

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – October 1, 2020

The lord be with you.

What would you say that you are in your Christian life? Would you say that you've arrived... What would you say that you are right where you have wanted to be? Or would you say, no, I've not arrived? I know that there is still more... So much more of Jesus to know? Well, I wanna talk for a few moments about the joy, the joy of not having arrived, the joy of knowing there are still so much more of Jesus and the life and Jesus to know, the wonder of going after the more... It's what the old Romans called excelsior ever hirer. That there's more, more than having made a decision, more than having joined a church... Let's look at the Apostle Paul in Philippians Chapter 3, as we see Paul wanting for the more...

Paul's letter to the Philippians comes at a time that Paul is far on in his Christian life and ministry, he has served Jesus for many years, and that ministry has brought him to a prison cell, and Paul's ministry has all but ended here in the book of Philippians. I read Philippians and I just have to wonder, who has served Jesus more faithfully than Paul? I mean, who might better say than the Apostle Paul, I have arrived. And yet we see Paul in Philippians Chapter 3, we look at the context, Paul is saying that he wants to know Jesus more and more. And to know the power of His resurrection. I'm gonna pick up reading in verse 12 of Philippians 3, "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me His own." Hey, isn't that a beautiful phrase. "I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But that's one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Your head pause letters, and you get the idea that he likes athletics and he likes the Greek Olympic games as he draws here on the imagery of a runner in the games, Paul says that he is like an eager runner in the race, he does not stop short of the finish line, he presses on as fast as you can, going hard for the tape, eyes straight ahead. Paul says, Forgetting what lies behind. And I wonder how many of us need to do that today. To forget what lies behind. To not look back.

I was running track in high school and one time after a race, my coach, he really went after me, He says, you look back... You look back, don't ever look back. For Paul, he runs the race, there is no looking back over his shoulder, forgetting what lies behind. That means forgetting our sins, I mean God says He's forgotten our sins, why don't we... Paul forgets his persecution of the church, he forgets his years apart from Christ, he forgets past failures, past achievements, past the awards as looking back will hinder keeping his eyes on the goal. There is no resting on his laurels for Paul. Note Paul's, singleness of purpose and running the race. This one thing I do, not idaple at six or even now. This one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining to lies ahead. So picture this in your mind's eye. Paul is a runner, straining every muscle towards this one thing, to know Christ more and more.

When I was a boy in elementary school, there came a day when I thought I had arrived. I had learned to do addition, subtraction, and then I went on to multiplication and division, and I thought, I mean, I seriously thought that I had learned everything there was to know in mathematics. Was I in for a surprise. Well, I laugh, but something not so funny is everything can we know everything in Jesus and in his resurrection power, and ever thinking that we have arrived. I have been in churches

Water from Rock

where people thought they had arrived, I could always tell that, but there was no joy, there was no wonder, there wasn't a real worship... What did Jesus say? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for they will be filled. And I pray for more hungering and thirsting.

Over the years, I've known a couple of great artists, one of the artists had paintings hanging in United States capital, but you know, this artist was never satisfied, he never felt that he had arrived as an artist, he kept pressing onward. When the world's foremost cellos, Pablo Casals was 83 years old, a reporter asked him, why continue to practice four and five hours a day. And Casals answered, Well, because I think I'm making progress.

Well, I wanna be like that in my walk with Christ, to keep on, keeping on. I love what the wonderful creature Charles Swindoll said one time, he said, When I die, I want my head to go down and hit the pulpit. That means we keep striving, we keep growing, we keep pressing toward the goal, and the goal is not heaven, the goal is Jesus, it is Jesus that will make heaven then. And we press on to know him more and more.

Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of my heart. Not be all else to me, save that thou art. Thou My best thought by day or by night. Waking or sleeping Thy presence, my light.

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

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