



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen - May 21, 2024

The Lord be with you.

"I don't know what God is calling me to, but I know what God is calling me from." Those are words that I have said several times in my life when I didn't have a clue as to what my next step was to be. Do you ever feel like that? Perhaps you're feeling like that today? I don't know what God is calling me to, but I know what God is calling me from. Yeah, I know the old saying about how God never closes a door but that he opens another one. Yeah, I found that to be true, but sometimes the hallways can be long and difficult. And so I've often times said that Abraham is my patron saint, as it says of Abraham in the book of Hebrews chapter 11 verse eight, that Abraham set out not knowing where he was going, except that God had called him.

And I want to share with you a Bible verse that has been a great help to me over the years and to many others when we come to that place in life where, well, we just don't know what our next step is to be, it might be a next step in employment, a next step in a relationship. The next step in a place to live I have in mind a verse from that Great Shepherd. Psalm, Psalm 23 a Psalm of David where he speaks to the Lord as our, as our good shepherd. And in Psalm 23 verse three, he says of the Lord, he says, he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Now, modern translations rightly translates this as he leads me in right paths for his namesake. He leads me in paths that are going somewhere. Many of David's prayers in the book of Psalms are prayers for the Lord to lead him. In fact, the most often prayed prayer in the Bible is for the Lord to lead, to guide us in our next step is as we know that we need God's wisdom. We want to navigate our lives in line with God's will for us. And sometimes it's pretty clear to us the door that he is closing, but not always clear, the door that he is opening. And David speaks from a lifetime of experience of walking with God as he says, he leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

In this Psalm, David is using the imagery of a shepherd, leading his sheep, leading his sheep to green pastures beside quiet waters, away from danger. It is a song that is filled with confidence in God's love and care for us as sheep, as sheep who often go astray. We get so easily lost and, and you know, she, she, she don't even know when we're lost.

Did you notice here that the shepherd leads us? He says in right paths for his name's sake. God is leading you and leading me. Not, not because of our merit, but for his name's sake. God leads us in right paths, not because of any goodness in us, but for his name's sake, you see God's character, God's reputation. God's good name is at stake



## water from rock

in leading us in right paths, paths that are going somewhere. I mean, David knows that some inept inexperienced shepherd who takes his sheep out into the wilderness and loses them is the laughing stock of all the villages.

God does not mislead us or abandon us because God's character. His reputation are at stake in leading you in me in demonstration of His glory, his goodness, his faithfulness. Yes, we face trials, we face uncertainties, we face valleys of deep darkness, but God is the good shepherd who leads us in right paths. For his name's sake. God is intending that your life and my life be testimonies to his grace and wisdom. I like of David in a nearby psalm. Psalm 37 verse 24. He says of our life's journey. He says, though we stumble, we shall not be hurled headlong for the Lord holds us by the hand.

Now, it was at one of those times in my life when, when I didn't have much of a clue as to where God was leading me next, that I came across a prayer that encouraged me and I share it with you today hoping that it will be an encouragement to you.

It is a prayer by Thomas Merton, a trappist monk and a profound writer on the Christian life. As, as he prays, he prays these words,

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end nor do I really know myself. And, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so, but I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I'm doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death, I will not fear for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

This prayer reminds us that even if we don't know where we're going that our desire to please God is in fact pleasing to him and we can trust, we can trust that God will lead us in right paths even when the way is unclear.

So I close out with the words of David's son, the wise Solomon in Proverbs chapter three verses five and six, trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight in all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

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