



water from rock

## **Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 1, 2022**

The Lord be with you.

How are you today? On a scale of one to 10, how are you? When being the lowest in the pits, or are you feeling out of 10 feeling on top of the world? I'm asking how you are today because well, we've been going through some difficult days, or should I say difficult months: A worldwide pandemic, lockdowns, violence, inflation, and the huge, huge jump in depression among young and old. So that I'm asking today, how are you?

I mean, I couldn't do these weekly selahs and not be wondering how you are. In wondering how you are, I wanna share with you something that helps me with how I am. Something that helps me think about the past and what we've been going through. Something it helps me think about the present, the right now. And something that helps me think about the future. What we're facing in coming days. Now this way of looking at the past, the present, and the future is something that I learned from Miroslav Volf, a Yale theologian who grew up as a pastor's kid in former communist Yugoslavia when his homeland of Croatia was occupied by Serbian army. So that Miroslav Volf knows quite a lot about trouble, about bloodshed, genocide, persecution. And yes, Miroslav Volf knows quite a lot about Jesus Christ.

Now, here's what I've learned from Miroslav Volf about thinking about the past. And that is that we can always look at the past with gratitude, because it's believers in Jesus Christ, we can say that whatever we have experienced, whatever we have suffered in the past, whatever pain, whatever suffering, whatever loss and grief, we can know that God intends it for good. You might wanna check out Genesis Chapter 50:20, where Joseph can say to the very brothers who sold him into slavery, what you intended for evil, God intends for good. And you know that is true for whatever has happened to us in our past. That God has intended for good, whatever evil, whatever pain has happened to us... It's just what the Apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 8, verse 28, That we know that God works all things together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. God intends it for our good, so that we can look at our past with gratitude.

Now as to the present, whatever it is that we're experiencing right now, Miroslav Volf has said that he has learned to say that we can look at the present with contentment. It's just what the Apostle Paul says in Philippians, Chapter 4 Verse 11, I have learned in whatever I have to be content. Or again, as Paul says in Second Corinthians Chapter 9, Verse 8, we always have enough of everything. I often think of this as I quote Psalm 23 to myself. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not be in want. So when thinking about the present, we can have contentment.

Now about the future, the great unknown, we can look at the future with trust that whatever happens



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to the economy, whatever happens in politics, whatever happens with China, we have the promise in Hebrews Chapter 13:5-6, Jesus has said, I will never leave you or forsake you. So we can say with confidence, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?

So on a scale of one to 10, these three things help me and how I'm doing today, as we can look to our past with gratitude, we can look to the present with contentment, and we can always look to the future with trust. Gratitude, contentment, trust. What a great way to live.

I hope this has been as helpful to you today as it has been to me, and my prayer for you today, well, my prayer for you I'm taking straight from the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Hope, joy, peace, and power for you.

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