



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- March 16, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever struggle with prayer? Maybe struggle finding time to pray or struggle knowing how best to pray? I know I do. And I'm thinking that it's not by accident that God's people do struggle with prayer because Satan, the evil one, he doesn't attack us on the periphery. I mean, he goes straight for the jugular. He goes straight for the heart and that is wanting to stop you and me from spending time with our Father.

I think the old hymn is right that Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon their knees. And so Satan is pulling out the stops, he's doing everything he can do to keep you and me from releasing the power of prayer in our lives. And I really do like that idea of making Satan tremble.

Philip Yi in his book, simply titled Prayer Tales of a time when Albert Einstein was at Princeton University's Institute for Advanced Study. And a graduate student approaches Einstein for help in knowing what direction to take in his studies. And when asked what direction to take in his studies, Einstein thought for a moment and then he said, he said, find out about prayer. Someone needs to find out about prayer.

Well, today, I, I want to share with you a short passage from the Bible that is, that is helping me pray. It's given me a little more boldness in prayer and I've got the verse right here. It's it's in the last book of the Bible. The book of Revelation chapter five verse eight, I read the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of God's people. I want to read that last part again. They were holding golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of God's people.

Now, these are the words of the apostle John who is in exile on the prison island of Patmos when he is caught up in the spirit into heaven, into the very throne room of God where, where he gets to see the world from, from heaven's viewpoint, John actually gets to see, he says the prayers of God's people. That's your prayers, my prayers. John gets to see them as God sees them in heaven. Now, this is an incredible scene as John sees what he describes as four living creatures along with the church that is the elders. He says that are now in heaven as they are holding golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of God's people.



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Now we see here from heaven's perspective, how very precious the prayers of God's people are to God here in symbolic language. It pictures them as presented to God. It says in golden bowls. And that tells us that in heaven, our prayers are valuable, precious to God. As here in symbolic language. They see our prayers presented to God in vessels of great price.

And then there's something else we see in this heavenly scene about about our prayers and, and that is how sweet our prayers are to God. It says that they are incense. They're like the sweet incense that rises up to God, a fragrant incense to him. That's what this is talking about. As in the Old Testament, the priest in the temple stood before the holy of Holies, offering up sweet incense as the people prayed and the fragrance of that incense floated up, it wafted up into the holy of Holies, symbolic of the prayers of God's people as they rose up to God. It is a sweet fragrance of God's people praying, rising up to God.

Now, what sometimes our prayers might seem to us dry, boring, trivial, not to God, not to God. As we see here from heaven's viewpoint, the prayers of God's people are precious to God. I mean, they're like gold, treasured by him. A sweet savor to him.

I don't know if even Albert Einstein knew the significance of his words. That someone needs to find out about prayer. I like the words of Peter Kreft, philosopher, theologian at Boston College, as he says, I strongly suspect that if we saw all the difference, even the tiniest of our prayers to God make and all the people, those little prayers were destined to affect and all the consequences of those effects down through the centuries. We would be so paralyzed with awe at the power of prayer that we would be unable to get up off our knees for the rest of our lives. End of quote.

One of the things I'm finding out about prayer is it the time I give to prayer expands. The time that I have. Let me say that again. The time I give to prayer expands, the time I have remember the little boy who gave us a lunch of five loaves of bread and two fish to Jesus. And you remember how Jesus multiplied them to feed the 5000.

I'm finding that when we give time to Jesus, Jesus has this wondrous way of expanding. The time that we give to him reminds me of what Martin Luther said. He said, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer. Luther found out about prayer the time we give to God really does expand the time that we have as our prayers are precious to God, treasured by God, a sweet savor to him. And that's why the old hymn is spot on. Right. Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon their knees. Well, it's something to think about today and something to give our time to today.

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