



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – March 21, 2023

The Lord be with you.

How is your heart today? Is your heart at peace? Or how about your conscience? Are you plagued by nagging, guilty conscience, are you frequently bothered that you don't do enough for God, that you don't do enough for others, do you feel that you're not measuring up to being a good Christian? Or do you sometimes even wonder if you are a Christian? Well, I have some encouraging words for you from the Bible, for any of you feeling you're not a good enough Christian feeling that you don't measure up... Hey, I know those feelings. I know what it is to feel guilty about not feeling guilty.

I'm looking today at the little letter of 1 John, not to be confused with the Gospel of John, but I'm looking at 1 John Chapter 3, Verses 18 to 21. I read, "Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action, and by this, we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God."

Now, in this phrase, whenever our hearts condemn us, in this phrase, God is recognizing the problem that you and I often have as Christians as a problem of a condemning heart, and of course, the evil one, satan, the accuser of the brethren, is always more than happy to join in with our hearts condemning us saying things like, what do you think you are to call yourself a Christian? I mean just look at the way you live. Our hearts condemning us. Here we are seeking to live a life of love as Jesus commands, and when we feel that we aren't doing a very good job and our hearts condemn us... I read these words here, little children, let us love not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And that strikes a nerve as I think how much I fail in this and maybe you do too. And our text says, our hearts condemn us.

Now the remedy, the solution for hearts that condemn is in the next phrase of our text, as it says, God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything. So our hearts are condemning us, but God is greater than our hearts, and God knows everything. Everything about you and me. You see, God not only knows your sins, my sins, but God does know the love that we do have for him. God knows a love that we have for others. God knows our longings to be better Christians, he knows our desires to serve him. He knows our desires to please Him, God knows everything. God is greater than our hearts that condemn us and God knows everything about us. Now, I read



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these words of first John, and I cannot help but think about a conversation that this John overheard between the Lord Jesus and Peter. As John records it in his gospel of John, Chapter 21, it's after the crucifixion, it's after the resurrection, after Peter had denied Jesus three times. And in John Chapter 21:17, John tells us how Jesus said to Peter the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter felt heard. Because he said to him the third time, Do you love me? And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you. I think Peter is saying, Lord, you know how my actions betray me, you know how my life falls so far short of what I want to be, but Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you.

My brothers and my sisters in Christ, God is greater than our hearts that condemn us. And God knows everything, he knows the love that you have for him. And once more, God knows the love that he has for you. He knows all that Jesus did for you and me on the cross, he knows that he has forever put us right with Him, that He has made us one with him. God is greater than our hearts that condemn us. Romans chapter 8, verse 1 says it like this, There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. God does not want you and me as his children to live in condemnation. It's like Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, I do not condemn you. And then later in Romans 8, that ask, who is there to condemn us? And then quick comes the answer, It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised, who was at the right hand of God, who indeed and intercedes for us. So as you're seeking to live the Christian life, as you're seeking to grow and love, when your heart condemns you, you're getting the wrong verdict. When your heart condemns you, you can have the satisfaction of knowing that God's higher court does not condemn you. When your heart condemns you, you couldn't quiet your heart with the assurance that you are in the hands of a God who is infinitely greater than your heart, and a God who loves you more than our finite minds can imagine.

So Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters that you will reassure their hearts that You are greater, greater than our hearts, and you know everything. And the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace.

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