



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 29, 2022

The Lord be with you.

Well, Christmas is just around the corner. And just the other day, I was thinking about a large pre-COVID Christmas, you know, when we could all get together as a large family to celebrate, and a cousin who lives in a different state, she told me that she was sorry that she had never gotten to know my father. And you know, when she told me that she had never gotten to know my father, I was sad. I was sad because I really love my father. My father was a wonderful man. I was always proud to be his son. I was proud to tell people about my father. And so that night, as we were driving home from the Christmas celebration, I kind of got a new understanding of Christmas. As I saw that Christmas is about Jesus longing for you and me to come to know his father. And Jesus comes to earth wanting us to know his father, to love his father, and Jesus loved to tell people about his father. And so yeah, I'm really thinking that this is Christmas in a nutshell, that Jesus wants us to know his father, and he wants to take you and me to be with his father.

And so I want to read a fascinating verse today. It's Matthew chapter 11, verse 27, where Jesus is speaking, and Jesus says, no one knows the father except the son. Okay, now let me read that again. No one knows the father except the son, and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him. And so Jesus comes on that first Christmas for the purpose of you and me getting to know his father, like Jesus knows his father. The Gospel of John chapter one, verse 18, it says that no one has ever seen God. It is God, the only son who is close to the father's heart, who has made him known. So Jesus comes to earth that first Christmas. He comes from close to the father's heart to reveal to us the father. I think my dad would have called Jesus, he would have reverently called Jesus a chip off the old block. As you see Jesus, you see the father.

Scottish theologian, Thomas Torrance, told of a time when he was serving as an army chaplain during the second world war. And he comes across a soldier who was mortally wounded. And the young soldier looks up at Torrance and he says, Padre, can you tell me, can you tell me, is God really like Jesus? And in moments just before the young man died, Thomas Torrance gets to tell him that, yes, yes, God the father is just like Jesus. In fact, in John chapter 14, verse nine, Jesus says, anyone who has seen me has seen the father. And so if there are moments that you wonder what is God like, well, look at Jesus. Look at Jesus welcoming sinners. Look at Jesus hanging out with publicans and sinners. And you see what Jesus is like. So that you and I would get to know his father, Jesus told this incredible story where Jesus tells about the worst person that you could think of. I mean, he was a guy who was a total ingrate. He was a pitiful excuse for a son. And he's a worthless kid who runs off with his father's inheritance. He runs off to the far country. He throws



water from rock

away his dad's hard-earned money on prostitutes and parties. And then when he runs out of money, he starts heading home.

And as Jesus tells the story, the father sees his son. And Jesus said that while the son is still far off, Jesus says that the father runs to his son. I mean, the old man is sprinting. And before the son can get out one word of repentance, before the son can even say, Dad, I'm sorry, Jesus says that the father puts his own signet ring on his son's finger. He puts shoes on his bare feet. And the father says, let's party. My son has come home. You see, Jesus wants you and me to know how much you and I, we are loved and forgiven by his father.

And that's why Jesus in teaching us the ABCs about how to pray, Jesus says to pray how? Well, we pray our Father who art in heaven. You see, this Christmas, Jesus wants us to know his Father's heart, like Jesus knows his Father's heart. And the Bible calls all of this, it calls it adoption. That is, by faith in Jesus, by simply believing in Jesus as the way to the Father, we are adopted. We are made full fledged members of God's family. So that we're coming to know God the Father more and more.

Some years ago, I served on the board of a Christian adoption agency. And one day I met a young family. They had two cute little boys. And one of the boys said to me, he said, he says, you know, one of us is adopted, but I forget which one. That's how loved and adopted you and I are into God's family. We are loved as Jesus is loved. There's a beautiful scene in the Gospel of John chapter 20, verse 17. I mean, it's right after Jesus' resurrection. And Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, go to my brothers and say, I am ascending to my Father and your Father. You see, you and I, we get to call Jesus' Father our Father. I mean, it's not a matter of church membership or being religious. It's not a matter of trying to be good. It's believing. It's put our trust in Jesus Christ as the way to the Father. And Jesus says, no one comes to the Father but through me. Now in Galatians chapter 4, verse 7, it says that God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Daddy, Father.

So as you're getting ready for Christmas, just keep in mind why Jesus came. Jesus came because, well, he longs for you and me to get to know his Father like Jesus knows him. He wants you to know that you are loved and cherished by Abba, Father. So that gets me to thinking, why don't we just take the next few moments to be still, to be still and let Father love us? As the Father is urging us through his Holy Spirit to cry out, Abba, Abba, Daddy, Father.

Well, someday I want to tell you more about my dad. I mean, I always like to tell you about him. But I do want to tell you about our Father who is in heaven.

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