



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Discernment: Learning to Listen to Your Heart

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 2:12-13

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

How do we discern and listen to our hearts as it relates to God's will for our lives? As followers of Jesus, below are a couple of questions that we must wrestle as we follow Jesus and his will for our lives.

1. What do you think Jesus is saying to you at this point in your life, in the context of the challenges and opportunities you are facing?
2. What indicators give you some measure of confidence that it is indeed Jesus speaking to you rather than someone or something else?

We must learn to discern God's voice from the other competing voices around us.

How we tend to make decisions:

1. Always discerning before deciding.
2. Always deciding but never discerning.
3. Deciding from a place of discernment.

To discern is to make a distinction between the voice of Jesus and those competing voices that invariably speak in our hearts and minds.

--Gordon Smith

Discernment is good judgment, wisdom, and the ability to distinguish between the sound and unsound, the true and the false, the good and the bad – and also the better from the merely good.

--James Manney

You can't earn your salvation. It is given freely and is something that we receive and nothing that we can earn.

Paul tells us we are to live out our salvation with fear and trembling. The decisions that we make for our lives need to have a sacred quality to them they are to be holy and sacred.

You are to work at it, being able to do so because God himself is at work.

The Holy Spirit is always working in and through each and every one of us. We need to pay attention to the Spirit's stirring in us so that we can work it out. God is using all of the material in our lives to help us pay attention and to see what God is stirring in our hearts.

When the Holy Spirit comes, God gives us, in the Spirit, a new heart and a new mind and because of this we now have the capacity and ability to do God's will.

We live in a world where the heart can be deceitful and one where God gives us a new heart through the Holy Spirit.

Love God and do whatever you please. For the soul trained in love to God will do nothing to offend the one who is beloved. –St. Augustine

We are called to listen to the desires of our hearts and the HS stirring inside of us.

In the church we have a tendency not to listen to our hearts. The culture around us tells us that we should do what our hearts desire. We are invited to a discernment of the Spirit.

Discernment of Spirits:

1. Doctrinally – Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)
2. Demonic activity
3. Discernment

True spirit: The “inner pull” towards God’s plan and toward faith, hope and love.

False spirit: The “inner pull” away from God’s plan and away from faith, hope and love. The false spirit is also referred to as the “evil spirit” or “the enemy of our human nature.”

Consolations:

- Our focus is directed outside and beyond ourselves
- Bonds us more closely to others
- Generates new inspiration and ideas
- Restores balance and refreshes our inner vision
- Shows us where God is active in our lives and where he is leading us
- Releases new energy in us

Desolations:

- Turns us in on ourselves
- Drives us deeper into our own negative feelings
- Cuts us off from others
- Makes us want to give up on things that used to be important to us
- Drains us of energy

When in consolation, test it before deciding.

When in desolation, we must not decide.

God often speaks to us from the outside and confirms those things that are on our hearts. If we are always waiting for a word from the outside, it can lead to spiritual laziness. We need to slow down so that we can hear and listen to God’s voice. We are called to be present to our interior lives, know that God has a good purpose for our lives.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, continues our new series titled *Discernment, How to Discover God’s Will*. Today Pastor Rich explores commonly held ideas about the role of our feelings in gaining clarity about the direction God is calling us to move towards.

Sermon Questions:

1. Do you feel an invitation from Christ in today’s scripture passage? Do any of the words resonate with you? If so, why?
2. Is there a decision or pressing issue in your life that you need help in discerning right now? Where do you need God’s voice and leading to help you make this decision or attend to the issue? Make time this week to sit with God, asking for his direction, wisdom and guidance regarding this decision.
3. Using the descriptions of consolation and desolations above, being honest with yourself, where in your life do you see yourself experiencing consolations and/or desolations? Journal your answers to this question and find time to share your responses with a trusted brother/sister in Christ, a family member or in your small group.