



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – October 28, 2023

The Lord be with you.

How are you picturing God today? I mean in your mind's eye, are you seeing God as smiling at you? Is God, is he frowning? That is does God look disappointed in you? Does God look like he's ticked off? Well, the reason why I'm asking is because how you and I picture God is just about the most important thing about us. Because how we picture God affects how we look at life, how we look at ourselves, how we look at others. There is a soul secret that we tend to move in the direction of the way we picture God, and so I wanna see if we can't use some scripture today to see if we can't bring into focus the way we picture God. So I'm looking at Ephesians Chapter 3, verse 12, in which the Apostle Paul writes, "In Christ, we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in Him." Now, the third chapter of Ephesians, it is part of the grand movement of the book that began back in Chapter One, by which we see God bringing those who are far off, God is bringing them near. Because when you love someone, you want to be close. And so the grand sweep of the first three chapters of Ephesians is how God in Christ has brought us to Himself.

Now, let's take a moment to unpack this incredible verse that says, In Christ, we have access to God. The Greek word translated access, it is a fascinating word that takes us back to that ancient day of royal courts and Kings. And this Greek word was a technical term for being granted access to the King, it meant being brought into the throne room and presented to the king, and there was actually a person who is designated and called the bringer. It's a word that's related to our Greek word here, as the bringer would bring you to and give you access to the king. It is the very word that is used over in 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 18 that says, For Christ also suffered for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. So Jesus Christ is our bringer to God. Because of ourselves, we cannot bring ourselves to an infinite holy God, but Jesus brings us, Jesus gives us access, he introduces God to us as our father. And it is because of Jesus that you and I, we get to pray. Our Father who art in heaven.

So Paul here, he pin-points in today's scripture, as he says In Christ, we have access to God. We have access to God, Paul says, in boldness and confidence through faith in Him. And so that means that you and I, we are not shy when we come to God, we don't come hat in hand timid. Jesus gives us access, he brings us to God as our father. Now, I love this word, boldness that



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Paul uses here when he says, We have access to God in boldness, the Greek word translated boldness. Well, it's one of the great words in the history of civilization. It is the Greek word parrhesia, and parrhesia meant that in the Athenian democracy, it meant freedom of speech. I mean, it was like the First Amendment freedom of speech. And the word parrhesia is made up of two words, one word meaning everything, the other word meaning to speak... So parrhesia literally means to speak everything. So you speak freely. You speak boldly. You don't hold anything back.

And what this means is that you and I, we have the freedom to say everything to God, every thought, every feeling. We hold nothing back. And that's one of the things I love about praying, the Psalms, as a Psalmist help us speak freely to God, so because of Jesus Christ, the bringer, you and I have access to God and boldness, that is this Freedom of Speech and confidence through faith in Christ. This is exactly what Hebrews Chapter 4 verse 16 promises us. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness. It's the word parrhesia, freedom of speech, let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And in it is all because of Jesus.

Being a Christian means that means that I know that Jesus is the reason we have access. And Jesus is the reason we have boldness before God. Because of Jesus all of our sins are forgiven, and we are adopted as God's beloved children coming to the throne of grace. Now just a couple of things we might think about as we bring this to a close today.

First, when we come to God, when we come whether in prayer, worship, service, when we come to God, we come not relying on our feelings, not relying on our mood, not relying on how well or how not so well we're doing today, so that second, when we come to God, we come rather relying on Jesus Christ alone. As Jesus Christ is our access, Jesus Christ is our boldness in the presence of God. I began today asking how you picture God... Well, today's Scripture shows us God. I think it shows us God with a huge smile on his face. With a face, eager to welcome you. To receive you just as you are, just as I am.

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