

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 2, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? I know that might be like asking you if you have a favorite child or grandchild you love them all. But is there a verse that you come back to again and again? The verse that picks you up when you have fallen. A verse that's like the North star when you've lost your way. The verse I want to share with you today. I am sharing for a very personal reason.

It is the verse I clung to years ago when my young wife died from cancer. It is a verse that helped me to make some sense of suddenly being a single dad with two little boys trying to pastor a church. And well, it helped me then and it helps me now to live life with joy. This verse in the Book of Ecclesiastes which has turned out to be one of my favorite books in the Bible. And you should see the looks on peoples faces when I tell them that Ecclesiastes is one of my favorite books, but I love Ecclesiastes because in it Solomon is taking on the hard painful issues of life and answering them.

1st Kings chapter 4 verse 30 says that God gave to Solomon very great wisdom so that his wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all. I'm going to start with the opening verses of Ecclesiastes 3. You might know these verses as they were made popular in a song that talks about how to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. And that is Solomon's big idea in this chapter the point that he's wanting to make, that there is a time for every purpose under heaven. And then to illustrate his point Solomon goes on in the following verses to lay out what are 14 pairs of opposites 14 pairs of life experiences that seem to cancel out the other.

A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, and so on. But did you hear in that there are these pairs of opposite life experiences that come at us that seem to cancel out the other? You might picture these 14 pairs of opposites as something like a balance sheet. There's assets on one side and liabilities on the other and then Solomon looks at this balance sheet of life - a time to be born a time to die, a time to seek the time to lose. Solomon is wondering. He's wondering about the bottom line of life.

So then in verse 9 Solomon asks what gain or what profit. Solomon is using a Hebrew word that comes straight out of the world of business and accounting, I mean, it's a 14 pairs of life experiences, life opposites cancel out each other then what gain, what profit have the workers from their toil? Seems like a logical question. I mean it in might feel sometimes like were dogs chasing our tails. What's it all about? Now its Solomon's answer in the next verse. I love verse 11. God has made everything beautiful in its time. God is also set eternity in the human heart so that no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Now the Hebrew word here for beautiful. As God has made everything beautiful in its time. It is a word that Solomon really likes. He uses a repeatedly in his book The Song of Solomon as he writes about the love of his life the shulamite maiden as he repeatedly says of her, she is beautiful. She is stunning. She is charming alluring that's the word here. Beautiful. God has made everything beautiful in its time. He is also set eternity in the human heart. Yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

You follow what Solomon is saying here? God has also set eternity in our hearts. We are bound by time but created for eternity. We are created in God's image so that God like we want to see how everything is going to fit together. We want to see how every cancer, every tear, every sunrise, every flower, how as Paul says it/s going to all be work together for good. We ask questions of why that that animals don't ask if it's because God has set eternity in our hearts. Yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

I think what Solomon is saying here is simply that God is working on a huge canvas. So so that we cannot see it all we cannot fathom that we cannot take in what God has done from beginning to the end. I sometimes think that I am must be like a house fly on Mount Rushmore crawling across the nose of George Washington. It is so big. I cant take it all in. I had a professor who said at the bottom of every sermon to write two words - So what? Solomon so what? What's your point? What are we to do with knowing that God is taking all of the life events and making them beautiful in its time. Here's the so what. Here is Solomon's application in verse 12. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in their toil. This is the gift of God.

Solomon is saying don't dare waste a minute of trying trying to unscrew the inscrutable just go ahead and live life to the fullest celebrate this and every day. So eat ice cream, play in the rain with your children, stop and look at the sunset, biblical faith is a call to Joy.

This is the day the Lord has made I will rejoice and be glad in it. Or as the Apostle Paul says rejoice in the lord always and again I say rejoice. Because our captain is bringing this ship safely into harbor.

Thank you for listening to me today as I go on and on about my favorite verse. I love to hear your favorite. So how about going on the water from Rock Facebook today and sharing your favorite verse? I know that it would it encourage other people.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way. Thank you for listening. Until next time.