



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 18, 2023

The Lord be with you.

I wonder if you ever have days, ever have nights when you feel like Atlas like you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders. If you're feeling that weight today as you're doing ministry, and if you're feeling that weight as a parent trying to provide and hold your family together in a time of pandemic. Maybe you're feeling that weight as a worker, just trying to keep your head above water. Well, I think I have something good for you today, something for anyone feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders.

It is a word from the wisest man of it's day, King Solomon, the author of the book of Proverbs, the author of The Book of Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. And a Psalm that I wanna share with you today, Psalm 127, the psalm superscription tells us that this is a psalm written by Solomon. And I'm gonna read the first three verses of this psalm, as I feel here is Solomon taking the weight of the world off our shoulders. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain, unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for the Lord give sleep to his beloved."

Now, note that Solomon is talking here about effort, that is vain, it's empty, it's useless, it's for nothing. As he talks about building does in vain guarding a city that is in vain, burning the candle at both ends that is in vain. Empty, useless. Now, Solomon knows quite a lot about that, which is vain, empty. In fact, he wrote a whole book about it, Ecclesiastes, where he de-cries vanity of vanity. What Solomon is talking about here in Psalm 127 is vain, it is useless, it is futile to go about our work to burn the candle at both ends as though it all depends on us and not on God. And I find that this Psalm is teaching me to take myself and my efforts a lot less seriously, and to take God a lot more seriously, as it isn't all on my shoulders, but on God's the ruler of Heaven and Earth. And so in the Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus is not warning against hard work or long days, rather Jesus is saying, don't be anxious, consider the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, how your Father cares for and blesses them.

There's a wonderful, fascinating phrase here in Verse 3 that says, The Lord gives sleep to his beloved... Now, in the margin of my Bible and in most modern translations, there is preferred reading, and that is rather than the Lord give sleep to his beloved, it is better translated as, the



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Lord provides for his beloved during sleep. The Lord provides for his beloved during sleep. Check it out in the margin of your Bible, and see that it's not only that God gives us sleep, but God gives to us while we sleep, that while we're resting, doing nothing at all, God is working. God is blessing. God provide sleep for you, yes. But God provides while you sleep. God wants you and me to go to sleep knowing that he works the night shift. Psalm 121 says it like this, "that he who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your keeper." And that is why for the ancient Hebrews, the day begins, not at sunrise, but at sunset. The day begins not in the morning when your alarm goes off and you're off to work, but the day begins at sunset when you rest from your work and God goes to work to bless and do you good... So we are to look at our work, we are to look at our labors as we look at our salvation, it is all by grace through faith, not of works.

Did you ever wonder why God made you and me such that we have to sleep a third of our lives? Well, I have an idea about that. And I think that God made us so that we need at least a third of our lives to sleep as a daily reminder that we're totally dependent on him, and his blessing. As I am never weaker, I'm never bore vulnerable, never more helpless than when I am sleeping. And God gives to us while we are sleeping. Now, when Solomon says the Lord provides for his beloved during sleep, I think Solomon is personalizing it, he's claiming it as his experience, and I say that because beloved of the Lord Jedediah, what that was, God's nickname, his pet name for Solomon, and it's there in 2 Samuel 12 verses 24 and 25, that Solomon was beloved by God, and God gave him even when he slept, and he gave to Him and His Kingdom peace, rest and safety all around. And you and I, we are the beloved of God. God's beloved children. And that means that it's not all on your shoulders. It's on God's. My mother loved poetry, and she would from time to time, quote me a little poem that I want to end with today.

Said the robin to the sparrow, I should really like to know why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so.

Said the sparrow to the Robin, Friend, I think it must be that they have no heavenly Father such as, cares for you and me.

So take a load off. God's got the night shift. Our Heavenly Father does care for you and me.

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