



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 20, 2023

The Lord be with you.

I have some good news for you.

Good news for you, as you seek to be in the world but not of the world. Good news for you is you try to navigate the craziness of a post-Christian world without being harmed, without being corrupted by the world. Some Christians choose to withdraw, to drop out from the world. While other Christians choose to compromise with the world.

Well, let's look at what Jesus prays for you and me. About being in the world, but not of the world. Today, we're looking at the Gospel of John chapter 17. We're looking at the night before Jesus lays down his life for the world, Jesus is praying for all of His followers through the centuries who are trying to navigate the culture. John Chapter 17, Verses 15 through 18, I read, "Father, I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world. Just as, I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." Now, it would be easy for Jesus to pray for God to remove his followers from the hostile world as he's about to leave. I mean, just take us all straight to heaven, but Jesus does not pray that the Father take us out of the world, but rather he prayed that the Father keep us safe from the world and its evil. I ask you to protect them from the evil one. Why that's what we pray when we pray the Lord's prayer isn't it? Deliver us from the evil one. That is the literal meaning, deliver us from the evil one. Jesus is praying that you and I, that we be kept safe as he is sending us into the world as he was sent into the world. And so our question is, how can we be in the world, but not of the world? How can you and I be in today's culture, engaging today's culture without being endangered, without being corrupted by the culture? Well, note what Jesus prays in verse 17, Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth.

Now let's look for a moment, at this word, sanctify. That's a big word, an important word throughout the Bible, there's a Greek word translated sanctify is a *hagiazō*, and it means to set apart for God's service, to set apart for a holy purpose. It was used for instance of Israel's priests who were sanctified, they were set apart from the world for God's holy service. It was used of the vessels and furniture in the temple that were set apart, they were sanctified, set apart for God's service, set apart for a holy purpose. So Jesus is praying here, not that we'd be taken out of the world, but that we'd be set apart from the world, for God's service to the world. Set apart from



water from rock

the world. For sake of the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world. Sanctify them in the truth, your word is true. There's a solution, it's not isolation from the world, that's not the answer, but it's insulation from the world. Not isolation, but insulation, that is that we are sanctified, that we're set apart for God's holy service by God's word. Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth. That's why it is so important that we read God's word, that we study God's word, that we meditate on God's word, that we memorize it, that we pray that we speak God's word to others.

I'm gonna share with you a way of getting into God's word that is so helpful to me, and it's been so helpful to many others through the centuries, it's called Lecto Divina, it means divine reading. It's an ancient way of getting into God's word and getting God's word into us. There are four steps to Lecto Divina: Read, reflect, respond, rest.

Step one, read, that's where you read just a short passage of Scripture. Just a verse or two. Read it prayerful, slowly three or four times.

Step two, reflect, take time to reflect on, to meditate on what you just read. Ponder it. Pay attention to a word or phrase that jumps out to you. And reflect on it.

Step three respond, that is pray as God has spoken to you in His Word. Now, you respond by talking to God about what you have read and reflect it on in your prayer, you might wanna thank God for something, you might wanna ask them a question, but you respond... You talk with God, you engage God about what his word has said to you.

Step four, rest, that's right, rest. This is an element that I left out of my Bible study and Bible reading for years. But rest, do not close your Bible and rush off but rest. Take a few moments to rest in God's presence to just let God love you and let God care for you.

Four steps: Read, reflect, respond, rest. You might do that with this John 17 passage versus 15 18 read it reflect on it respond talk to God and rest. I find that that's a great way to get into God's Word and a great way to get God's word into us. We live in a difficult world at a difficult time. God does not want us to isolate but he wants to insulate us from the world to live holy lives set apart by His Word.

I am to Smith a fellow traveler thanks for listening until next time.