



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 14, 2022

The Lord be with you.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Those are words right out of our Declaration of Independence. We are all pursuing happiness, but how to be happy? That is the question. It is a multi-billion-dollar industry of books, articles, seminars on how to be happy. I'm going to share with you today a psalm that is about, well, it's about God's way to being happy.

It is Psalm 1. I read the first three verses. Happy, happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in a seat of scoffers, but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night. They're like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season and their leaves do not wither in all that they do, they prosper.

Notice here that the truly happy person does not follow the advice of the world and how to be happy, they don't listen to Hollywood, social media influencers or celebrities on how to be happy, rather the Psalmist says that the happy person is one who, quote, delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on God's law day and night. And when the Psalmist uses the word law here as meditates on God's law, he's not talking about law as rules and regulations, he's not talking about you and me pouring over law books, rather, the Hebrew word translated law is the word Torah. It comes from a root word, meaning to teach.

And that is why the word Torah is often translated in scripture, is just that teaching. The Hebrew word Torah, it has the root idea of a finger pointing to the right way to go. Someone asks for directions, which way do I go, and the finger points to that road, that way as the way to go. Torah is a finger pointing to the right way to go in life, it's the right way to being happy. The word Torah originally referred to the teachings of the five, first five books of the Bible. But in time, Tora came to refer to all of God's teaching that comes to us in Holy scripture, the Bible. It's the way to go in life. So the truly happy person does not take advice from the world and how to be happy, but rather looks to God's Torah, God's teaching in holy scripture, and delights in it, and meditates on it day and night.

A woman said to me one time, she said, I do not know how to meditate, and so I ask her, Do you know how to worry? And she said, Oh yes, I know how to worry, and I said, then you know how to meditate. That is, you know how to go over something again and again in your mind. In a sense, that is what meditation on God's word is about, it is about going over and over again in our minds, the Word of God. Meditation in the Eastern world, and much of meditation and so-called the New



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Age movement, it is emptying the mind, but Christian meditation is filling the mind. Filling the mind with God's word. That is taking a passage of Scripture and going over and over it again in our minds. My wife, Rita, was raised on a dairy, I was raised on a farm where we both saw cows chewing the cud. The cow would eat some grass and then lie down for the rest of the day and chew and chew again and again the grass... Moving the grass through the stomach, assimilating nutrients, transforming them into milk. And so, I like to think of meditation on God's word as to something like a cow chewing it's cud. We chew and we chew again and again Scripture. We prayerfully go over it again and again, digesting it. Spiritually finding ourselves transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's like a dog chewing on a bone going over and over again and again.

So the truly happy person delights in and meditates on God's word day and night. That means that we take time to do it. We make time to do it, we can do it in the intervals of a busy day, we can set aside time to do it, we can do it, and they wake full hours of the night, and look what happens then for the person who delights in and meditates on God's word day and night. The next verse tells us, they are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither in all that they do, they prosper. Now, I live in Arizona desert, where every day I see the result of trees that are planted by streams of water, we're gonna get up to 100 degrees this week. And let me tell you, if those trees are not planted by streams of water they're going to die. I find it interesting that the words translated here as streams of water, that in the Hebrew it is literally canals of water, just the kind of canal is that you see where dug in ancient Babylon, Egypt, Israel. Canals that are dug here in Arizona, that if trees cannot sink their roots down into that water, they die, it's a matter of life and death to be planted by streams of water. Canals of water. And for you and me, it is a matter of life and death that we sink our roots deep into God's word as we meditate on it. And it says that we will then be like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither and all that they do, they prosper.

You know God has promised to bless only two things in the world, God has promised to bless His word, and he's promised to bless people, and so I pray that today you are blessed by these words.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.