



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – January 21, 2021

The Lord be with you.

I am so grateful to my mother, who was the first person to introduce me to the book of Psalms. I can remember the day when my mother took a Bible in hand and she opened it up and she showed me right there in the middle of the Bible, you can find the book of Psalms. She said, you know, it's right there in the middle is like God wanted the Psalms, to be easy for us to find. And I've been turning to the Psalms for the rest of my life. I turn to the Psalms when I'm happy and wanting to give things, I turn to the Psalms when I've sinned as they help me pour out my heart in confession. I turned to the Psalms when I'm confused, feeling overwhelmed, and I don't know what to do, I turn to the Psalms.

Today, I'm in the Book of Psalms again, praying over a Psalm of David written when David is feeling far away from God, written at a time David is feeling overwhelmed by the problems he's facing. And so, David does what David knows to do. David cries out to God. I'm in Psalm 61, and I'm going to read just the first three verses. "Here, my cry, O God, listen to my prayer. From the end of the earth, I call to you when my heart is faint, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy." Now, we do not know the circumstances of the Psalm, we do not know the background. The Psalm does indicate that David writes this psalm, when he is King. He's Lord and Master, but David is hurting in the psalm. David says, from the end of the earth, I call to you now, that's an intriguing phrase from the end of the earth, because from the Biblical record, we know that David never traveled outside the promise land, yet figuratively, symbolically, David does feel that he's at the end of the earth. This is David's poetry. This is metaphor, as the end of the earth is David's sense of despair, his sense of alienation, of spiritual distance of being far from God. Yet I see here, I see that David does not say, from the end of the earth, I give up hope. Nor does David say from the end of the earth I think God does not love me anymore. Rather David says, from the end of the earth, I call to you. At the limit of David's strength at the limit of his wit and wisdom, as David is emotionally spent, he calls to God. David says, from the end of the earth, I call to you when my heart is faint. Literally here the Hebrew reads, when my heart is covered. Covered, that's the word, it could be covered with darkness, covered with grief, covered with sadness, that David's heart is covered. He is faint, he can see no light, he can see no way out.

Now, David does not tell us why his heart is faint, but you know, I'm really kind of glad because that means that you and I can then fit our own life situations right into this prayer when our hearts are faint that no matter the reason, no matter the situation that we feel at the end of the earth, we can call to God. Then David prays, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. In David's mind's eye and



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his imagination, David sees above him this great high cliff, that if only he could plant his feet on that high cliff, David knows that he would be safe, he would be secure against any attack. Secure against any danger. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Note here that David is asking God for three things. First, he asked God for a rock. He needs a place of security, a place of stability, a rock, he needs something strong like a rock to stand against the storms of life. Second, David asks God for a rock that is higher than I. It's gonna have to be a place higher than David's abilities, higher than David's wisdom, it's got to be higher than David, it has to be above and beyond David. And then third, David asks, lead me. You Lord lead me to the rock higher than I. David knows he can get there by himself, he can get to that place of safety, that place of stability without God. So here God. Here's my hand. Lead me, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you are my refuge. A strong tower against the enemy. So, what is that rock that's higher than David? Well, it's God who is his refuge, his strong tower. Lord, hold me close. You keep me safe. You keep me stable. For you are my refuge. A strong tower. I think most of us at times can relate to David here. It may be our heart as faint that things have turned against us, we feel at the end of the earth that God is far away. It might be a bad, bad diagnosis, it might be losing a job, it might be a broken relationship, and you know, it seems like they all happen at once, and we don't know what to do, it feels more than we can handle, and we can call out to God, who will lead us, who will lead us to that rock that is higher than you and me...

Now, if you are not in such a place today, if you're not feeling at the end of the earth and faint of heart, I thank God, but you and I know people who are, and their hearts might even be too faint to pray. And so we pray for them. Our loving Father, we so thank you that our Lord Jesus was tried, tested, tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. Jesus is not a stranger to anything that we go through. We thank you that Jesus is our great high priest who knows even the feelings of what we're going through, so we pray for all today who feel far from you at the end of the earth, faint hearted lead them to that rock that is higher than we are, lead them to Jesus. That great lover of our souls. And fold them in your warm embrace. Amen.

I Am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Things for listening. Until next time.