

5.26.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “In Search of God’s Guidance: How Does it Really Work?”

Scripture Reading: [Acts 21](#); [Acts 21:4](#); [Acts 21:10-11](#); [Acts 21:13-14](#)

Reflection: Pastor Henry

“Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.” Acts 21:4

“But, how did they *know* that it was the Spirit who was talking to them?”

This was a great question from a person in the one of the discipleship groups that I am a part. The question came up when we were talking about what we noticed/what stood out to us in our text for this week (Acts 21:1-36). It is a question that all of us have asked at one time or another I suspect.

“How do I/we know that this is God who is speaking to me/us? How do I know that it was the Spirit who is leading or guiding or encouraging me to do something?”

Early on in vocational ministry, about 19 years ago, one of my first spiritual mentors helped me with this. The first thing he said to me was “Henry, do you believe that the Spirit of God speaks to you? Do you believe the Spirit can speak to you audibly, through visions, through promptings, through God’s Word, through leadings, through word pictures or images?” Whether or not we believe God speaks to us this way he said was the first step. If you don’t believe God speaks this way, you need not worry about it trying to discern God’s guidance. But, if you do, then you need to respond appropriately. In response to these questions, I told him that I do believe that God can and does speak to his followers this way.

“Good” he said. “Because you do believe God speaks to us this way, then you need to open yourself up to God, make yourself available to Him. You need to find time and space throughout your day that allows you to be ready to hear. When you are in position and posture and ready to hear from God, you need to ask God – ‘God, what would you have for me in... _____?’ You and I can fill in this blank with all kinds of the different things that we might be facing in our lives. Or we can just leave it open ended: “Lord what would you have for me?” Then, after we ask God, and are in a position and posture where we are ready to hear, he said “You need to start trusting that the words, images, impressions, and promptings you are receiving as a result of asking God/The Holy Spirit are in fact from God.” He said that we need to start believing what Jesus said: “Ask, and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be open to you.” (See [Matthew 7](#))

“But, how do I know and trust that these things I am hearing and receiving are really from God?”, I asked. (Sound familiar 😊)

He went on to say: “Does it correspond to God’s Word? Does it coincide with the heart and will of God? Is it consistent with what you know about God? When you share what you heard with other people, do they confirm what you are hearing is from God? Are other people hearing the same thing?” Each of these things can help us know that what we heard was in fact from God.

Finally, he said, “Practice. You need to keep practicing. The more you open yourself up to God, the more you listen, the easier it will be for you to recognize and discern the voice of God from your voice or other voices. (See [John 10](#)) As with many things in life, the more and more we do them, the easier they become.

How are you making and taking time to seek out, listen to, and discern God's voice for the things you are facing each and every day?

Prayer:

God, thank you for being a God who speaks to us through your word and Spirit. Help us to ask, seek, and knock. And when we do, enable us to listen to you Holy Spirit. Help us to discern and recognize your voice. AMEN.

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Find 2 or 3 times this week where you set aside time and space to specifically listen for God's voice regarding something(s) that you are currently facing or dealing with. Take note of what you hear and how God speaks. Share what you hear with someone else you trust.

Songs for today:

[Spirit of God](#)

[Show Us Christ](#)

[Holy Spirit](#)