



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 30, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Do you sometimes feel like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders? I mean, do you sometimes feel like everything depends on you that, that if you let go for just a moment that it all comes crashing down? Well, if you ever felt the weight of the world or you know, someone who does I have a scripture for you? And well, it's for me too. It's Psalm 127 A Psalm by Solomon. That's right, Solomon.

And as we've looked at several Psalms by David, but here is a Psalm written by David's son Solomon, of whom scripture says that Solomon was the wisest person of his time. Solomon was one of the great doers of his time. He was one of the great builders, one of the great administrators. I mean, if, if you read about Solomon in the Old Testament, you'll see that Solomon is someone who gets a lot done reading.

Now, Psalm 127 beginning at the first verse where it says, unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain, unless the Lord guards the city. The guard keeps watch in vain. It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil for the Lord gives sleep to his beloved. Now, did you pick up on Solomon's repeated use of the word vain? Those who build that labor in vain. The guard keeps watch in vain. It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest. And here with this word vain.

Solomon is picking up on a theme that he writes extensively about in his book of Ecclesiastes, Vanity of Vanities. All is vanity. It's vain. It's something that's meaningless, futile. Empty, stuck on stupid trying to do all of this without the Lord trying to do this without relying on him, whether it is trying to build a family, a business, a ministry. I'm struck by Solomon's line where he says it is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil. Note the word, anxious, anxious toil.

Now you read the book of Proverbs written by Solomon and, and you know that Solomon he's not against toil. Solomon is not against hard work. Rather what Solomon is warning about here is toil that becomes anxious, anxious toil. I mean, it's working as though it's all up to you. It's, it's as though true success in life depends on you and not God. Solomon is not telling the builder to stop building he's not telling the guard to stop keeping watch whether a Solomon is saying that that do we have to take God into account in all of it? We have to put our trust in God for what we do.



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I remember a time when I was a young pastor and I was feeling the weight of the church on my shoulders. And finally, finally, one Sunday on our way home from church, I said to my wife, I said I just resigned from being the fourth person of the Godhead. It's no more God, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy spirit and Tim, no, it's about God. So Solomon is saying it is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil for God gives sleep to his beloved. That's quite a statement, God gives sleep to his beloved.

Now, if you check out this line in the margin of the new revised standard version of the Bible or the margin of the new international version, you will see that the translators suggest that this phrase is better translated as the Lord provides for his beloved during sleep. Now, I like that because that really is the idea here of the Hebrew. It is that God provides for you and me during our sleep. I mean, when we're not lifting a finger, God is going about his work of providing for us as we rest. I wonder here if Solomon is thinking about God putting Adam into a deep sleep so he can provide Eve for Him.

I wonder if Solomon is thinking of Genesis 15 where God puts Abraham into a deep sleep so that God can provide an eternal unconditional covenant with Abraham. Or maybe maybe Solomon is thinking of first Kings 3 when Solomon is sleeping, not working, but sleeping. God provides for Solomon the gift of wisdom so we can see a lot happen while, while you and I are resting, while we sleep. God is working. And that is why in the Hebrew Bible, the day begins not with sunrise when, when we go to work, but the day begins at sunset. When God goes about his work.

There's such an important lesson here for us that just as we are by grace through faith, not of works, God does his saving work in our lives so that God's greatest blessings for you and me come as we rest from our works as we let go of this crazy idea that it's all up to us like the blessing all depends on us.

I was thinking about when I was a boy and my dad was giving me my first lesson and how to swim. And my dad told me that I needed to learn to trust the water to hold me up. He said that if I would just relax in the water and trust the water, that it, that it would hold me up and you know, that really made no sense to me at all because because I knew that the harder I tried, the harder I try to stay afloat. Well, the quicker I sank and, but you know, God says, relax, trust me, I'll hold you up because unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor, labor in vain.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says to us today, come to me and I will give you rest.

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