

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 21, 2020

The Lord be with you.

I'm looking here at a list of suggested things to do as we're quarantined at home, and there's some good ones like phone five friends, purchase gift cards to support local businesses go for walk outdoors.

Read five books you've been intending to read. Call your grandfather. I like that one. But last night in the middle of the night, it came to me. Something I really need to be doing during this pandemic something I need to do, and it's something I want to do, and that is to spend time praising God.

I had prepared to talk about something different, today, but it came to me as I talk about a lot of different things, and I wanna be more like Paul and Silas in Acts chapter 16 as there they are at midnight they've been severely flogged they put into the innermost cell and their feet facet in stocks and it says that they were praying and singing hymns to God at midnight and suddenly there was an earthquake and immediately all the doors were open and everyone's chains were unfastened.

There is something we see that scripture and we see throughout life that praise releases the power of God. Now that takes me to a story. It's found in Second Chronicles chapter 20, it's a long chapter. I'm gonna give you the cliff notes. Reader's Digest version. You might wanna check it out. There's a lot of good stuff here, but here's the story, it's the year 750 BC, we're in Jerusalem, Jehosophat is king, and he's one of the good kings, who in many ways follows David's example but word comes to Jehosophat that an Israeli intelligence has picked up something, there's a surprise attack that's being planned against them as three nations are moving into position to launch an attack and the armies have already crossed the area around the Dead Sea, which means they're only 40 miles away. So, attack is imminent, and our text says that King Jehosophat was afraid. I don't doubt it, I'd be afraid to, but I, I like, what Jehosophat, does when he's afraid, it says he set himself to seek the Lord and the whole story really turns on this he set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout the land.

He's asking to people if they would join him in prayer, and so there's a prayer meeting and he stands before the people, And here's what He prays Oh Lord, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over the kingdoms of nations in your hand or power and might? So, as He prays he's putting focus on God, and then he just lays out the crisis to God he says, "For we are powerless against the great multitude that is coming against is... We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you, to get that last phrase? Our eyes are on you. He's getting his eyes off the problem he's getting his eyes onto God, Lord. We're facing something a lot bigger than us, a lot stronger than us and we don't know what to do and so we're looking to you that's a prayer that I've prayed quite a bit recently. Lord, we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you, it's your move Lord, and now as you have and the people are praying, it says The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehosophat so here's the word of the Lord come to its people through a profit in this time of crisis, and Jehosophat says tomorrow, go down against them. This battle is not for you

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to fight. Take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the Lord on your behalf, do not fear or be dismayed.

365 times a Word of God commands do not fear means there's one for every day of the year.

It wasn't only God's word for them in that crisis but it's God's Word to us, today, do not fear our Lord Jesus said in John 14, 27, Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

And then the text says, that Joshua and all the people worshipped and stood to praise a Lord with a very loud voice.

Now, I notice as the people Pray that people go from a place of fear, to a place of confidence, they go from being overwhelmed, by the problem to rejoicing in God they've got their eyes on God, and not the problem, and it says, "They rose early in the morning, they're ready, their pumped, they're ready to go and it's decided that as they go into battle, that they're gonna send the choir, I'll call it the praise team, they send the praise team out in front of the Army so it's a praise team that's going to lead the army into battle. It's always good to go into battle, praising God, picture this. I think that's us to be the strangest army. Anyone will ever see. It's not to Special Forces leading the way, it's not to scout it's not the long boat or church it's the praise team that is leading the way into battle and listen to what they're seeing.

These are the lyrics Give thanks to the Lord for His steadfast love endures forever.

Now, this next part is significant. Not to timing, as they begin to sing and praise as they began to sing and praise the Lord set an ambush and the armies were routed.

It's unclear what happened here, but the Lord joins the battle and the invading armies, are defeated, as the people are singing, and praising God after the battle is ended. It says that they assembled in the valley of Baraka for there. They blessed Baraka, the Lord, therefore, that place has been called the Valley of blessing the valley of Baraka to this day.

People remembered and they bless God, and they praised him, and then when they return to Jerusalem, they have a praise Fest, a praise gathering with harps... Liars and trumpets. It's all here in Second Chronicles 20, as they praise God in the midst of the crisis, they praise God after the crisis, praise was not the prelude to the battle praise was the battle praise wasn't preparation for battle strategy praise was the battle strategy, these days of quarantine. And locked down on anyone's bucket list.

But there are a lot of good things we can be doing during these days and the best thing we can do is praise the Lord.

I wonder if Paul has this passage in mind when in Thessalonians 5, he says, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, gift thanks in all circumstances. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you, and Lord, Lord, be with us as we're locked down in our homes. And be with those who have no homes.

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I'm Tim Smith. A fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening, until next time...

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