



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- October 13, 2022

The Lord be with you.

I call these few moments that we are together, I call them Selah, which is a word from the Hebrew Bible that's... Well, it's sort of like a railroad crossing sign that you find in the Book of Psalms. It says, Stop, Look and Listen. And I think that that's a good thing to do in the midst of life's busyness. In the midst of a culture that seems to have lost its way, and that is to stop for a few moments each day to look at scripture and to listen to what God is saying to us, what God might be saying to us in a time of trouble. For today's Selah, I wanna Stop, Look, and Listen to Psalm 27 to see what David does when he is facing trouble. As we see in just the first few verses of Psalm 27, that this is a time of darkness for David. A time that he says that he is surrounded by enemies. He says that there is an army in camp against him. War is rising up against David, and in the midst of everything that is going on let's look down at verse 4 of Psalm 27, where David tells us his strategy for facing problems head on.

Verse 4, David says, "One thing I ask of the Lord, that will I seek after." One thing David says, Here is the one thing that David makes the priority in his life priority. That is the one thing we do prior to doing anything else. The one thing most important to David."One thing I've asked of the Lord, that will I seek after. To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."

And we need to keep in mind here that the temple has not yet been built, that would be for David's son, Solomon to do.

So when David is talking about the temple and the house of the Lord, he is speaking symbolically. He's talking about spending time with the Lord. That is a one thing most important to David, about making himself to be present to the God who was always present to us. One thing, this one thing I do and seek after. And you know to get everything else in life and to miss this one thing is to miss life. It is to miss what makes life most wonderful.

The one thing is to live close to God, to focus our minds and hearts on the God who so loves us, to live moment by moment in God's presence. Not to focus on our fears, not to focus on our problems, but to focus on what David calls the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire, to learn of him. That's a wonderful adventure. That is the one thing David seeks most in his life.

Now, in the next verse, verse 5, let's see that this one thing leads to protection, God's protection. As



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in Verse Five, David goes on to say, "For God will hide me in his shelter. In the day of trouble, He will conceal me under the cover of his tent, he was set me high on a rock."

David here is using imagery that is right out of the ancient Middle East, and that is the honor code of hospitality for the traveler. Back in the days that there were no Motel 6's, there were no Hilton Inns, but there was this scrupulous Honor Code that required hospitality for the stranger who shows up at your tent. So that when a stranger approaches, a tent and simply lays his hand on the flap of that tent, that stranger had to be welcomed and received into the tent. Food has spread before him. He is provided protection from his enemies, his head is anointed with oil, a table spread before him in the presence of his enemy. It's all there. As there was no greater security, no greater comfort than that which was provided for the stranger who presents himself at someone's tent.

So you see here in these few verses, David is picking up on that imagery of hospitality, a provision, protection when He dwells in the House of the Lord. So that instead of being surrounded any longer by enemies, David goes on to say in verse 6, "Now, my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in God's tent sacrifices with shouts of joy."

Notice the sequence here: From priority to protection, to praise. As David makes it his priority to live in God's presence day by day. That leads to protection for David, there in God's presence. That in time leads David to praise to God for His goodness to him.

I'm gonna share with you a way that helps me to day-by-day live in God's presence. That helps me to present myself to God for his protection, provision. It's a way of praying that I learned from a Quaker, it's called palms down. Palms up.

You can pray palms down, palms up sitting on your desk, sitting in the doctor's office, even lying in bed at night. It goes like this, where I take a few moments just to take the palms of my hand and to turn my palms downward as I let go from my grip, my problems, my burden, my worries about tomorrow. Palms down, I'm letting go of all of those into God's faithful hands. In Psalm 55:22, which is another Psalm of David, he says, "Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you." So with palms down, you're letting go of those burdens you're carrying, any problem that you have, you let go of those into God's faithful hand.

And then you take a few moments to turn your palms upward in that universal gesture of supplication, asking God to fill your hands with that which you need for the day- His provision, His protection, His love. Palms down, Palms up.

And the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.