



## water from rock

### **Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – March 15, 2020**

The Lord be with you.

The world breaks all of us. That's what Ernest Hemingway said, the world breaks all of this, but there are some who grow stronger at the broken places. And I'm wondering if you might be feeling broken today.

I mean with everything going on in the world and everything going on in your life and the lives of those around you. How is it that there are, like Hemingway said, that there are people who actually grow stronger at the broken places? That's what I want to explore for the next few moments, growing stronger at our broken places.

I remember a time in my life when I was broken, some bad stuff had happened to me, and I wasn't handling it very well, and I was broken, and I was praying to Psalms, and by the way, that the Psalms do make for good praying when you're broken, depleted, empty. Well, I was praying in the Psalms and I stumbled across this, the most amazing verse, Psalm 34 verse 18, "The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and he saves the crushed in spirit." And I realized that at that very moment, the Lord was near to me. I mean, he was right with me, as God is near, when we are broken and bleeding, and the Lord saves the crushed in spirit. I like how Eugene Peterson in The Message Version, the Bible, how it translates this first line of Psalm 34 verse 18, "if your heart is broken, you'll find God right there". You know, I found that true in my own life, and as a pastor and chaplain, I found that true in the lives of so many other people. The Lord is near you when you are broken. You'll find God right there with you, ready to help, as a God is actually drawn to our brokenness, God is magnetically pulled to our brokenness, like a physician is drawn to the hurt and ailing, so God has drawn to you and to me as we're broken.

Now, when I discover something broken, maybe it's my computer that's broken or my smartphone or my car that's broken. Well, I either wanna get fixed or I wanna get a new one, we think of broken as flawed damaged, no good, but not God. As God is drawn to, he is invited by our brokenness, as brokenness is God's way of dealing with our proud spirits of thinking we can live life independently from God, and then we're broken. And that's why David praise in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. Oh God, you will not despise." And that's why we can actually grow stronger at our broken places because we discover that God is right there with us in our brokenness, and we make a decision to agree with God that yes, yes, we are broken, and we yield our lives to God.



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When our heart is broken, when we've run out of options and the pain is so great, we turn to God alone. Quaker educator Parker Palmer tells a Hasidic tale of a young student who asks his rabbi, he asked him, tell me, rabbi, Why does Scripture tell us place these words up on your hearts? Wh does scripture not say, place these holy words in our hearts? Well, the rabbi explained, he said, it is because as we are, our hearts are closed and we cannot place the holy words in our hearts, and so we place the holy words on our hearts, and there they stay until, well, until one day our heart breaks. And the holy words fall into our heart.

My prayer for you today, my prayer for me is that as our hearts are broken by all we see going on in our tired broken world, and with everything that's going on in our lives, that God's word falls into our hearts, that the Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and he saves the crushed in spirit.

And that's my story, and I'm sticking to it. That you and I can grow stronger at our broken places.

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