



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – October 21, 2021

The Lord be with you.

Could you use some hope today? How about a heaping dose of hope for the future? Hope for whatever it is that you're going through. Hope is so important for you and me. It's been said that we can live about 40 days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but for hardly a second without hope, and that's why I am so glad to be able to pass on some hope to you today.

Well, it's actually hope from God, hope from God's Word, as today, I'm in the Old Testament book of Lamentations. Yes, that's right. There was a book of the Bible called Lamentations. It's a whole book full of honest pouring forth of tears. It is not some Pollyanna pie in the sky kind of hope, but it is a real honest, genuine hope for when things are not going well.

The writer of the Book of Lamentations is Jeremiah, whose nickname is the weeping prophet. As Jeremiah knows quite a lot about tears about troubles, about Lamentations, as he writes about the wonderful hope that we have in God. I'm looking at Lamentations chapter 3, verses 21 through 23 that I read. But this I call to mind. And therefore, I have hope. To steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness. So what is the reason for hope and difficult times. Well, what gives Jeremiah hope? He says, this, I call to mind the steadfast love of the Lord and His mercies that never come to an end.

Now, all of us have experienced some pain and trouble and tears over the past several months, some Lamentations. Some of you I know have lost loved ones, some have lost a job, some have lost their income, some have suffered and still suffer Covid, but in the midst of this, we call to mind the steadfast love of the Lord and His mercies that never come to an end. That every morning of our lives, God pours out fresh doses of steadfast, faithful love and mercy, God's steadfast love and mercy for you and me they will never run out. Great is your faithfulness. Jeremiah says, great is your faithfulness.

Now, all of this reminds me of a story. A story about Thomas Obadiah Chism born in a log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, in 1866. He described himself as just an old shoe, he went to a small country school and he actually became that school's teacher at age 16. He then became a Christian at age 27, and without any college or seminary education, Thomas Chism went into Christian ministry, but poor health forced him to retire from the pastor, later becoming an insurance agent. Years later Thomas Obadiah Chism, he wrote a letter in which he looked back on his life and he said, My



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income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the early year years, which has followed me until now, although I must not fail to record here, the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, and that He has given me many wonderful displays of his providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness. End of quote. Although Thomas Chism battled poor health much of his life, and he got by with a little income, he wanted to leave the world some record of what he called the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant keeping God.

And so what Thomas Chism did, he wrote a poem, and he titled that poem, Great is Thy Faithfulness. He based his poem on this Lamentations scripture that we're looking at today, hope in the midst of Lamentations, and then he set that poem to a friend William Ryan, who set the poem to music and he became a hymn... You might know the hymn, that the first lines go like this, Great is thy faithfulness... Oh God, my Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee. Thou changes not. Thy compassions, they fail not. As thou has been Thou forever will be. Great is life faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. Morning by morning, new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

The faithfulness of God, His steadfast love and mercy. That are new every morning. Where they gave Jeremiah hope and difficult times, they gave Thomas Chism hope in difficult times, and they give me hope today, and I pray that they give you hope. As Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord unto me.

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