



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – January 13, 2024

The Lord be with you.

I don't know if you've heard, but there's a story going around about, about Satan having a big yard sale. Satan is selling off his tools, he's selling off pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, things like that. And they say the demons are coming from everywhere wanting to buy his tools. And, and when one demon asks about a tool that's lying over all by itself in a corner, Satan says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Keep your hands off of that tool. That tool is not for sale because that tool has always been my best tool for attacking people. It's discouragement. My discouragement always works for me when all my other tools don't. Satan says, and Satan said, you know, the good thing about discouragement is that people don't think of discouragement as coming from me. True story.

Well, no, but we do know that God's people often struggle with discouragement as we follow Jesus. Well, I have a scripture for us today that that often helps me when I'm discouraged and following Jesus. I'm looking at second Corinthians a book where discouragement is really a big issue. Paul opens up in the first chapter of Second Corinthians talking about his discouragement and serving in Asia minor.

Paul talks about his discouragement in dealing with problems in the Corinthian church. He talks about the discouragement of a very painful thorn in the flesh and, and then, and it just like light breaks through, the light breaks through for Paul in his discouragement. I mean, it's right here in Second Corinthians chapter two verse 14 where I read, But thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads in every place. The fragrance that comes from knowing him.

I've often said that the little three letter word, but it's one of my favorite words in the Bible as, as the word, but it just turns everything around and it happens right here as Paul says. But thanks, but thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession that as Paul lives his life, he sees himself as following Jesus in this great victory parade. But Paul calls it here, he, he calls this a triumphal procession. And with these words, Paul is using the imagery of a Roman triumphal procession. Something that was well known in that ancient Roman world.

A triumphal procession was something that was awarded to a general who was returning home from a great victory in war. A Roman triumphal procession. I mean, it, it meant this magnificent entrance into Rome as it wasn't just any victory that was celebrated, but it was a victory. That, that meant an arch of triumph was built because there was peace that was won in an area. The troops were brought home. It meant that the territory of the Roman Empire was extended through that victory. And a Roman triumphal procession. Well, it was a Roman holiday. I mean, it was a day off for everybody to welcome the decorated general as he enters Rome, standing in his ornate chariot pulled by four white horses and, and all along the way, the people are cheering, they're throwing flowers. And then behind the victorious general there marches his soldiers. There are victors with him following him and then come the spoils of war- captive kings and



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princes that are followed by people who are burning incense that spreads the fragrance of victory all along the way.

So you hear what Paula's saying to us here, Paul is saying that Jesus is leading you and me in his great triumphal procession, Christ has won the victory. Christ has defeated his enemies of sin and death and you and I are following Jesus in his triumph. So contrary to appearances, contrary to what we might be feeling today, you and I, we are following Christ in his triumphal procession. Nothing stands in the way of Christ, the victor as we follow him.

And you know, this makes me think of something the Apostle Paul says over in Romans chapter eight where in this long list of terrible things that could happen to us. Then in verse 37 Paul says in all these things, in all these terrible things that might happen in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. So Paul is going through some hard times in Asia Minor. He's going through some hard times with the Corinthian Christians and I don't know, but you might be going through some hard times too.

But thanks be to God. Thanks be to God who in Christ always, he says, always, it means there's no exception. He always leads us in triumphal procession and through us in every place. He says, it doesn't leave out any place in every place. He spreads the fragrance that comes from knowing Christ.

So today you and I, we're, we're part of that victory parade. We're following Christ, spreading the knowledge of Christ victory. Here's how Paul says it. He says through us spreads in every place, the fragrance that comes from knowing Christ. And so you and I, as we follow Jesus through our ups and downs there spreads the fragrance that comes from knowing Jesus.

Now, the Greek word that is translated here as fragrance. It's frequently used in the Old Testament for the sacrifices that are offered up to God as a sweet fragrance. Sometimes the path of following Jesus in his victory. It does mean sacrifice. But as we live, it, it goes up as a sweet savor to God and spreads to others. The fragrance of knowing Jesus Paul uses the same Greek word for fragrance.

Over in Ephesians chapter five verse two, where Paul says, live in love as Christ, loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God in the midst of our struggles, perhaps discouragement. Christ is leading us. He's leading us in triumph and you and I, we spread to those around us. The fragrance that comes from knowing Him. So don't let Satan discourage you today.

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