



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- May 30, 2023

The Lord be with you

This morning as I was thinking about the difficult time through which our nation is going. I thought of a children's sermon that I used to do years ago in which I would hold up in one hand, a thermometer and hold up in the other hand, a thermostat and I would ask the Children, are you being a thermometer or are you being a thermostat that is, are you reflecting what is going on around you?

Reflecting the temperature of anger, fear and despair or are you being a thermostat by which you're setting the temperature, you're setting the pace, you're setting the tone as you're seeking to be what Jesus has called us to be the salt of the earth.

1:08 Well, this morning, as I was having all these thoughts and emotions about what our country is going through I thought of this century old tradition in the British Royal Navy that when there was trouble on board ship and when the ship had hit a storm, the ship's officer would sound what was called the still and the sounding of this still was the captain's command for every sailor to stop whatever he was doing and to be still, he must not react, but he must collect himself and he must be still to be ready alert for the Captain's command.

And that's just what I'm doing today in the midst of everything that is going on. I want to be still for a bit to be still and to listen for a captain's command and as I was listening for God's voice for us today, I thought of first Timothy chapter two where the apostle Paul is writing to Timothy, whom he has left in charge of the church in Ephesus as he's wanting him to shepherd the church in the midst of what was a very pagan dark culture.

So I'm looking at first Timothy chapter two verses one through four as God's command to us. First of all, then I urge the supplication prayers, intercession and thanksgiving should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God, our savior who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Notice with me here, the how the text begins, it begins with, first of all, first of all, that is a Christian's priority. This is a first importance.

First of all, that supplication prayers intercession and thanksgiving should be made for everyone. The Apostle Paul made prayer a priority in his life. And, and he wants prayer to be a priority in your life and mind for prayer to be a priority for us at this time in, in our nation, for God's people to be praying scripture regards us as our first and foremost duty.

First of all, it says prayer is to be made for everyone, everyone that that means all different kinds of people today are needing your prayer and my prayer. We're not just to be praying for our



water from rock

family, for our church. I mean, not just for Christians, not, not just for us, for and no more but prayer for everyone.

And that includes all kinds of people today who are needing our prayer. That that means that we pray even for people that we don't like. Notice that Paul includes praying for the king. Well, who was the king then? Well, it was that Emperor Nero emperor Nero who was persecuting Christian. Paul says, he needs our prayer. I think about the prophet Samuel in the Old Testament as he says to King Saul. And for Samuel chapter 12 verse 23 he says, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you. And so the apostle Paul, he's, he says, pray for kings and for all who are in high positions for, for people who are making decisions that are affecting us. Paul says that prayer has to be our priority for the difficult days ahead.

I think you're about the great John Bunyan, the author of pilgrims progress, who said you can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed. And and so prayer is going to be so important for us in the days ahead. As in prayer, we invite God into what we are facing. And in prayer, we let go of how and when we think God should answer our prayer, the Paul says that prayer has to be our priority. First of all, Paul says that we do this so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. Now, now, Paul isn't so much concerned that we can retreat into our little private lives of ease and prayer. But Paul is wanting us to pray that we have the freedom to live out our Christian faith without restraint.

And that's what we pray for. Paul says, because God desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And you know, for two centuries, America has been a gospel lighthouse to the world. And so we're gonna be praying that that can, that can continue that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives, whereby we can live out our faith so that the church can be built up and the good news of Jesus Christ, go forth to the ends of the earth. And so I pray today to a loving father, the ruler of nations before whom nations rise and fall.

Father, may your glory shine throughout the world. We come to you, our nation, to your merciful care so that we may live securely in peace and be guided by your wisdom and providence. Give to all in places of authority, the wisdom and courage to know your will and to do it. May they do that which is morally right? And not just politically expedient, help them to know that they're called to serve the people as lovers of truth and justice. We asked this through that name above every name, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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