



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 7, 2024

The Lord be with you.

You know, I always thought my dad was the smartest person in the world. I mean, when I was a little boy, it seemed that I could ask my dad anything. And my dad, he always knew the answer until one day, one day when I wasn't so sure about dad, it happened on the day that I received a pocket knife as a gift. And I was proud, carefully looking over my new gift and, and I saw some words on the blade of that pocket knife, some words that I didn't know what they meant. I saw the words tempered steel. And so I ask, I asked dad, wait, what does tempered steel mean? And when my dad told me it, it didn't make any sense to me. My dad told me, he said, he said tempered steel means that the steel of your pocket knife was made stronger by putting it through fire. He told me that heat makes the steel stronger, less brittle, more useful than other steel. And that really didn't make sense to me.

I mean, what my father told me that day, I mean, how do you make something stronger by putting it through fire, wouldn't fire, destroy it. Well, over the years, I've come to know that again. My dad was right. That steel is made stronger, less brittle, more useful, more pliable by being put through fire. And over the years, I have also come to know that God makes you and me stronger, more useful, more pliable by putting us through fire. We see this in life and we see it again and again in the Bible.

For instance, we see this in the Little New Testament letter of James. James chapter one verses two through four that I read my brothers and sisters. Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its full effect so that you may be mature and complete lacking in nothing.

Ok. Here, the word of God is telling us to consider it nothing but joy when we face trials of any kind because it says that God is using these trials not to defeat us, not to destroy us, but God is using these trials to make us stronger, more useful.

Why this this this Bible text says it says whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy. That's a curious thing to say whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy. Why I mean, why, why would he say such a thing because God uses those trials. He says to make us mature and complete, lacking in nothing. I like the sound of that mature, complete lacking and nothing. And so this Bible text instructs us to consider it nothing but joy as we face our trials, whether there are trials in our health trials, in our finances, in our relationships, trials in our country.

Now, I have my Greek New Testament before me here today. And I see this word that is translated, consider as in considerate, nothing but joy. This Greek word translated consider is the word Hema. And he is a word that is oftentimes translated as to lead. He is a thinking word. It's not a feeling word, it's a thinking word. It, it means to lead in our thinking when



water from rock

trials come our way, we don't let our, let our feelings take over, but we, we, we lead with our thinking leading by telling ourselves that, that, that God is using these trials for his purpose for us.

That God will in fact use these trials to make us mature, complete, lacking in nothing. So God is lovingly wisely using the trials in your life, using them to make you more like Jesus like steel was tempered by the fire. So God is doing with you. I mean, it's, it's what God is up to British pastor and Bible teacher. Alan Redpath used to say he used to say quote when God wants to do an impossible task. He takes an impossible man and crushes him. I wonder, I just can't help but wonder if that's the meaning of the trials that you've endured.

Andrew Murray, the South African pastor and writer was going through a, a time of great trial in his life, time of great pain. And Andrew Murray wrote down these words to himself to lead him in his thinking about his trial.

Here's what Andrew Murray wrote, I read in time of trial, say, first God brought me here, it is by his will that I am in this straight place and that I will rest next. God will keep me here in his love and give me grace in this trial to behave as his child. Then say, then say, God will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons. He intends me to learn and working in me, the grace. He means to bestow and lastly say, say, say that in God's good time. He can bring me out again how and when God knows, therefore, say number one, I am here by God's appointment. Number two in God's keeping number three under his training. Number four for his time. It's not only steel that is made stronger and more useful by the fire. It's also true of you and true of me.

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