



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 26, 2023

Lord be with you.

How about let's take a break today, I should take a little breather, a pause from the news, from the over-stimulation, that feeling of having too much to do, and let's reboot. Let's just turn everything off for a bit, let's put on hold what needs to be done so that we can spend time with our heavenly father.

It is Jesus who was leading us in this is. As in Matthew chapter 14, Jesus is experiencing what... I think I can say this, that Jesus is experiencing overload.

He has just received horrible news, and then on top of that is the constant demand of people on his time and energies. Matthew begins with Jesus receiving the news that his cousin and the man who is the herald of His kingdom, John the Baptist, has been beheaded by a bloody petty tyrant. And that pretty well tells Jesus what's instore for Him... And Jesus is needing time alone with the father, he's needing time to grieve with the father, he's needing time for fresh guidance. Time to be refreshed. To be refueled. So in Verse 13, it says that Jesus withdraws to a deserted place by himself, but then it says that Jesus sees the multitudes and is moved with compassion, compassion, the most common emotion ascribed to Jesus in the Bible.

And so it's hard for Jesus just to get away. It's hard for him to put a sign on the door that says, Gone fishing. Jesus moved with compassion. He feeds to hungry the thousands, he gives to them with nothing more than a boys five loaves and two fishes, but Jesus knows that he's needing time alone with the father.

So after having done all of that in verses 22 and 23, we read, Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds, and after he had dismissed the crowds, Jesus went up the mountain by himself, to pray.

Notice it says Immediately, Jesus made them get into the boat. Note the verb translated, made them get into the boat. It's a strong word that is translated elsewhere in the Bible as to compel for us... I can just imagine Jesus taking Peter by the arm, and James and John and saying, Hey, guys, get in the boat. Now, start rowing. Detect says that Jesus went up the mountain by himself to pray. What we see Jesus doing here is something we see Jesus often doing in the gospels, we read elsewhere that before dawn, he will go off to a deserted place to pray. Other times we see



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Jesus going up on a mountain to be alone, so that he can give full and divided attention to the Father.

Now I ask you, did the multitude still need Jesus? Were blind who had not yet been healed? Were there hungry who still were in need of food? Of course, but Jesus knows his need to be with a father, and he knows of his need to be with the Father at the needs of others will never be met. So sometimes you just have to turn off the cell phone, I have to turn on the computer, you have to close the door. So you can get alone with God.

Hey, I'm preaching to myself on this, I need this, and Jesus knows that we can't always go on to the wilderness or climb some mountain to pray, and so in the Sermon on the Mountain, Matthew 6:6, Jesus says, Go into your closet and shut the door and pray to your Father those little homes in Galilee, they were essentially one room, and that little room would have a pantry, it would have a story room. That's the word Jesus uses here.

Jesus is saying, Hey, whatever it takes, whenever it takes, find a way to be alone with the father. Jesus guarded his alone times with the Father, because Jesus knew that they were the secret to his power. The secret to his effectiveness. Yes, Jesus is a son of God, but he needs time alone with the father to be loved by the Father, to be guided, to be refreshed, to be refueled. Jesus says that he only speaks what the father tells him, that he only does what the Father shows him to do. Jesus needs time with the father.

I had a mentor who would say, To be little with God is to be a little for God, but I'm just really busy. Let me look at all the stuff I have to do any. It's good stuff, it's spiritual stuff, it's church stuff, but Jesus is saying that without God, it's nothing. Peter Craft in his book, Prayer for Beginners says, we have time in prayer backwards, we think time determines prayer, but prayer determines time. We think our lack of time is the cause of our lack of prayer, but our lack of prayer is the cause of our lack of time. We have 24 hours in a day, just like Jesus, and I think of all the technology, they think of all the labor-saving devices that we have, our lack of prayer is a cause of our lack of time.

I think of the little boy here in Matthew 14, He makes a sacrifice, he gives up his whole lunch to Jesus, five loaves and two fish, and Jesus takes what the boy gives him, and Jesus multiplies them. And you will find, you will find that as you give your time to be with God, that He will multiply your time, and as we spend time with the Father, that means of wives, husbands, children, people around us, that they will benefit from, they will receive from the overflow, because time alone with God triggers a snowball of effect of good that we do to others.

One of the ways I like to spend time with the fathers, what has been called palms down, poems up, it's a simple but powerful way of praying, and I'm gonna close out today praying palms down, toms up what they were sitting at your desk. In a chair and maybe even lying down, joined with me and turning the palms of your hands downward, and with this physical gesture, you were saying to God that you are letting go from your grip, you're letting go any worry about



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the future, you have an A worry in a guilt about the past, any fear that palms down, you release all of that to God.

Now, after having released all of that into God's faithful hands, take the palms of your hands and turn palms upward, and in that gesture, you're saying to God that you're ready to receive... Waiting to receive from Him His love, His forgiveness, His guidance, His strength. Whatever it is that you need for today.

I find that palms down palms up as a prayer, I can pray in two minutes and it's a prayer, I could spend an evening with the father like that, you might wanna come back to palms down palms up later in this day.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening, until next time.