



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Discernment: Building on the Wisdom of God

Speaker: Sherin Swift, Connections & Equipping Pastor

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”
(NIV)

Sermon Outline:

As Christians we are to use the two questions below as part of our discernment process when making extremely important decisions regarding God’s 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?

How do we know it is indeed Jesus guiding us and not some other voice in our head? We know and are familiar with Jesus’s words and his teachings. We are also familiar with Jesus’s voice and what it sounds like in scripture. The Holy Spirit is inside of us reminding us of God’s words to constantly bring us back to Jesus.

The whole of scripture is necessary to live a wise life and the Holy Spirit is our companion in this process.

To discern God’s will, we need to know and be shaped by his word.

The Holy Spirit will bring to mind the words of scripture. If we don’t know scripture it will be hard to know what is consistent with God’s will because we have so many other voices competing for our attention.

We will be tempted to trade contemporary wisdom for the tested and proven wisdom of scripture.

If we are not clear on who our true shepherd is, we may find ourselves in the wrong place following the wrong shepherd.

Jesus assures us that his word is the sure thing. He is trying save us a lot of disappointment, frustration, and loss. By following Jesus’s word, you will not only feel secure and confident in the short term but also in the long term. Don’t settle for counterfeit wisdom or a shepherd who will lead you to frustration and loss.

Although God’s word is complex, the Holy Spirit is your partner in this work and in understanding the word.

We need to cultivate a habit of reading scripture as a whole and not just piecemeal in a devotional.

God preserved his word in the Bible for us. This text is valuable and has carried people through millennia. The more you read the Bible and connect with it, the more the Holy Spirit will help you understand it. God will meet us in his word.

Jesus is inviting us to be shaped by the values he has given us in the Bible so that we are not shaped by the values of the world and culture around us.

Which choice creates space for me to grow in Christlikeness?

1. If I went with a particular choice, how could I live and grow in these values there?
2. What would be my challenge of following Christ there?
3. Is Christ inviting me to that challenge in this season?
4. How will the choice enhance or limit my ability to remain meaningfully connected to others?
5. How does this choice fit with God's priorities for my life in Christ?

We are invited to trust and obey, following the true shepherd who knows where we are going. Jesus wants us to walk in the water with him even when we are not sure if he is really with us. We all take a risk in trusting and obeying and yet in all that, the promise of scripture is that Jesus will be there to catch you. When you feel that you are sinking, the Holy Spirit is there to remind you that Jesus is there, and he will lift you up on solid ground.

May we live with a greater capacity and courage to live in God's will.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Sherin Swift, Pastor of Connections & Equipping, concludes our series titled *Discernment, Learning How to Discover God's Will*. Today Pastor Swift explores the guidance available to us through Scripture and the Holy Spirit as we learn to discover God's will.

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. Being honest with yourself, how you are being shaped right now? Are you being shaped and tempted by the words and values of the culture and world around you? Or are you being shaped by the values and words that Jesus has given us? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to help guide you and bring you back to Jesus and his word?
3. In terms of growing in Christlikeness, find time this week to sit with the questions listed above, journaling your responses to them. At this season in your life, is there one particular question that resonates with you or maybe there are a few questions that resonate with you? Offer your responses up to God asking him for guidance and wisdom around following his will.
4. Where have you decided to follow "your kingdom come, and your will be done?" instead of following God's will? Are you wrestling with trusting and obeying, wondering if Jesus is really with you? The promise of scripture is that Jesus will be there to catch you. Can you offer your own repentance to God around following your own will?