



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 19, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever wonder what God is up to? Do you wonder what God is thinking? What does God have in mind with our troubles and trials? As a pastor and chaplain, I've seen quite a bit of pain and suffering up close, and I could guess that I could say that I've had well, my share of pain and suffering too. And there was a passage of scripture that I have underlined in my Bible, a big star beside it, a passage that helps me a lot to get a glimpse of what God is up to in our affliction and pain.

I am looking at 2 Corinthians Chapter 4, Verses 16, and following, I read, "We do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen, for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." Now, there was a phrase here of the Apostle Paul that just jumps off the page at me, and that's where Paul says this slight momentary affliction is preparing us. Well, preparing us for what? Paul says, this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory. Not that Paul says that our affliction is preparing us then not for just an eternal weight of glory, but He says, an eternal weight of glory that is beyond all measure. That means that the glory coming to us is beyond all comprehension, we cannot imagine the glory that our affliction is preparing us for... So see what Paul is doing here, Paul is using the image of a set of scales, well, it's a set of scales like they used to use in the old days, where on one side of the scale, Paul places all of our affliction, and then on the other side of the scales, Paul places the eternal glory beyond all measure that our afflictions are preparing us for. So picture this in your mind's eye. On the scale, on one side, he puts all of our affliction, and then on the other side, the other scale, he puts the eternal weight of glory beyond all measure. And then Paul weighs it. Are you struck by the fact that Paul calls us a slight momentary affliction when you think about all the Paul suffered? But Paul weighs the slight momentary affliction, and He sees that the glory that is coming to us, the eternal weight of glory, is beyond measure. You cannot measure it. You cannot imagine it. You cannot comprehend the glory that is coming our way. I like how the message version translates this as it says "that these hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times." Now, when I'm going through hard times or I see other believers going through hard times, I'd like to imagine a sign over us, it says, God at work, God at work. I say that because God is at work so that our afflictions are accomplishing something big, they are preparing us for a glory that is eternal, a glory, that when you weigh on the scales, you see that our affliction cannot be compared to the glory coming to us.

Paul says, for this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond our measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen, for what can be seen, it's temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. That means that there is a lot more going on in your life than meets the eye. As God is doing something big, God is doing something eternal in you and me, that will last forever. Ruth Bell Graham, the late wife of Billy Graham, She tells how she was driving one day on the back roads of North Carolina when she came to a construction zone, and after slowly patiently working her way through the construction zone, Ruth Graham says that she saw a sign that read. End of construction. Thank you for your patience. And when Mrs. Graham



water from rock

returned home, she told Billy, she says, What a marvelous image for the Christian life, that we are under construction here until God's work is accomplished in us. And then we get to go home to be with God. And Mrs. Graham says, she says, That's what I want to be my epitaph. End of construction. Thank you for your patience.

So as you and I patiently endure affliction. As we see other brothers and sisters enduring affliction, let's keep in mind that God is working, that this is not happening to us by chance, by accident, but our affliction is preparing us for something big, something eternal, something glorious. Here's how the apostle Paul describes all this in Romans chapter 8, verse 18, where he says, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us." So loving Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters going through affliction, I pray for my dear friend who's had a re-occurrence of cancer, I pray for a friend suffering dark depression, I pray that you will strengthen them and more, encourage them. Reveal your presence with them. I pray all of this in the name of our Lord Jesus, our great high priest, who feels with us in all of our affliction.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.