lord and that we've been that broken heart, raised Peter to a whole new level of living. I sometimes like to ask people, what's the only man-made thing in heaven? And they think for a moment and say, Well, I can't think of any man-made thing in heaven, and I like to remind them that the only man-made thing in Heaven are the wounds in Jesus hands, His feet in a sign, and those wounds will forever remind us, that Jesus understands our pain, he understands our brokenness, and He is near to save. The American playwright Thornton Wilder spoke a great spiritual truth when He said "in love's service, only broken hearts need apply". And you know if you've been broken-hearted, you are ready to serve God and to serve others in new ways, as we own our brokenness, as we face up to it, we find that brokenness is the pain that heals our other pains, and God can use that brokenness even to heal the pain of others, I'm thankful for that Sunday where I was so broken-hearted. And Psalm 34:18, it just jumped off the page at me, and I know that it's true. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. God is up to something in our broken hearts.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening, until next time.



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