



water from rock

## Selah- Stop, Look, Listen: October 6, 2022

The Lord be with you.

A question for you. How do you and I, as believers in Jesus, as God's beloved people, how do we not just survive difficult times, but how do we actually thrive at a time that our nation, our culture is going through a whole lot of pain and trouble? What does God's word have to say to us about actually being blessed? About being fruitful in a time of high inflation, fuel prices soaring, social unrest, hurricane...

I wanna share with you a brief passage of scripture and then take a few moments to unpack it so that we might think about what it means to experience God's blessing and to bear God's fruit even in a difficult time. And the scripture I have in mind is from the Old Testament Prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah Chapter 17, I start reading at Verse 7. "Blessed are those whose trust is in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and it's leaves shall stay green. In the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."

Now, as a native of the Arizona desert, this passage really speaks to me as it talks about heat. It talks about drought. I mean, it speaks to me because here in Arizona, we are in the midst of a 27-year drought. And we're probably only going to get about five to six inches of rain this year, and yet our cities are growing, Golf courses expanding, artificial lakes being built. How is that? How is it that we're not just surviving, but we are thriving in the heat and the drought?

Well, it's because up in the high country, up in the mountains, there will be rain, there will be snow this winter, and the waters from that will flow down into streams, into rivers, into canals here in the desert that will irrigate our crops, provide water for drinking, water for golf courses, and I say all of this because our Arizona desert is a lot like the land of the Bible, the land where the prophet Jeremiah lives, where people are desperate for water. Water is a matter of life and death.

But note here in this Jeremiah passage, note that Jeremiah says, that the person whose trust is in the Lord, he says that person is, well, like a tree in the desert that is planted by a water stream, and that tree sends out its roots deep into the water stream.

Now, if you ever fly in to Phoenix, Arizona, you can see it from high up in the sky. You can see where water flows down the mountains into streams, into rivers. You can see where the water flows, because you're gonna see cottonwood trees, mesquite trees, palovertly trees, that they are growing alongside those streams, sending their roots into the life streams of water.



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And I always think of this when I'm flying into Phoenix. That those whose trust is in the Lord... They are like trees planted by water streams. Jeremiah says that they do not fear when the heat and drop come. He says that their leaves stay green even in time of drought. He says, They're not anxious. They.

do not cease to bear fruit. Why? Jeremiah says, because their trust is in the Lord.

I mean you should see the root system of a cotton wood tree here in the desert. The root system reaches out wide, it goes down deep, drawing life, drawing strength from the water stream, and Jeremiah is saying that that is a picture of those who sink their roots deep into God. They put their trust in the Lord in time of trouble.

Well, you know this, the last summer, it got up to 117 degrees here in the Arizona desert and those cotton wood trees, they just kept right on growing because their roots went deep into the water stream.

The key word in today's passage is the word trust. Those whose trust is in the Lord. The Hebrew word that is translated, trust as a word, *batach*, that is B-A-T-A-C-H, and it is translated in various Old Testament Scriptures as to trust, to be confident, to be sure, *batach* conveys the sense of well-being, a sense of security, a sense of being at ease. And it all comes from having a person in whom we can place our trust. And that is our reason for confidence and difficult times. The reason for our sense of security, it is because our trust is in the Lord...

This sense of well-being and security, it's not based on anything we have done. It's not based on who we are, but it is based on God. Based on God's faithfulness based on God's Many promises to you and me. The American writer, the late Frederick Buechner, he tells of the time that was terribly dark for him. A time that he was terribly depressed about his daughter's eating disorder. It was a time of various problems his family was enduring. So that Buechner sought a time of retreat in a mountain cabin. And one day as he's up there in that mountain cabin, there's a car that shows up out in front of the cabin.

It was a man that he did not know who came to the door. He happened to be a trust officer from a local bank who was looking for someone. And Buechner said that when the trust officer got back into his car and started to drive away, Buechner saw the man's personalized license plate that said "Trust".

Buechner said that for him, in that moment that a trust officer was driving away and he saw that simple word, trust. Buechner says that for him it was a moment of epiphany. It was a moment of insight. Trust. Put your trust in the Lord. Put your trust in the Lord for your life. Put your trust in the Lord for the days to come. God has your back. God's got this. God's got you covered.

And I wonder if this just might be God's word for you today. God's word for you in what are some difficult days. Trust. Blessed through those, Happy are those whose trust is in the Lord.



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I am Tim Smith of fellow traveler. Thank you for these ten. Until next time.



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