



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 27, 2024

The Lord be with you.

How do you think that the trials that you're going through, the rough times in your life, how do you think that all of those might be growing? You maturing you making you more like Jesus and making your life a blessing to others. That's what I'd like to think about with you for the next few moments.

Some years ago, my wife Rita and I went to a life celebration for our friend Pat. Now Pat had not died, but had battled cancer valiantly for many years. And Pat's family and friends, we got together to celebrate Pat's life while, while she was still with us. And it was at that life celebration that I learned about the agony of the tea leaves. The agony of the tea leaves is what sets apart really good tea from the tasteless tea bags in our supermarkets. The agony describes the writhing, the twisting, the unfurling of tea leaves as boiling water is poured over them.

And it is in that moment of agony that all the stored oils of flavor and aroma are released and its that agony that makes for a great cup of tea and that was the life of our friend Pat, who, who through years of chemotherapy radiation, putting 1 ft in front of another. That the beautiful life of Jesus Christ was seen in Pat. And I always think of the agony of the tea leaves whenever I read the words of the Apostle Paul in Second Corinthians chapter four that I wanna share with you. Second Corinthians chapter four verse eight. Paul says, we are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body, the death of Jesus. So that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

I like how the Apostle Paul while he doesn't sugar coat things, but he acknowledges the reality of his pain, his struggle as later on in this book of Second Corinthians in chapter 11. And what we learn of Paul's imprisonments, beatings stonings shipwrecks. I mean, Paul knew trouble, but Paul knew that his trouble that it was not meaningless that it was the agony through which the life and power of Jesus was released. Actually blessing bringing others closer to Christ notice here that Paul talks about being afflicted in every way, perplexed, persecuted struck down.

But Paul can say that in the midst of all of that, he can say we are not crushed, we're not driven to despair, were not forsaken were not destroyed. Paul here was likely thinking of himself as a soldier or a gladiator in the arena, facing attack from every side, confused, bewildered in battle, uncertain, targeted by the enemy, not down wounded, but but he says,



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not crushed, not driven to despair, not forsaken, not destroyed. He says always carrying in the body, the death of Jesus. So that so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. Paul explains here that that our trials and troubles become opportunities for Christ's resurrection life to shine through us. That when we are weak, Christ is strong in us, through our suffering, the power of Jesus' life is, is revealed that you and me.

We learn here that our, our trials that they, they're, they're not just personal, they're not just about us, but our trials serve God's greater purpose that the life of Jesus that we have in us. It is at work in us and, and it flows to those around us so that we are part of a much larger story where Jesus is glorified through us, our pain and struggle. They're, they're, they're not in vain, but they have a purpose in God's great redemption. I think here of the words of Csos who said that hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.

It's the agony of the tea leaves that we gathered some years ago to celebrate the wondrous life of pat whose life so glorified the life of Jesus in her in this painful season of life. No, the goddess with you. God knows your heartache, your pain, and God will guide you and give you strength through this difficult time. For your eternal good and for His glory.

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