

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 11, 2020

The lord be with you.

How about a little pep talk today? Could you use one? I mean, a little encouragement. Well, I know I can. I mean, it's gonna be 111 degrees again today where I am. My mom called these the dog days of summer. And then on top of all of that, I've lost count of what day this is in the pandemic. And how many days have we've been on lockdown? Can you remember a time quite like this?

Now for the pep talk, the encouragement, a good word for you and me straight from the Bible. First Corinthians 15, Verse 58, Therefore, my beloved. I like that. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because, because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain.

Notice that the Apostle Paul begins with the word therefore. I like the old saying that Every time you see the word therefore in the Bible, you need to stop and see what it is, there for. Well the word therefore points us back to what has just been said. Therefore is the logical conclusion to what Paul has been saying up to this point, and so we look back to the words immediately proceeding in Verse 57, where Paul says, But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the Apostle Paul, as he's finishing up on this grand chapter on the resurrection of Jesus, where we see because Jesus lives, we live also because Jesus lives, we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, therefore, my beloved, be steadfast. In view of Christ's victory, be steadfast. The Greek word translated steadfast comes from a word meaning chair or seat, it's a place where someone sits... Where someone remains stationary. Okay, then the word takes on the meaning up to be settled, to be steady, to be unmoved, unshakable. It means that you and I were not going to budge an inch from being a follower of Jesus, we will be steadfast in these days.

How I thank God for an elementary school teacher who would often time say to us students, she would say others may, you can't. And then she would say, Hey, if everybody else goes running off the cliff... Are you going to go with them? No, others may. You can't. Be steadfast.

And then Paul continues, he says, Be immovable. Okay, that's a similar idea, but the Greek word translated here as immovable in Acts 27:41, where Paul is a board a ship and there's a ship wreck, and it says that the ship striking a reef, they ran the ship aground, and the bow stuck. It stuck and remained immovable. That's our word immovable, it means the ship, it's not moving, it's not going anywhere, and that's to be you and me in these days as we are immovable in following Jesus. And Paul is using the word in the sense that we remain immovable in the face of false teachers, we remain immovable in the face of everything crazy going on in our culture, we're not buying it. Steadfast. Immovable. Paul continues, always excelling in the work of the Lord, the Greek has the idea of going beyond what is ordinary, going beyond what is expected, it's going the extra mile for Jesus. And one of the exciting things is that Jesus has assigned each one of us different roles in serving his kingdom, you have your role, I have mine, and each one of us gets to be responsible for a part of God's kingdom in the world. And then we're going to excel in the work of the Lord, we're gonna give it our best. Because Paul says, because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain.

Water From Rock

I've lived enough years to know that there are a lot of things that we might do in life that will amount to nothing, but we can be sure that what we do for Jesus... It is never in vain. It is never wasted. It is never lost.

Now, in Matthew chapter 19, Peter is, well how should I say it, Peter is feeling sorry for himself. He's thinking about how much he's doing for Jesus, and Peter says to Jesus, he says, Look, we have left everything and followed you, what then will we have? One of the things I like about old Peter is that he goes ahead and blurts out what everyone else is thinking. Well, listen to what Jesus promises in Matthew 19:29. And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sister, or father, or mother or children, or fields for my name's sake will receive a hundred fold and will inherit eternal life.

Following Jesus might be difficult at times. And it might get more difficult, I don't know, but the payoff will be enormous for us to one day hear Jesus say, Well done. Good and trustworthy, servant, you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your Master. I'm inspired by the words of Martin Luther who said, there are only two days on my calendar today, and that day. Today, and that day that I kneel before Jesus... Charles Taylor Stud was born into a wealthy English family man, and in his day, he was known as the greatest cricket player in the world, and he felt God calling him to things other than to wealth and to fame. And he wrote these words, Only when life will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last.

Well, that's our pep talk for today, I probably didn't say anything that you didn't already know, but if you're like me, it's good to be reminded, and so we keep on keeping on.

I am Tim Smith a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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