



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – February 6, 2021

The Lord be with you.

Stephen Covey, in his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, says That one of those habits is beginning with the end in view. That is having a clear idea of where you want your life to go, where you want to be, when you get to be to where you're going. Where you want to be at the end. People are often surprised when I tell them that some of the happiest, most fulfilling years of my life were the years I was a chaplain for hospice, when people were coming to the end. And that's because I got to listen and to talk with the dying and with their families about things that really mattered. I got to be with them as they took care of some unfinished business as they got some important things finally nailed down. And as I worked for hospice, I learned the five things people need to say before they die, we would so often see that people did not say these five things, that their deaths are often more difficult physically, emotionally, spiritually. And I got to witness, beautiful healing moments as people said, these five things... What are those five things? Well, the five things people need to say before they die are forgive me, I forgive you, I love you, Thank you. Goodbye. And then a time, I learned a six thing people need to say before they die, and that is... They need to say, I forgive me.

And I wanna think with you for a few moments about these six things that we need to say before we die, as I've actually come to think of them as a six things we need to say before we live. Before we live full passionate meaning-filled lives. Now unlike the way I usually do a Selah podcast, I do not have one particular scripture passage today because well, these six things we need to say run throughout the Bible, they are practical every day Christian living, where the rubber meets the road.

Okay, first of all, we need to say... We all need to be good at saying, forgive me. Our Lord Jesus said in the Sermon on Mount, in Matthew 5:22 and 23, so when you're offering your gift at the altar. If you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there. Before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and how freeing it can be in life, and in dying to keep short accounts, to be ready to ask forgiveness when we need to. Well, I've seen so many marriages come apart, so many relationships fail, so many churches divide because people will not say the simple words, forgive me.

The second thing we need to say is, I forgive you. Ephesians 4:32 says, Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. It's been said that to forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner is you. It is pertinent that one of the Greek words in the New Testament most often translated, forgive is a Greek word *apoluo* that is A-P-O-L-U-O, it also means to set free. And I have seen that so many times, that that when a person forgives another, that there is a setting free, there is a setting free of the self. Sadly, I've seen some people wait to the last days, the last hours of life, to say those powerful words... I forgive you.



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The third thing we need to say to say to those people close to us is to say, I love you. When we leave for work in the morning, when we leave for school, I love you. Life is so fragile. We might not see each other again, so we need to be frequent in saying, I love you... We can't say it too much. I love you.

The fourth thing we need to say is, thank you. Thank you means a lot doesn't it? Look how the apostle Paul begins so many of his letters with the words, I thank my God every time I remember you. Saying thank you is just a simple way of saying, I appreciate you, I respect you, I honor you for who you are and what you do. I don't have to wait until I'm dying to say, thanks for being such a great son. Thanks for being such a wonderful friend. Thank you's are there like oil lubricating a relationship.

The fifth thing we need to say is, goodbye. When I worked with hospice, I saw people often had the ability to control when they were going to die. As they were wanting time to say to goodbye to a grandson flying in from Boston. Well, wanting to say good-bye to an old friend, I've seen people struggle with doing, holding on, waiting to say goodbye. I think it's significant that our word goodbye is a contraction of the words, God be with you. And that's what we really mean when we say goodbye. It's a prayer. It's a blessing. God be with you.

I've seen people say those five things we need to say before we die, that we need to say before we really come alive and live. But then I saw that there was one thing missing. I saw one more thing that people needed to say, and that is people need to say, I forgive me, I've seen so many people lumber through life, they struggle with guilt and shame because they have not received... They have not experienced the wondrous free forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. They have not come to that point where knowing God's forgiveness. They can say, I forgive me, I forgive me my many sins, my many wrong choices, my many wandering from the path, but knowing God's forgiveness of me, I can't help but say, I forgive me. And I want to so live saying these six things, so that when it comes time for me to die, to leave this world, to leave my loved ones, all I have to do is die. For saying These six things means not only being ready to die, it means being ready to live to really come alive.

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