

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 17, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Educator, Steven Covey has said that the main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing. Now, his words really speak to me today as I find it so easy to get distracted from the main thing in life, that one all important thing that matters most. I can so easily lose sight of that, and I think that's why I am so drawn to a scripture text that I wanna look at today as David models keeping the main thing, the main thing.

I'm looking at a Psalm of David, Psalm 27, verse 4, as here we see David laser focused on the main thing. David writes, one thing, one thing I asked the Lord, that will I seek after. To live in a house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple.

Notice here that David speaks of his determination to seek that one thing, and David is writing this at a time that he is besieged by enemies that in verse 2, David compares to wild beast that are eager to tear him limb from limb. I say this, just emphasize that David is not on some peaceful mountain retreat wanting to spend time with God, whether David is in a desperate situation, there are many things that might compete with the one thing that David says that he wants. As David is surrounded by enemies, as he is threatened, as he is nearly overwhelmed. David says, One thing, I ask of the Lord that will I seek after. Now wasn't that interesting? David says, I ask the Lord for it. So I... For my part, I will seek it. Notice how David turns prayer into action. David wants to do his part. To get what he asked, he seeks to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that when David says that he wants to live in the house of the Lord all the days of his life he's not talking about taking a sleeping bag down to the tabernacle and camping out there.

Just a reminder that the temple has not yet been built by David's son, Solomon, but David is not... He's not talking about living in the tabernacle for the rest of his life, he has responsibilities, his things to do, whether the House of the Lord represents for David, as it does for us, it represents the presence of God, that you and I can know wherever we are. So the one thing that David wants and he wanted more than he wants anything, the one thing is to live in the presence of God, in constant communion with God. And I have to often time stop and ask myself, Hey Tim, Are you keeping that the one thing, the main thing in your life?

So I'm very much needing to hear this from David who is, after all a man after God's own hear. Think about David, he is surrounded by enemies who are wanting to kill him, you know the one thing I might have wanted would be just some peace and quiet or maybe some hand grenades and bombs, but David wants to live in constant communion with God. Let's follow David's thought here. To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. That is to do two things there, one, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and two, to enquire in his temple. Well, what a great phrase this is to behold the beauty of the Lord. I don't think we talk enough today about the beauty of the Lord, the Hebrew word here translated as a beauty, it's translated elsewhere as favor... Kindness, pleasantness, graciousness. We might say that David has an agenda. David wants to live his life in thrall by God's goodness and favor.

So David, the main thing is to behold that beauty, favor and grace of the Lord and... And he says, to inquire in his temple. David is talking about that presence of God, David wants to live close to God so that He can inquire of God, he can ask questions, he can seek the will of God to know it and do it. Now, if you looked at the books of Samuel and Chronicles in the Bible, you would see in those books of history that David's life was characterized as one who inquired of God. He inquired of God's will. While Saul, on the other hand he did not inquire of God. So for instance, I refer you to 1 Chronicles 10:14, where it says, Saul did not inquire of the Lord, and the Lord turned the kingdom over to David. So David is determined, he determined to seek that one thing, to behold the beauty and favor and grace of the Lord, and to enquire of him.

Now, I look at what follows in the next verse, verse five, for the Lord will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble, He will conceal me under the cover of his tent, he will set me high on a rock. Now, in Eastern culture of David's day, you would go to a king's house, the chieftains house, a chiefs house, that house would become for you a sanctuary. You were safe there, you would be protected there, cared for, no one could harm you there. So follow David's thought by living in the Lord's house, in communion with Him. David experiences God's protection and provision. And so can you... Now, it feels like we're in the midst of a perfect storm in our nation. I mean all at once we're hit with a pandemic, with lockdown, outbreaks of lawlessness and violence, it's a hard time, but in this time, God is calling us to keep the main thing, the main thing. And to be like David, single-minded, laser-focused, one thing I've asked for the Lord, and I'm gonna seek after it, and God's promise is that He will hide us in his shelter in the day of trouble. Stephen Covey was right. The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing. David, thank you for reminding us of what that is.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way. Thanks for listing. Until next time.