



## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – November 28, 2020

The Lord be with you.

What do you sense God might be saying to you? I asked that because he is after all, a God who speaks. Who reveals Himself to us. We call Jesus the word, as it is God's very nature to want to speak, to want to reveal Himself to us. And so what do you sense God might be saying to you? Perhaps there is something you've been reading in Scripture, speaking to you through world events. Speaking to you through a sermon that you've heard or the wise words of a friend, what do you sense God saying to you, because he is after all, speaking to you, as Jesus says, Whoever has ears to hear, listen.

For the next few moments, I wanna look at the story that begins the advent season. Where God is speaking to a young teen girl. Her name is Mary, and we know her as Mary who lives in that tiny backwater village of Nazareth. And one day, maybe Mary is gathering firewood or baking bread, we don't know, but God speaks to Mary through the messenger angel Gabriel, and Mary becomes not only Jesus, mother, but she becomes Jesus' first disciple. A true icon of faith. I'm looking at the Gospel of Luke chapter 1, where the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, and he reveals to her, he speaks to her, telling her that she will conceive and bear a son, and that son will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and he will reign in his kingdom, will have no end, and he will be called the Son of God.

You and I know the story well, that Mary is hearing all of this for the first time, and it makes no sense to Mary, she does not understand. She's not had intimate relations with a man, and how is it that God could do such a great and wondrous thing through such a poor and lowly girl. But the angel reminds, Mary that with God, nothing is impossible. I used to take it for granted that Mary... Well, of course, Mary would say yes to God. Not that I'd always say yes to God, I've always made myself available to God, but I just assumed in reading this that Mary would say yes. But think what it would mean for Mary to say yes to God's word for her. Here she is, a teenage girl who'd be pregnant out of wedlock. I mean here marriage to Joseph, it's gonna be called off. In place of the dowry for her father, her father is going to get shame, and according to the law of Moses, Mary might even be stoned to death. And so will Mary obey what the Word of God is saying to her?

Mary could say, Hey, this is not a good time for me. Could you come back in a year? Or Mary could say, This really interferes with my plans. How about something else? But Mary simply says, Here I am the servant of the Lord. Our English word servant is actually a weak translation of the Greek word that Mary uses, the Greek word that she uses is doule, that's D-O-U-L-E. And doule comes from the Greek word deo that means to bind, as a doule is a female bond slave who was



## water from rock

bound by obedience to her master. That's the word Mary uses here, *doule*, to express being bound in obedience to the Word of God. Here, am I, the *doule*. The bond slave of the Lord. So, at this moment, Mary is faced with a decision, will I obey and make way for the life of the son of God in me? Or will I avoid the pain? Will I take an easier way? Notice that Mary does not resist, she does not argue, she does not offer another option, she does not try to come up with a better plan, Mary says, Here I am the bond slave of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word.

I like here, how Mary's refusing the world's most frequent prayer, you will be changed. And she's saying to God, your will be done. I don't really understand what all of this will mean, but yes. Yes, your will be done. And notice what happens here in this moment that Mary says yes to God's word to her, the moment that she says, Here I am, at that moment, the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary, and the Holy Spirit begins forming in Mary the very life of the son of God. She said yes to God's word, and the Spirit of God goes to work. No sooner has Mary said, let it be done. And it is done. Let it be with me according to your word. And by the Spirit of God, God goes to work. The Word of God that comes to Mary, it is strange. It is startling, but as Mary yields in obedience to God's Word, the Spirit of God comes up on her and forms the Son of God in her. And you know the moment that you and I say yes to the Word that God is speaking to us and keep in mind, he is speaking to us. The moment that we say, here, am I, Lord, the Spirit of God comes upon us, and the Spirit of God goes to work forming in us the character and image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, I began by asking, if you sense God saying something to you. God might be saying something to you that you don't fully understand. God might be saying something to you that... Well, it doesn't seem like the right time. God might be saying to use something that it's not going to be easy, but as you let it be to me according to God's Word, the Spirit of God will go to work in you. Be forming in you the life and character of Jesus, answering your prayer to make you more and more like Jesus. So, let's begin this Advent season saying Yes to the Word that God is speaking to us, and as we do that, the Spirit of God will go to work in our lives.

Advent does begin tomorrow. And if you've not received a copy of our 2020 Advent devotional, "Lighten the Darkness," I do hope you will go on our Water from Rock website and each day of Advent you can find the daily reading, and you can take it all the way through to Christmas Day.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.



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