

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 30, 2020

That the Lord be with you.

Now we know that God works all things together for good, for those who love him, we know that. But do you ever wonder if the troubles you're going through right now? If God is really working them for good. How about the pain, the disappointment, the failure, is God really doing something with that? I wanna think about this for a few moments as I tell a quick Bible story and then tie that story with another scripture.

First, a story, it's a story of Gideon, that you find in the Old Testament, Book of Judges, Chapter 7, and it is quite a story. As God is using Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites who have invaded. And that's a story goes there were 32,000 men who have gathered around a rather timid fearful Gideon to fight against the Midianites, but God tells Gideon that he has a problem in that he has too many men to fight a battle and so God actually directs Gideon to whittle down the number of his soldiers from 32,000 to just 300. God wants Gideon to go to battle against the median army of 135,000 soldiers with only 300 men, and then God directs what Gideon's measly little army is to use for weapons.

You will see the weapons on the logo of every Gideon Bible as for weapons they are to use clay jars with a torch inside and each man will have a trumpet, and then those 300 men surround an army of 135,000 and as Gideon gives the signal, each Soldier breaks his clay jar, the light of the torch shines through and they blow the trumpets and it is shock and awe. It is panic time for the Midianites as the clay jars are broken, and the light shines through.

You can read it there in Judges. As it says that the many nights begin killing each other, they panicked and they fled over the Jordan River. And so here are just 300 men armed with trumpets, broken clay jars and the light shining through, that puts to flight an army of 135,000. Now, I'd call that a miracle.

Okay, now, I want you, I want you to hold that image of broken clay pots light shining through and I want you to connect that with what is another miracle, it is the miracle that the Apostle Paul tells us about in 2 Corinthians Chapter 4, Verses 6 and 7 here it is. For it is the God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that that's extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

That's a miracle. The story about Gideon and his army was a miracle. This is an even greater miracle as Paul says, "We have this treasure. What is the treasure? It is the light of the glory of God in Christ Jesus. We have this treasure, he says in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

Notice here, what Paul was doing he was picking up on the image of the broken clay jars and the light shining through to talk about the light of the glory of God, that is in Christ Jesus, that shines through you and me as we are broken. And I've seen this so many

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times in the lives of God's people through the years as God's people endure pain, heartache, trouble. I see God's glory shining through them. Then in the next verse, Paul says more about this process of being broken. As he says in Verse 8, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. Now let me ask you, can you relate to any of that? Afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down. Yes, all of that, but with a difference. He says, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. That's the difference, perplexed, but not driven to despair, that's the difference. persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. Paul, what makes the difference, what is the secret?

Well, he says it in verse 10, always caring in the body the death of Jesus, so that, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. As you and I go through the pains and trials of life this side of heaven, it becomes apparent that the life of Jesus in these empty clay pots sustains us and shines through.

Paul says we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that the extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. God's extraordinary power shines through ordinary people as we are broken and the light of the glory of Jesus Christ shines through.

Now, I want you to know that I sometimes complain about my circumstances, I don't like something being done to me, I don't like something that is happening to me, it's not fun. I did not sign up for this. And then it dawns on me that these circumstances in which I find myself, it's where the light of Jesus Christ can best shine through.

And so, I'm not nearly as concerned as I used to be about hiding my brokenness from others. As I am wanting the light of the glory of Jesus Christ to be seen in my brokenness.

Harry Dixon Loes was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, and he wrote the lyrics of 1500 gospel songs and composed 3000 tunes. But Harry Dixon Loes is best known for a children's song. And I'm so glad I learned that song when I was barely learning to walk. It goes like this, This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna go let it shine. Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim road.

Thanks for listening, until next time...

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