

## Selah: Stoph, Look, Listen – June 13, 2020

The lord be with you.

These are the times that try men's souls. That's what Thomas Payne in the darkest days of our nation's founding, and I do not think that I would be exaggerating to say that you and I are living in times that try our souls.

This is a hard time. This is a difficult time. This is big history.

But I was thinking the other day about the men and women that I most admire, those to whom I look for inspiration for courage, I realized that they all lived in difficult times, and I think that is why in so many of these Selah conversations that I'd find myself looking to David, for whom most of his life was difficult.

How many times does David do callous, stupid things? He does great things, and Scripture calls this very complex man a man after God's own heart. There's a lot we can learn from David. The New Testament begins with the words, an account of the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David.

The Bible does seem to hold up David as exhibit A for how God loves and cares for flawed and failing people who seek Him. So I turned today to yet another Psalm of David, Psalm 138, where perhaps no one's surprised David is in trouble again. I'm gonna read us a portion of the Psalm and then reflect on it. I read verses seven and eight. That are the Psalms conclusion. Though I walk in the midst of trouble. You preserve me.

I think that's really too weak a word, preserve as the basic meaning of the Hebrew verb is to have life, to give life. And so, I've translated as though I walk in the midst of trouble. You give me life. You breathe life into me, that's the idea. Its like in Psalm 23:3, the shepherd sound, where it says of the Lord, He restores my soul, he gets me going. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you give me life against the wrath of my enemies. Here again, we might think of Psalm 23 words, it says that God is shepherd. He prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Here I am surrounded on all sides by enemies by trouble, and the Lord is caring for me, so David says, you stretch out your hand and your right hand. That's the strong hand. Your right hand delivers me. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me. Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands. Now, as I read the song today, I just have to ask you what stands against you, what problems do you face, is it a health problem, a financial problem, a problem with family or friends?

Take a moment to speak to God about the trouble that you face, and then notice David's confidence, though he walks in the midst of trouble, David says, The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.

David knows that God is present in his troubles.

David knows that God has a purpose for our lives. He has a purpose in what we're going through, God has a purpose, a plan, a goal, and intent. So you're not an afterthought with God, you're not God's plan B. God is not making up life for you on the fly, there is purpose in your life, there was an

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eternal purpose in what you're going through, you're not just some random event, an accident, there is purpose in this for you.

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul is getting at in Romans 8:28. We know, we know that God works all things together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. In the midst of all of David's ups and downs, David knows and he can say, the Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.

David knows what God begins at, God always completes.

It is what the Apostle Paul was talking about in Philippians 1 verse 6. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring a to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. David knows Paul knows what. Grace begins grace completes. And so I love what it says of David in Acts chapter 13, verse 36, For David, after he served the purpose of God in it, his own generation, died a question. How can David be so sure that God will fulfill His purpose for our lives? Well, David explains it in the next line as he says, Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. God's forever love for you and me means that God will complete his purpose for us, God's love for us doesn't go out only so far and then stop, God's love for you and me endures forever.

Now we see that David completes a Psalm with a prayer. They'd like to do that, to pray. And here David prays. Do not forsake the work of your hands. As David knows God's steadfast love. As he knows that God will fulfill his purpose. So David prays according to God's purpose. Do not forsake the work of your hands, and here we are reminded that prayer is always a part of what God uses to fulfill His purpose for us. God doesn't want to do it without you and me. We get to play a part in God fulfilling this purpose. And so we pray. Do not forsake the work of your hands. Is that a beautiful image? That you and I are the work of God's Hands. So the Apostle Paul says it in Ephesians 2 verse 10, For we are God's handy work. Created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Yes, these are difficult times. Times it stretches to try our souls, but God has a purpose for you in me in this, he has good works, notice that he has prepared in advance for us to do so that each day you and I get to step into good works that God has prepared beforehand for us. By God's grace, you and I get to serve God's purpose for our lives in our generation.

And so I pray, Spirit of the living God. Fall a fresh on us. Melt us. Mold us. Fill us. Use us. Spirit of the living God. Fall a fresh on us.

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

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