



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – January 9, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Well, our poor nation is going through a rough time right now, aren't we. I mean, we've seen our nation's capital building over run the first time that's happened since the War of 1812 and over-run not by the British, but by Americans. And these are days that we are facing deep political, moral and spiritual divide. And our leaders, well, they will talk a lot, they'll go on TV a lot, but they just don't seem to know what to do, and I think it's gonna take you and me some time to even take stock of what has happened in the past few days. But today, I'm thinking of a children's sermon that I used to do years ago, in which I would hold up a thermometer and a thermostat, and I would ask the children, are you a thermometer or are you a thermostat? That is, are you merely reflecting what is going on around you reflecting the moral temperature of anger, fear, despair, or are you a thermostat where you are setting the temperature, you're setting the pace, you're setting the tone, seeking to be what Jesus called us to be. The salt of the earth.

Well I woke up this morning with all kinds of thoughts, all kinds of emotions, not knowing exactly what to do, and I thought of this century old tradition in the British Royal Navy that when there was trouble on board ship, when the ship had a storm, that his ship's officer would sound what was called the still. And the sounding of this still was the captain's command for every sailor to stop what he was doing and to be still. He must not react, but he was collect himself, he must be still to be ready to be alert for the captain's next command. And that's just what I want to do today in the midst of everything that is going on, I want us to be still for a bit, to be still and to listen for our captain's command. And I'm listening for God's voice today in 1 Timothy chapter 2, where the Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy who he has left in charge in Ephesus to shepherd a church in the midst of what was a very pagan dark culture.

1 Timothy chapter 2, verses 1-4, God's word commands us, "First of all, then, I urge that supplication, prayers, intercession and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Notice the text begins, first of all, first of all, this is a Christian's priority. This is a first importance, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercession and thanksgivings should be made for everyone. The apostle Paul has made prayer a priority in his life, and he wants prayer to be a priority in the lives of God's people, and this is a time, in our nation for Christ's people to be praying.

Scripture regards this as our foremost duty. First of all, it says, prayer is to be made for everyone, everyone, that means all different kinds of people today are needing your prayer, my prayer. We're not to be praying just for our family, our church, not just for Christians. Not just us for and no more. But prayer for everyone that is all kinds of people are needing our prayer today. Notice Paul includes praying for the king. Well, who was the king? Well, that's the emperor, Emperor Nero,



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who is persecuting Christians. He needs prayer. I think about the Prophet Samuel said to King Saul in 1 Samuel Chapter 12 verse 23, far be it for me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you Saul. And so the Apostle Paul, he prays for kings and for all who are in high positions. So Prayer has to be our priority, and the difficult days ahead...

I think about the great John Bunyan said, the author of Pilgrims Progress, he said, You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you could not do more than pray until you have prayed. So... Prayer is so important for us in the days ahead. As prayer is going to invite God into what we are facing, and we pray and we let go of how and when we think God should answer, but we pray. And so the Apostle Paul makes prayer, first of all, priority one. Paul says that we do this so that, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. Now here, Paul is not so much concern that we can retreat into our little private lives of ease, but Paul is wanting us to pray, that we have the freedom to live out our Christian faith without restraint, without persecution. And that's what we pray for, Paul says. Because God desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And you know for over two centuries, America has been a gospel light house to the world, and so we're gonna pray that that can continue, that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives to live out our faith, so that the church can be built up and the good news go forth to the ends of the earth. And so I pray to our loving Father, ruler of the nations before whom nations rise and fall, your glory shines throughout the world. We commend our nation to you, merciful care, so that we may live securely in peace and be guided by your wisdom and providence, give all in authority the wisdom and courage to know your will and to do it. May they do that which is morally right and not just politically expedient, help them to know that they're called to serve the people as lovers of truth and justice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now, I want to close that with a blessing for you, a blessing by former chaplain in the United States Senate, Richard Albertson. You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God has put you there. God has a purpose in your being there, Christ lives in you, and has something he wants to do through you where you are... Believe this and go in the grace and love and power of Jesus Christ.

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