



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- May 13, 2023

The Lord be with you.

I have encouraging words for you today. Encouraging words for you who love the Lord Jesus and are seeking to serve him. Encouraging words for you who teach a children's Sunday school class, who serve in the homeless shelter, who lead a home Bible study, who care for a home bound loved one, you who serve on the church board. And the encouraging words, I take straight from scripture. First Corinthians chapter 15 verse 58 the words of the Apostle Paul for you. "Therefore, my beloved be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain." And I pray that these words encourage you today.

Now, did you notice as I read the scripture that this verse begins with the word "Therefore"? That's important for there's a rule of biblical interpretation that says that when you see the word there in the Bible, you need to stop and ask what it is there for now to do this, we need to look at the words leading up to this first the context because therefore is a conclusion of what has gone before. And what is gone before this verse is, well, it's all of First Corinthians 15, which is the Bible's grand chapter on the resurrection, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our promise resurrection with him to everlasting life. That's what leads us up to this word "Therefore." It is because of our glorious life to come that the Apostle says, "Therefore, my beloved be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord. Because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain."

Now, if you look back at 1 Corinthians 15, you see that the words 'in vain' are important for what Paul is leading up to in verse 58. Paul in verse 14 says, if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. If for this life only, if for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. Hear what Paul is saying here. That if all you're going to get out of following Christ out of serving him is what you get in this life, then you are, well, you are to be pitied. But because Jesus is he is raised from the dead and we will one day be raised with him to life everlasting. "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." That what you do now counts forever. Right now is tied to your eternal destiny. Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for the Lord will last.

I remember when I was a little boy, I remember one Sunday our pastor holding up a silver dollar for all of his children to see. And then pointing to that silver dollar he said, he said, "your life is like this coin. You can spend it any way you want, which you can only spend it once."

Stephen Covey in his best selling book, The Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People. Stephen Covey says that people who are effective in their lives, that they begin with the end in view. And Stephen Covey suggests that a good way to begin with the end in view, well, it's to imagine your



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funeral and what you would want people to say about you at your funeral. Well, what I prefer to do, what I prefer to do is to imagine the day that I stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and what would I want to hear Jesus say about my life?

Martin Luther said he had only two days on his calendar today and that day, today and that day that we are raised to everlasting life and we stand before Jesus. What do I want Jesus to say about me? Those two days need to be on your calendar, my calendar. We must never separate today from that day, the eternal day.

Jim Elliot is remembered as one of the many 20th century martyrs for Christ as Jim Elliott was a missionary who on January the 8, 1956, was killed in Ecuador along with four other missionaries. When Jim Elliott was a young college graduate, thinking about the future, Jim Elliott wrote in his diary, these words, "he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." So today, in light of that day, I do want to encourage you who are following Jesus faithfully, you who are doing the hard work of serving him. I want to encourage you with these words of scripture. Therefore, in in light of that day, therefore my beloved be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord because you know that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain. You cannot out give God. God is in no one's debt. You will be rewarded.

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