



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 16, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Henry David Thoreau said, the path of least resistance leads to crooked rivers and crooked men. Good words, I think as you and I live in a culture where it can be so tempting to take the path of least resistance, tempting to just go along, to get along. Well, I was in college, home for spring break, talking excitedly with my mom about what I was learning and what I was doing, and my mother listened quietly, and then she warned me, Tim, you're like a sponge soaking up everything around you... Well, I knew that my mom was pretty smart about things, and I try to take seriously her warning about not being a sponge, about taking everything in and taking the path of least resistance going along to get along. Now, all this takes me to a verse of scripture that I do pray will guide me that it might guide you.

The words of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 12, verse 2. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. I really like how the modern message version translates this as it says, Don't be so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking... I'm mourn, I grieve for what I see going on in our culture today, the violence, the corruption, the course-ness, the personal attacks, the hyper-sexualization, I don't wanna be a part of that. I don't want to be conformed to that, and in today's scripture, the Apostle Paul is writing to a tiny minority of Christians living in Pagan Rome, that was a moral cesspool. And he's warning them and us, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The Greek word translated world as in, do not be conformed to this world. The Greek word is, aion, that's A-I-O-N. And aion means an age, a space of time, it speaks of the present evil age that is transitory, that is passing away. Followers of Jesus are not to soak up, are not to be conformed to the fleeting fashions of this culture that is passing away. Okay, that's what we're not to do... To be conformed to this world. To this present evil age. Here's what we are to do. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The Greek word translated transformed, it is actually translated transfigured in the gospels where our Lord Jesus, when he was trans-figured on the mountain, when his face shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white. He was transfigured. And something like that happens to you and me spiritually and morally, as we are transformed, transfigured Paul says, by the renewing of our minds. You see, all real change, all transformation begins in our minds, in our thinking. So if you're wanting to change your life, change your thinking. We act as we think. So do not be conformed but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

As computer programmers say, Garbage in garbage out. That is your program garbage into a computer and you're gonna get garbage out. If we program our minds with the garbage of today's culture, we ought not be surprised what we get out in our behaviors in our way of life. This often leads me to look at my life and ask, How does my input of the culture, the world's media, how does that compare with my input of God's Word through Bible reading, Bible study, prayer, meditation, worship, fellowship with other believers? Something else here I find interesting, and in the word translated transformed, transformed is in the passive voice of the verb, meaning that we are passive,



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we do not bring about this transformation of our lives. Our lives are transformed by the Holy Spirit as we input the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is always the agent of transformation, and as we focus our lives on God's Word, the Holy Spirit transforms us trans-figures us to be more and more like Jesus.

I do appreciate the warning my mother gave me, I don't wanna be a sponge in today's culture, soaking it up, going along to get along, but seeking day by day by day to be transformed by the Holy Spirit by the renewing of my mind. And so I pray that old hymn, may the mind of Christ, my Savior, live in me from day to day, by his love and power controlling all I do and say, May the Word of Christ dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour. So that all may see, I try and only through his power.

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