



## water from rock

### **Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – March 29, 2022**

The Lord be with you.

How do you and I as believers, as God's people, how do we not just survive, but how do we actually thrive and what are admittedly some very difficult days? What does God's word have to say to us about actually being blessed, about leading fruitful lives at a time of pandemic of uncertainty and fear. Well, I wanna read a brief scripture passage and then take a few moments to think about being blessed and being fruitful in a difficult time... The scripture passage I have in mind is from the Old Testament Prophet, Jeremiah. Jeremiah Chapter 17, I'm gonna begin reading at Verse 7, Blessed are those who trust in the Lord. Whose trust is the Lord? They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when he comes and is... Leave shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Now, there's scripture passage that talks about heat about drought, it really speaks to me because I live in the Arizona desert where where we are right now in our 26-year of a long-term drought, and at best will probably only get five to six inches of rain this year, and soon this summer, temperatures will soar high into the 100s. And yet our cities are growing, we have the golf courses, we have artificial lakes, we have prosperous farming, and that's because of snow and rain high in the Arizona mountains that flow down rivers into the lakes through canals. And this Arizona desert is much like the land where the prophet Jeremiah lives, where people are desperate for water, water for them, like for us, it was a matter of life and death. Nothing survives. Nothing grows without water. But note that in this dry arid land, that Jeremiah says that the person whose trust in the Lord, the person whose trust is the Lord, is like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream.

Now, if you ever fly into feelings beyond the watch that miles away from Phoenix, you can see at high from the air, you can see where water flows down the mountains, because you can see where cottonwood trees are growing and sending out their roots and flourishing. I often Think of this passage when I fly into Phoenix, so those who trust in the Lord shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream, it shall not fear when he comes and its leaves shall stay green in the year of drought, it is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit. Now, how is this all possible in the midst of heat and drought... Well, the secret is in the roots. Those who trust in the Lord shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. When the heat comes, when the months without rain come, when the painful seasons of life come, the tree sends its roots deeper, deeper toward the stream. Well you should see, the root system of these cotton wood trees, they spread out far, going deeper, deeper, almost instinctively toward their source of life, drawing more and more strength for growth from the stream. Jeremiah says that those who trust in the Lord, that



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they're like that. In good times and bad times, the secret is in the roots going deeper and deeper into God, so that it says that in the year of drought it is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit. One day last summer, our temperature reached 118 degrees and last August was the hottest month on record, but you know those cottonwood trees that kept right on growing, they kept on thriving as the roots went deeper, deeper by the stream.

Now, I would say that the keyword in the scripture is the word trust. Those who trust in the Lord, the Hebrew word translated trust is the Hebrew word *batach*, B-A-T-A-C-H, and it is translated in various scripture passages as trust to be confident, to be sure. *Batach* has a sense of well-being, a sense of security of being at ease, that all comes from having a person in whom we can place our trust, and the reason for our trust or confidence, it's not based on what we do or what we have done, but trust is based upon God, who God is, His goodness and His love and His many promises to us. The American writer, Frederick Buechner, he tells of a time that he sought retreated in a mountain cabin, 'cause he was terribly depressed about his daughter's eating disorder and about various problems in family, and they're in that cabin out of nowhere there was a car that shows up and there was a knock at the door, it was a trust officer from a local bank who was looking for someone. And when that trust officer got back in his car and started to drive away in his personalized license plate that said, Trust. And Buechner says that that was a moment of epiphany for him, a moment of revelation from God, telling him, trust the Lord. Trust the Lord for your children. Trust the Lord for yourself. Trust God. Trust. I wonder if that might be God's epiphany, God's word for you today in the midst of difficult times, if that might be a revelation for you... Trust trust.

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