



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – November 19, 2022

The Lord be with you.

It has been said that a Puritan lives with the haunting fear that someone somewhere might be having a good time. Well, while I don't think that's exactly fair to the Puritans, it probably is fair to say that Christians can give the impression that we are against having a good time, but you know, Jesus seems to have left no one thinking that he was against a good time... Well, just look at all the parties and Jesus was getting invited to. And we see that the religious stuffed shirts of Jesus day actually called him... Quote, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. As our country has been going through a really difficult time, I want to propose that we look at this as a time to celebrate, and I say that because we are going through a difficult time, that just all the more reason for us to celebrate and to rejoice in the goodness of life.

I see that in the book of Ecclesiastes today, Chapter 9, Verse 7. I read. "Go eat your bread with enjoyment and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has long ago approved what you do, let your garments always be white, do not let oil be lacking on your head, enjoy life with a wife whom you love all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun." Now we see this theme of rejoicing and celebrating life all the way through the book of Ecclesiastes, it's there seven times, we're called upon to rejoice and celebrate. As they're in chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 5, 7, 8, and here in Chapter 9, and again in chapter 11. Celebrate and enjoy. And you know, I really first discovered the Book of Ecclesiastes, not when I was in school, but I discovered Ecclesiastes when my first wife, Melody was battling cancer and finally died at the age of 39. As she and I divided life into BC and AC, life before cancer, and life after cancer. And it was life after cancer that we learned to celebrate life and enjoy it today.

Now, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, the author who calls himself the preacher, he takes on the really hard questions of life, but the meaning of life and loss, the uncertainty of life, the shortness of life, and all those kinds of things we can't understand, and the preacher essentially says, Well, you know, for right now, that's all above our pay grade, we can't understand it, but we can live by the faith that God has an all in hand, so seize the day. Grasp every moment to enjoy the gifts of God. So let's look again at what the preacher says, he says, Go eat your bread with enjoyment and drink your wine with a merry heart. Notice that we are to eat and drink with enjoyment with



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a merry heart. You see, we do this not just for necessity, not just for sustenance, but for enjoyment, that God is no cosmic kill joy who was afraid that someone somewhere might be having a good time... God delights as our Heavenly Father in giving us good things to enjoy. I mean, God didn't really have to make chocolate taste so good, did he? But he did, and we could eat and drink with enjoyment and a merry heart. For our text says that God has long ago approved what you do, so these are not only God's gifts to us, they are God approved for us to enjoy. As a family, we've always prayed before meals. But you know, I'm thinking that it might be good as well to pray after meals. Wow, God, that was so wonderful. It tastes it so good. I enjoyed that. As the good gifts, point us to the giver of good gifts, and we celebrate...

The preacher continues his call to celebration and joy when he says, Let your garments always be white, that means that means keep in mind that in the ancient near east, wearing white garments was an expression of joy. 3000 years ago, people did not have washing machines, they didn't have bleach, and so white garments were reserved for special occasions for a party, for a wedding feast, and that's why the scenes of the Bible that we have in Heaven, the saints are wearing what they're wearing white because they're celebrating. And so the preacher says, Let your garments always be white. That is... celebrate life each and every day. You don't need a reason to celebrate today, just celebrate. Then he says, Do not let oil be lacking on your head, in that hot Middle East oil was poured on a guest head at a party to refresh them. So Psalm 23 says, The Lord anoints my head with oil. It is a thing of joy. The preacher continues enjoy life with the wife whom you love. The preacher here is recognizing the blessing of a home where there is a wife, a husband to be loved, to delight in. God wanted Adam to enjoy life with... And for Eve, to enjoy life with Adam, that means the joy of friendship, companionship, marital intimacy, enjoy... I had a seminary professor who would remind us young guys from time to time that Hugh Hefner didn't invent sex? God did. It was God's idea. It's all good with one's wife, with one's husband. In 1 Timothy 4:4, the Apostle Paul says, that teaching abstinence from certain foods and abstinence from marital sex, that it is a doctrine of demons. So Ecclesiastes says that eating and drinking with joy and enjoying life, it is your portion in life, it is what God has assigned you to do, it is God's gift to you, receive it, receive it with joy and thanks what God intends and these pleasures is that they point us to the greatest pleasure, and that is a God, and knowing and enjoying God. So let's not obsess with what we eat, drink or white clothes, let's just enjoy them, but know that they point us to God.

I just had a thought before I go, what could you do today to celebrate life and to enjoy God's goodness? It might be good to think about...

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