



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 18, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever have those moments? Well, when you just know you need to forgive someone, but you can't find it in you to forget, or you have a moment to you since God calling you to do something and you don't wanna do it, or you're wanting to obey God, but you don't know if you can... Well, if you ever have moments like that, I've got good news for you. It's a scripture verse that many have found helpful in moments like that. Philippians Chapter 2, verse 13, in which the apostle Paul writes, It is God who is at work in you, enabling you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Often people think of God as high up there in his heavens and well, in us down here trying hard to live for God, trying hard to serve Him, but that is not the Bible's teaching, God has not left us to ourselves... Note what the Apostle Paul says here, it is God who is at work in you. So that puts a whole new light on things... It is God who is at work in you.

You see, we live by participation in the life of Christ. Jesus did say, apart from me, you can do nothing. Jesus didn't say that you can do some things apart from him. Or he didn't say you can do many things apart from him, he said, apart from me, you can do nothing. So Paul says here, he says, it is God who is at work in you. And that's the key. It is God who is at work in you. Enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. You see the want to in the Christian life has to come from God. And the work of the Christian life has to come from God. Now, there was a time in my Christian life when I was pretty discouraged, I was feeling defeated, and I did not know where I would get the power to live the Christian life, or where I would even find the want to, and then I happen on this verse. As Paul says that both the will and the working of God's good pleasure comes from God. You and I can't do it, but God can. That's the Christian life. That God supplies both the energy and the ability to do what pleases Him. That that's why Jesus yoke is easy and his burden is light. It's because Jesus is right there in the yoke with us. For me, this is one of the most comforting, one of the most encouraging verses in the Bible that God is at work in us, both to motivate us and to enable us to do what pleases Him.

Now, how this works out it's one of the great mysteries of the Bible, one of the great mysteries of the Christian life. St. Augustine put it like this. We will, but God works the will in us. We work, but God works the working in us. God does not act for us, rather God empowers us both to will and to work that which is pleasing to him. So, God will not force you, God will not compel you, but God will enable you to will and to work. We do the living, the choosing, the acting, but we know the secret, we know that all the while it is God who is living, choosing and in acting through us as we allow him. Corrie Ten Boom, the author of *The Hiding Place*, tells the horrors of the Holocaust and a Nazi prison camp. Corrie talked about her need to often pray, Lord, make me willing to be willing to do what you want me to do. Lord, make me willing to be willing to do what you want me to do. And Corrie found the Lord did. That the Lord did enable Corrie to tell good news in a concentration camp. God enabled Corrie to forgive the prison guards. He enabled her for the next generation of her



## water from rock

life to travel the world, telling the good news of God's love and forgiveness, but it all began with the prayer, Lord, make me willing to be willing to do what you want me to do.

Perhaps today, you're struggling with forgiving someone, perhaps you're struggling to do what you know God wants you to do, and you just don't have the want to... You don't have the power. Why not pray like Corrie, prayed? Lord, make me willing to be willing to do what you want me to do. And when you pray that prayer, you then free God to act in your life. For it is God who is at work in you, Paul says, enabling you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. You'll make God happy, and you'll be happy too.

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