



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 23, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Happy Thanksgiving. You know, one of the things that I'm thankful for today is you. Thank you for listening to the Selah podcast. As, as I always look forward to getting to share these few moments with you.

I believe that it's significant that the word thank, which we're doing today, that the word thank it comes from the same root word from which we get our word think. The people who study these things, they tell us that as far back as they can go into the early Indo-European languages that they see that our word thank and think that they are connected. That it is the wisdom of time in the ages and telling us that there is something about giving thanks that helps us to think. To think more clearly about life, about God, about the world. And when we really stop and think about things, we can't help but give thanks to God that good thinking and good thanking always go together.

The Apostle Paul says as much in Romans one verse 21 where Paul says that people who did not honor God or give thanks to Him that they became futile in their thinking. You see, if we don't give thanks to God, it really does mess with the way that we think.

Now on this Thanksgiving Day, there was a wonderful Thanksgiving hymn. Well, it helps me to give thanks to God even in some difficult times. And in giving thanks I am helped in better thinking about life. The hymn I have in mind is the hymn "Now, Thank We All Our God" written by the German pastor Martin Rinker in which he is giving thanks to God in a time of great trouble. Martin Rinker originally titled the hymn "A Short Grace Before Meals." As he wrote to him wanting to give it to his children, as their mother, his wife had died that year, he is giving the song to them, wanting it to help them to think and to thank as they sit down to eat, well, not our big Thanksgiving feast, but what would have been a pretty meager meal.

Let me say a little bit more about the times in which Martin Winker wrote this great Thanksgiving hymn. He wrote this hymn around the year 1636 which, well, it comes in the latter days of the horrific bloody 30 years war that shattered, that tore apart Europe from 1618 to 1648. And there are estimates that between 4.5 to 8 million people died from the war that was then followed by famine and disease. It is thought that in Germany alone, where pastor Rinker lived, that Germany lost up to 60% of its population. And this was followed by collapse, a breakdown in social order. And there are refugees flooding the walled city of Eilenberg where pastor Rinker lived and ministered. And at this point, all the other pastors of Eilenberg where they've either died or fled, so the Pastor Rinker ministers alone and it is recorded, the Pastor Rinker conducted as many as 40 to 50 funerals today including the funeral of his wife so that he conducted a total of 4480 funerals in all during those difficult years.

And in the midst of war, disease, shortages, Pastor Rinker shared as much food as he could, keeping bare rations for his Children and himself. But he wants a song for his children to sing as they sit down to eat and so he wrote this what he called A Short Grace Before Meals. That, that, that we know as "Now Thank



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We All Our God' and you know, I find this hymn as a good reminder. I, I think of what the Apostle Paul taught to give thanks to God in all circumstances.

Now, in the first stanza of the hymn, we find pastor Rinker as he's giving thanks for God's many generous, gracious gifts. And I can imagine him and his children holding hands and singing that first stanza. *Now, thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices who wondrous things has done in whom this world rejoices who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love and still is ours today.*

Now, I want, I want you to note in the second stanza. Notice how Pastor Rinker moves from thinking and thanking God for his goodness in the past. He moves into the future, praying for God to guide and to guard, offering up thanks. *O may this bountiful God through all our life, be near us with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us and to keep us in his grace and guide us when perplexed and guard us through all ills in this world and the next.*

Now, in the third and final stanza, Pastor Rinker while he closes out the hymn, as many German Christians would close out their hymn in the 17th century. He closes it out with the Gloria glory be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as he's praising God, three persons and ones as he, as he writes *all praise and thanks to God. The Father now be given to the Son and him who reigns with him in highest heaven, the one eternal God in whom earth and heaven adore for this. It was is now and shall be evermore.* And on this Thanksgiving day, thank you to pastor Rinker for connecting right thinking in a time of war and trouble for connecting, right thinking to thanking God for all his goodness to us.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.