

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 9, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Years ago, I was doing some work on that as my first computer I was a novice to the whole thing back then. Frankly, I still am, but my computer started acting up. It was leaving undone those things that ought to have done, and doing those things, which it not to have done. You get the picture, and I didn't know what to do. So, I called an IT friend and he said, reboot it.

What do you mean, reboot it? And he said turn it off, wait a bit and turn it back on.

And you know, I did just what my friend told me to do, I rebooted I waited and turned it on and it was fixed.

And I'm thinking of these days of quarantine as a time to reboot the time to turn off for a while and to wait and we'll be ready to turn back on and get going. And I think most of us probably need some time to reboot time to see things a little more clearly.

And that's what I hope Selah is for you and me as Selah is a Hebrew word that means much what the railroad crossing sign means when it says Stop, Look and Listen.

And that's what I've been doing for the past few days, in John 12, as Jesus is coming down to Good Friday and as I stop and look and listen for God's voice in this, it's helping me to see things a little more clearly, in the midst of all the fog of the coronavirus pandemic John chapter 12 verse 23. Jesus says, "The hour has come, that's a Good Friday and Easter "the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified, Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the Earth and dies, and remains just a single grain but if it dies, it there is much fruit.

Now, if you ever done any kind of gardening, or watch anything growing the ground, you already have a pretty good sense of what Jesus is talking about here is Jesus is saying that his impending death will be like that seed that is buried in the ground as to all appearances, the seed dies. It comes apart it disintegrates, it comes to nothing. It looks like the end of the grain of wheat. And then there is this miracle that only God can do this miracle frankly, that only God understands scientists can give some fancy name but they don't understand it the seed dies and as it dies it passes over into new life, but not just new life, but fruitful abundant, new life and in this Jesus is explaining the meaning of his suffering and death as on one level Jesus sees his suffering and death as bringing new life for all.

But then on another level, another level Jesus wants us to see a profound spiritual truth for you, and me, and that is the many kinds of death, the many kinds of coming apart that we experience this side of heaven, actually bring new life and blessing to us and through us to other people and in this Jesus explaining not only the meaning of Holy Week... Is death

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and resurrection, but he's explaining the meaning of the lives of all of those who follow Him as we are united by faith. With Jesus, when we live our lives in Him and He in us so that Jesus' death and resurrection, become are dying and rising to new life and this is a spiritual truth, we see throughout all of life in the many different kinds of death that we experience.

For instance, there was the death of a relationship, there's a death of a dream, the death of a career, the death of one's health, there are many different kinds of death or something precious, to us dies.

I think of my late wife Milo's death in 1981, I think, of some years later, the death of a relationship, the death of a marriage that I experienced through divorce or I think of my two sons with whom I was so close, I think of the empty nest as they left home, which was good. They needed to do it, but I had to grieve it, I had to name it as a death of sort or I think about the death I experienced, in leaving a church that I had founded and pastored for 21 years, it was a death, it was a coming apart as there were times. We feel like that grain of wheat dying coming apart coming to nothing. We don't know what's going to happen next, We grieve but we do not grieve as those who have no hope, and the God of resurrection goes to work in us unless agree if we fall into the Earth and dies. It remains just a single grain but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

And I've lived enough years I've lived enough the life to know that what Jesus says is true, I love the old poster, that says, Just as the caterpillar thought the world had come to an end, it became a butterfly and time. And again, just as we think our world has ended... God makes something new, of us, it is God's great mystery of how in undergoing a kind of death, we receive a new abundant life. And through us, others received an abundant life as God can take the suffering, you're going through right now, and God can redeem it, that's why we call him Savior, and He can bear much fruit. Not only in your life, but in the lives of many others.

I'm in a men's Bible study when I'm not social distancing. And there's just wonderful man in the group who he's been through a lot of pain, through a lot of suffering. He's been in prison, two different times. He was addicted to drugs and God has wonderfully redeemed and transformed him life and my friend talks about Jesus as being a dumpster diver, Jesus knows how to dive into the misery, and muck of our lives and bring out something beautiful and wonderful.

That's what I love about Henry Nouwen, that great spiritual writer who talked about being a wounded healer, how God knows how to take the wounds of our lives and use them for the healing in others. I've learned, I've learned that the pain and horror of a Good Friday is always followed by the light of an Easter Dawn, it may be Friday, but Sunday's coming.

Christ, we do all adore thee... And we do praise thee forever. For on the Holy Cross thou has the world from sin, redeemed Christ, we do all adore Thee, and we do praise thee forever.

I am Tim Smith, the fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening. Sunday's coming.

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