



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 9, 2024

The Lord be with you.

It has been said that people can live 40 days without food, about three days without water. And about eight minutes without air but can only live for a second without hope. We desperately need hope. We live in some difficult times. And we need hope. But what do people do who have no hope... No hope for the future. Where does one go to get hope? Well, has a passage of scripture that could help us with that. A scripture guaranteed to give hope for today. Hope for the future. Hope for eternity.

Of course, we find hope in the Bible, but today I'm thinking of the Bible's book of Lamentations. That's right, a whole book of the Bible that is filled with lament, with grief, with pain. It is written by the prophet Jeremiah, who is a long remembered as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah writes around the year of 586 BC as he looks out on the city of Jerusalem after it has been taken captive, destroyed, left in ruins, and Jeremiah laments for himself and for his people, he is broken, he is overwhelmed. I read Lamentations chapter 3, beginning at verse 19, as Jeremiah is doing some serious talking with God, Jeremiah prays, "the thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall." That is, it's all bitterness to him. In verse 20, "my soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me." Jeremiah sounds pretty hopeless for the future, and then everything turns for Jeremiah, everything pivots on Verse 21, As Jeremiah says, "But this I call to mind. And therefore, I have hope." But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. I think the little word, but it's one of the great words of the Bible as the word, but just turns everything around, but this, I call to mind, and therefore I have hope, so that in the midst of pain, of grief, of hopelessness, Jeremiah calls something to mind... And what is it the Jeremiah calls to mind? Well, that's Verse 22, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new, every morning, great is your faithfulness." That's something to call to mind when you have no hope, the never ceasing, steadfast love of God for you, His mercies that never ended, and his faithfulness, his great faithfulness.

Notice what it is that Jeremiah is doing in these versus. Jeremiah begins honestly acknowledging what he is feeling, it's worm wood and gall, it's bitterness to him. But



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Jeremiah doesn't stop with what he is feeling. Jeremiah then thinks right thoughts. He calls to mind, he calls to mind what he knows to be true, and that is the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. Steadfast love is a translation of that great Hebrew word, hesedd, that's H-E-S-E-D, that literally means covenant love. It means that God has entered into covenant with His people by which he has sworn to always be faithful. Jeremiah calls out to mind, and that gives some hope for the future. Next, Jeremiah calls to mind God's mercies never come to an end. The word mercies is a beautiful word in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, the word means womb. It speaks of a mother's love of mother's maternal longing for the child she carries in her womb. It's a very tender word. Jeremiah calls to mind God's mercies, not that it is plural, in order to emphasize that God's maternal longing, mercies for his people never come to an end. Jeremiah adds that his mercies they're new every morning. God's mercies to us are fresh and new everyday. This is what Jeremiah calls to mind in difficult times and painful times and it gives Jeremiah hope for the future.

Thomas Obadiah Chisum was born in a log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, in 1866. He went to a small country school and he became its teacher at age 16. He became a Christian at age 27, and with no college or seminary training, he became a pastor who was faced with many health problems. In a letter dated 1941, Thomas Chisum writes, I read, "my income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which have followed me until now, although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness." Now in the midst of his poor health to meager income, Chisum wanted to leave a record of what he called the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God. And so he wrote a poem, you might have even sung this poem, it's called Great is Thy Faithfulness as Chisum based a poem on this passage from Jeremiah's prayer.

Great is Thy faithfulness oh God, my Father.
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not.
As Thou has been forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness.
Great is Thy faithfulness.
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness. Lord unto me.



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This we call to mind today, and we have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord, His mercies that are new every day, and great is his faithfulness to you and me.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.