



Pastor Derrick Shields “Soul Food: Which Way Should We Go?” 10/17/2021

Key Verses:

- Numbers 9:17-18

Key Thoughts:

- Soul: *the capacity to integrate all parts (will, mind, body) into a healthy, whole life.*
- We all make choices, and we want to make the best choices possible for ourselves.
- What we learn from Numbers 9 is that wherever the cloud (the presence of God) moved, that's where the Israelites moved. If the cloud stayed, so did they. As their leader, Moses knew that discerning the will of God is dwelling in his presence constantly.
- *Discernment: the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God both personally and in community.*
- In Deuteronomy, they chose judges who were wise and *discerning*.
- We don't have a cloud by day or a pillar of fire by night now, but what we do have is the Spirit of God with us.
- Discernment is a result of spiritual transformation. That happens through a process of practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, silence and solitude.
- We can't force discernment, it's a gift given by God through maturity. This means we can't only go to God when big things come up.

Three Beliefs Crucial to the Practice of Discernment:

1. *Goodness of God*
 - Many of us have trouble believing in the goodness of God to us personally, but we'll believe God has good plans for someone else. However, this can hold us back from experiencing a life of spiritual discernment.
2. *Love is Our Primary Calling*
 - Instead of weighing pros and cons of a decision, we should ask “What would love do?”.
3. *God Communicates Through the Holy Spirit*
 - The Holy Spirit helps us know the demand of love in our situation.
 - The Holy Spirit expands Christ's teaching from when he gave it in a particular setting to the moment we're in right now.

Prayers that Lead to Discernment:

1. Prayer of Indifference
 - This is a prayer that is indifferent to anything but God's will, like Mary's prayer in Luke 1:38.
2. Prayer for Wisdom

Discussion Questions:

- How do you tend to make decisions? How did this message challenge how you do that?



- Which of the prayers that lead to discernment is God leading you to focus on?
- Which of the three beliefs crucial to discernment resonated with you most? Why?