



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – February 14, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Well, I am back in the book of Psalms today, needing to be in the book of Psalms today. As I started out the day feeling confused, upset by the news, by what's going on in the world, and I will always be grateful to my mom for first teaching me about the Psalms when I was a boy. When my mom told me that I could find a Psalm for every feeling I had. She said that there's a psalm for just about every life situation, and you know... My mom was right. As the Psalms have helped me so much through the years. And that's why I've come today to my old friend, the Book of Psalms. I don't have one particular psalm to share with you today so much as I have a life lesson learned from the book of Psalms, and that lesson comes with learning the three major types of Psalms there are. And learning how these three types speak to our different life situations. Now, there are different names that Bible students give to these three types of psalms, but I like the names that Walter Brookerman, an Old Testament scholar gives them. He calls them Psalms of orientation, Psalms of disorientation, and Psalms of new orientation. And knowing these three types of Psalms can help us in reading the Psalms and help us in reading our own lives, so let's look at these three types, first, Psalms of orientation.

And in these the Psalmist is writing from a place of orientation, a time that life is making sense. We're oriented to God, we're oriented to the world. Life is good. Psalms of orientation are filled with worship, worship of God for who he is for what God does for us. Well, these are just the types of songs that we like to read in church. A Psalm of orientation, for instance, would be Psalm 23, where David says, The Lord is my shepherd. I have everything I need. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters. Life is good. Life makes sense. God makes sense. I'm happy. But life doesn't always make sense to us, God doesn't always make sense to us. It doesn't always seem that God is a shepherd making us lie down in green pastures.

So that takes us to the second type of Psalms, Psalms of disorientation, when the psalmist, if they might say, the Psalmist feels that he's getting dissed... Psalms of disorientation. And this is when we feel disoriented to God, to life, when up is down and down is up, when everything we thought we had nailed down is flown loose, so that in psalms of disorientation, a psalmist is expressing honest feelings of anger, hurt, depression, questioning of God. I often think how it is the same David who wrote about the Lord as his shepherd in Psalm 23 also wrote Psalm 22. My



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God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from hearing me? Okay, that's the same David at two different times in his life. I'm struck that there are more psalms of disorientation in the Book of Psalms, then there are psalms of orientation. In Israel's book of praise we learn that God hears our struggles our hurts as praise, so the God is not put off by our honest expressions to him of pain and confusion, the times of disorientation do not last forever, and that takes us to the third type of song, Psalms of new orientation, as life takes a turn, God comes through, God makes a way, and God brings us to new orientation when we come to a new understanding of God, a new way of thinking about life about ourselves. So another Psalm of David that would illustrate the psalm of new orientation is Psalm 40. I'll read just the first couple of verses, I waited patiently for the Lord. The Hebrew reads literally, in waiting, I waited for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry, he drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog. That was David's disorientation. His pit, His miry bog. God drew me up out of the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock. Making my steps secure. God put a new song in my mouth, a psalm of praise to our God.

You see, God through David up out of the pit, out of his disorientation, and gave to David a new understanding of who God is, a new understanding of who we are, and in that David says... God put a new song in my mouth. David says, I have new things to tell you about God, I have new things to tell you about our deliverer. And that's really the reason why I do these Selah podcasts, because God has put a new song in my mouth. I've been in a few pits in my life, a few miry bogs. I know disorientation inside it out, and God has come through, he's given to me a new song, new experiences of His love that I'm gonna tell you about. And so knowing something about these three types of psalms can help us as we deal with different life situations.

These three types of Psalms can help us number one, number one, to acknowledge to God what we are feeling. They're just like, David, we can be honest and real with God. And then second, these types of Psalms teach us to think right thoughts... Yes, we do acknowledge to God what we were feeling, and then we take a breath and we think right thoughts. We think about that God is for us, that God is our shepherd, we can trust him, and then after knowledge of our feelings, thinking right thoughts, we reset our will to do... God's will. We acknowledge our feelings, we think right thoughts, we reset our will to do God's will, and you know that really helped me this morning when I got out of bed on the wrong side, and God is putting a new song in my mouth.

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