



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 4, 2022

The Lord be with you.

What do you do when you're really down on yourself? What do you do when you're confused about life? What do you do when God feels so far, far away from you?

I want to talk with you for the next few moments about what I'm learning to do and say when the bottom drops out, when life comes unglued. I like to say what the little book of Jude verse 21 says, "Keep yourself in the love of God." That is, right now find your orientation, get your bearings from the fact that you are loved by God. That you did not earn God's love, you can never deserve God's love, and you can never lose God's love. Keep yourself there.

Today, I'm looking at the little New Testament postcard of the book called Jude. Jude is just one chapter long, tucked away between the third book of John and the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, so it's easy to find in your Bible that I find, but it's mostly overlooked. Jude is written by the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a go-to verse for any kind of trouble in which we find ourselves. Jude 1:21, "Keep yourself in the love of God and look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life." So here is a present orientation for us- "Keep yourself in the love of God,"- and here is a future orientation for us- "look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Message Version of the Bible translates this as, "Stay right at the center of God's love. Keep your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our master Jesus Christ." So whatever your mood today, however life is going for you, I can't say it any better than this. Keep yourself in the love of God. Stay right at the center of God's love. Get your bearings in life. Get your orientation from the love of God for you just as you are.

I'd like to think of this as the baseline of God's love. Let me see if I can illustrate.

When I was a boy, my father took me out to a hill that is southwest of downtown Phoenix. The hill is called Monument Hill. Few people know about this hill, but it literally affects all of us living in Arizona. The hill is marked by an 8-foot tall rock monument put there in 1861, and that monument Hill is the baseline for all of Arizona. It is the Monument that is the maturing point from which all of Arizona is surveyed in map. It is the baseline for all property deems. The house and lot where we live is measured from that baseline monument. Any place we are in Arizona, we can know right where we are as we are oriented to the baseline Monument... The baseline of our lives, wherever we are, the baseline is God's love for us, so that Jude says, "Keep yourself in the love of God." When you're confused, orient yourself to God's love for you. When you're guilty, when you've really blown it, get your bearings from the love of God for you.



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The great English preacher Charles Spurgeon tells of a day of being in the English countryside, and he came across a barn with a weather vane inscribed with the words "God is love." And he asked the farmer, what that meant. He said, "Do you mean to say that God's love is his fickle as the wind?" And the farmer smiled and said, "Not at all. I mean to say that no matter which way the wind blows, God is love."

And that's true for you today, no matter which ways the winds of life are blowing, God is love. So keep yourself in the love of God. Keep yourself oriented to God's love. Look at everything from the baseline of God's love for you. That reminds me of something that Jesus says in John 15:9. "When on the night before Jesus laid down His life for us, he says, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.' Abide in my love. That is, settle down and live your life in the love that I have for you. Abide in my love. Stay there. Don't wander from it. Meditate on God's boundless love for you. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher to reveal to you more and more of God's infinite love for you.

The Apostle Paul says in the Book of Romans chapter 8, verse 39, that nothing, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And if we ever doubt God's boundless love for us, Paul says in Romans chapter 5, verse 8 that God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The monument Hill in Arizona is the baseline from which everything is measured, everything is oriented in the State of Arizona, and the hill of Mount Calvary is the baseline from which we measure, from which we get our orientation in life, so that we keep ourselves oriented to God's love. We don't wander from there, we put our roots deep down there. This is where we live our lives, where we make sense of everything that happens from the baseline of God's love for you and me. Keep yourself in the love of God. Look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I just feel I have to close today with the first lines of that great hymn by Frederick Lehman, *"The love of God is greater far the tongue or pen can never tell, It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell, The guilty pair bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win, His heiring child He reconciled and pardoned from his sin, Oh love of God, How rich and pure, how measureless and strong, It shall forever more endure the saints and angels song."*

And it's my song today.

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