



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – July 9, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Elizabeth Elliott in her fine book titled "Suffering Is Never for Nothing" She says the deepest things I've learned in my own life have come from the deepest suffering and out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires have come. The deepest things I know about God. How about you today? Could you say that? But the deepest things you know about God and the deepest things you have learned about life that it's come to you from your deepest suffering.

There's a man I know a really great man of God who who suffers a lot. And, and one day he was asked if he had a verse of scripture that, that that helps him through his suffering. He immediately opened his Bible and he read a verse from the book of Job. Job chapter 42 verse five. I've got it right here in my Bible where Job after enduring unimaginable suffering, he says to God, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you and Here, job captures the transformation that God works in our lives through our suffering, through our trials. In this Job reveals an essential truth about the purpose of suffering. That suffering is never just some random, arbitrary, meaningless event. But suffering is a means through which God draws us closer to Him. Suffering is a means by which God deepens our understanding of Him, his love, his wisdom that, that we do not always grasp in easy times.

So the book of Job is 42 chapters long about how through job's suffering, he experiences God's presence. He understands God's ways God's character in deeper ways. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees you instead of just knowing about God from what others have said about God. Job is making that million mile journey from his head to his heart. Job has through suffering experience. God in ways that that it goes beyond a head knowledge that goes beyond intellectual understanding to a deeper personal relational experience of God.

I'm reminded here of a story told by E Stanley Jones, the great missionary statesman who he told one day about being in a bookstore and he sees a sign over some old books and the sign says second hand theology for sale. And Jones said that, that he, he looked at that sign and he vowed in that moment. He said, I never want a second hand theology. I've got to know God firsthand. I wanna know God for myself and not just what others have told me. And in the book of Job, we are seeing Job moving from a second hand knowledge of God. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear. Job is moving to a first hand experience of God. But now my eyes see you.



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The book of Job teaches us that that yes, in fact, good people do suffer and the suffering can't always be explained or understood. In the Book of Job, we learn to express to God our pain, our confusion, even to express anger to God. The book of Job wrestles with profound questions about God's justice, about God's goodness. And through all of that wrestling that struggling, we see job being drawn into firsthand experience of God's love and grace.

I've lived long enough and I've experienced enough suffering and loss to, to say that Elizabeth Elliott was right. The deepest things we learn about God, about his love, about his compassion, about his wisdom. It comes from our deepest suffering, even if we don't understand the suffering, like like job didn't understand the suffering. Romans chapter eight verse 28 assures us that we do know. We do know that in all these things, God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose to make us more like Jesus because it is ever the purpose of God, the heart of God to bless you.

I close with this blessing commanded in the book of numbers chapter six, the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace.

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