



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – December 17, 2022

The Lord be with you.

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm in the Christmas spirit. I mean, after such a strange and difficult year, I am more than ready to celebrate Christmas, and so the other night, I sat down to listen to Christmas carols, I stopped everything else I was doing just to take in the joy and beauty of Christmas music. And you know, there was one song that just reached out and grabbed me, one song that really moved me, and it was a phrase in the song O Holy Night, it is a phrase that says, long lay the world in sin and ere repining till he appeared. And the soul felt its worth. And that night as I thought about Christmas, as I thought about all the Christmas means, I was gripped by that phrase, till he appeared and the soul felt its worth. There was in this song and understanding of Christmas, an understanding of Christ coming that I don't think I find in any other carols. Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth. And I wonder, are you feeling your worth to God this Christmas. With God so loving the world that he gave his son for you and me, we feel, we know, we acknowledge, we accept, we validate our worth to God.

Now, that phrase struck me, that with Christmas, with Christ coming for us, the soul felt its worth. I say that because many times in today's Christianity, we confuse being unworthy, which we are, we confuse being unworthy with being worthless to God. Yes, the Bible does make it clear that we are sinners. We are broken. We do fall short. We are unworthy of God's love, we are unworthy of God's grace, that God does not think you are me worthless. Far from it. I would read a couple of verses of Scripture. John 3, Verses 16 and 17, For God so loved. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish. That may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

Sadly, I've come across some preachers across the years who in trying to say we are unworthy, they end up making people feel worthless, worthless sinners, and they talk more about our brokenness, that they talk about God's love and God's power to heal. When the Bible says that We are unworthy, it is saying We are not deserving of God's grace, and that's something very different from saying that God thinks you or me worthless. Long lay the world in sin and ere repining till he appeared. And the soul felt its worth. Think with me for a moment, just try to imagine the infinite internal God who holds 80 billion galaxies and more in his hand, that he so loves you with me, that he becomes one of us, that he takes on our humanity, so that he can take



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on our sin as his very own sin, so that he can die for us in our place... That shows that there are no limits to what God will do, no limits to how far God will go to win your love. We cannot read the Christmas story, we cannot celebrate Christmas and not come to the conclusion that we are of infinite worth to God. The great theologian Carl Barth made one of the most remarkable statements that I've ever come across, Barth said, God did not want to be God without us. God did not want to be God without you, so that God so loved us that he gave his son that we might forever share his life and glory. Jesus took our place, that we might have his place with the father.

So Christmas tells us that, you matter to God, you bear God's image. God humbled himself for you to be born in a feeding trough for cattle, to die on a criminals cross, you are of infinite worth to God. I like to imagine the Son of God returning to heaven after his time here on Earth. The Son of God returns to heaven in a human body. And I imagine the archangels and the seraphim and the cherubim as they gather around and they asked Jesus, they say, Tell us, was it worth it? Was it really worth it? Becoming human. Was it worth making yourself vulnerable? Was it worth it? Being rejected, being crucified, was it worth it? And I can imagine Jesus saying it was worth it and more, because they will now share my life forever.

We sometimes talk about the worth of something in terms of how much was paid for it, if a lot is paid for something, we deem it to be worth a lot. Well guess what is the most ever paid for a work of art? I checked it out this morning, \$450 million was paid for the Da Vinci's Salvator Mundi Savior of the World, and so we say that that painting is worth a lot... When you consider that 450 million was paid for it. It's worth a lot, which is, think of how much God paid for you and me. The Son of God paid his very life. And that says so much about how much you are worth to God Longley the world, and sin and raping till he appeared. And the soul felt its worth you are precious to God you are of infinite worth to God and I ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in me this Christmas deeper and deeper into the love of God.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler thanks for this thing until next time.