



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- March 2, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Are you ever fearful about what you're reading in the news? Fearful about what you see happening in the world? I mean, there's inflation, there's lawlessness, war in the Ukraine, pandemic, and it seems that more and more people are calling evil good and calling good evil. Things seem kind of upside down right now, don't they? Are you fearful? Fear is a natural reaction to things that seem to threaten our safety, things have seemed to threaten our sense of well-being and trying to ignore our fear. Pretending that we're not afraid, well, that actually makes fear worse. We may try to eat our way out of it, drink our way out of it, shop our way out of it, but I've learned that if I do not face up to my fear, if I do not acknowledge it, that fear, well, it has this way of going underground and popping up elsewhere.

Psychologists tell us that depression, and we're seeing a great spike in depression right now, they tell us that depression is fear masquerading as depression. They tell us that depression is fear denied; fear, gone into hiding. And so I wanna talk with you for the next few moments about something that, well, that helps me to deal with fear in uncertain, difficult times. As I'm looking at John Chapter 14, as Jesus is speaking to his disciples on what is the most frightening, the most horrific, darkest night in human history, the night before his crucifixion. As all the forces of hell are running loose, and there in that upper room, Jesus is talking to his disciples who are afraid. I mean they are confused, discombobulated, as it seemed to them that the world is spinning out of control, and yet Jesus says to them, in John Chapter 14:1, do not let your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me.

You know in doing Bible studies, we oftentimes say that a text without a context becomes a pretext. So our text is John Chapter 14. What is the context? Well, the context of this, the end of Chapter 13, is that Jesus has just told His disciples that He's leaving them. And he's told them that one of them is going to betray Him. And then on top of that, to make matters even worse, he says that Simon Peter is going to deny him, not just once, not just twice, but three times. It must feel to those disciples like Jesus has pulled the rug out from under their feet, like everything they thought they had nailed down is flying loose.

That's the context of our text. I'm gonna read the text again, John chapter 14:1 with this context in mind, Jesus says, Do not let your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me. I like how the Message version of the Bible translates this. It says, Don't let this throw you. You trust in God, don't you? Trust in me. That is the calm, assuring voice of Jesus in the midst of their troubles. In the midst of it, it seems that everything is going wrong. It reminds me of a T-shirt I saw recently, the words on it were relaxed, I've got this, Jesus.

Horatio Spafford was a successful Chicago lawyer and businessman who lost much of its business in the Great Chicago fire of 1870, and then shortly after that great fire, Spafford lost four of his daughters and a ship wreck in the North Atlantic. And then Stafford sailing to England to be with



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his wife who had survived the shipwreck when he came to that place in the North Atlantic where his daughters had drowned, Spafford wrote the words of Him that perhaps you know that him, he wrote these words, When peace like a river attended my way When sorrows like sea bellows roar, whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say It is well, it is well with my soul.

And it is well with my soul. And that's all because of Jesus. That Jesus can say, Do not let your hearts be troubled, do not let this throw you. I wanna share with you a prayer that, well, it helps me when I'm afraid. It's called the Abba prayer. It's simple but powerful. Here's how the Abba prayer goes. You sit renewal or may be lying your bed for a few moments, and you just let yourself relax into the Father's presence. You let the gaze of Abba Father sweep over you. I like to take a few deep breaths to help me relax and to become still in Abba's presence. And then after these few moments of being still in Abba's presence, I breathe in slowly saying the words Abba, Abba... And I breathe out slowly saying, Abba, I Belong to You. Abba, I belong to you. Breathing in, breathing out. Abba, I belong to you.

On that darkest night in human history, after all the things that Jesus had told him that were going to happen, that were going to go wrong, Jesus said, Do not let your hearts be troubled. Don't let this throw you. You believe in God. Believe also in me. I got this.

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



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