



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 25, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Well, here we are a couple of days after Thanksgiving and I'm hoping that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day and that you've made your way through Black Friday and all of that. But you know our reason for Thanksgiving, well, it, it keeps right on going because, we, we have so much to be thankful for.

I've heard it said that Thanksgiving Day can be an uncomfortable day for the atheist because, well, he has this feeling of being thankful, but he doesn't know who to thank. Well, you and I as Christians, we never have the problem of knowing who to thank because we have a wonderful, loving and generous God. But, but sometimes I at least I do wonder how, how to best, thank God for who He is and for all that he has done for us.

And so today I'm, I'm looking at a psalm where the psalmist is wondering too, wondering how to thank God. How to sufficiently, adequately say thank you to God for who God is and for all that God does for us. And so I'm looking at Psalm 116 verse 12 where the psalmists asks, "What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?"

You like me have probably asked that. What, what, what can I ever give back to God for all that God does for me? Well, let's see what the psalmist comes up with to his question as right in the next verse 13, the psalmist says, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people."

When I was first studying Biblical Hebrew, I I was really surprised to learn that the Ancient Hebrews did not have words for saying thank you. So rather than saying thank you, they would say I will tell of your name or I will tell others about you. And you know, I bet if you are in business that you would love to hear those words, I will tell of your name. I will tell others about you. One of my Hebrew professors, Doctor Ronald Allen, he illustrated this aspect of Hebrew with a story. He told about a friend who was a medical missionary in India, who was an ophthalmologist as he was serving in a part of India where blindness was endemic, where thousands of people were struck with blindness.

Well, this missionary doctor, he developed a treatment, a cure for that particular form of blindness. And you know, people would flock to see him at his clinic and, and they would leave the clinic, healed of their blindness. And of, of course they were wanting to thank him. But like the Ancient Hebrews, they did not have in their Indian dialect, they did not have the words for saying thank you. Whether they would instead say I will tell of your name.

I like that story because it, it really speaks to me about the Psalmist question. What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? Well, the psalmist says, I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

So in ancient Israel, when, when you wanted to say thank you to God, when, when, when you wanted to tell of His name, you would, you would, you would make a vow to go to the house of the Lord to offer up a sacrifice of praise and call on the name of the Lord that is they, they, they would tell this is what the Lord did for me. And that's why I'm offering this sacrifice and, and asking you to share with me in the eating of it. And a note here that they would do this it says in the presence of all the people. And here we



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see a very important element in the Biblical way of saying thank you to God, we tell of his name. We tell others in the presence of his people.

So here is a psalmist standing beside the altar. He's lifting up a cup, a libation which they call the cup of salvation, the cup of deliverance. And as he lifts up the cup to the Lord in a sense toasting God, calling on the name of the Lord. He would say, I want to tell you what the Lord has done for me. It might be telling about the Lord delivering from trouble or the Lord, he healing an illness or the the Lord answering a prayer or blessing in a special way because you see that they never felt that it was enough just to go into their prayer closet and say thank you Lord. They wanted to tell others what the Lord had done.

I mean, it's what the psalmist has in mind in Psalm 99 verse three, let them praise your great and awesome name. I will tell of your name. You know, I've, I've really made it my personal mission statement, my life verse Psalm 107 verse two. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so those he has redeemed from trouble."

You see, the the Lord has, has, has really done something for me in my life. And I want to tell others and, and that's really the whole reason for these Selah conversations that I want to tell others. I, I want to say thank you to God by telling of his name, telling what God has done.

So, I'm wondering today, are you, are you thankful these few days after Thanksgiving? Are you thankful for what God has done for you? Well, how about telling some others? I mean, you, you, you decide the best way to do it. But how about telling others? I think it's a good question that the psalmist raises. What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? Well, I will tell others what the Lord has done. I will tell of his name.

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