

# The Pastor's Pages



Vol. 1 Issue 2

With the second printing of the Pastor's pages we begin to explore deeper questions of faith. It is my deepest desire and prayer that these meditations will be a form of comfort and an occasion for growth in your journey of faith.

Blessings,

Pastor Faron

Our next question is one that many of us may have asked, if not publicly, at least in secret. Perhaps, just between us and God. **When will God answer my prayer?**

It suffices to say that we do not have an answer to this. For to have an answer would claim to know the ways of God in a deeper way than God is known. Yet in studying, we can see that we are not alone in our desire for the Lord to hear us and respond. Also, we can find that there is much that we can learn from what we know of God while trying to determine the direction of our lives. Finally, we are then lead to consider how we can discern or understand God's will.

We may question how much that God participates in our lives and whether God micro-manages our lives, but that is another subject altogether. However, we as Christians always have a desire to reach out to God in our prayers, to ask for guidance and seek the will of God in our lives. We see this in Scripture. We read the Psalms and hear the psalmist cry out, "How long O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Psalm 13:1) Again we hear the psalmist say, "Hear my cry O God; attend to my prayer." (Psalm 61:1) And finally, we constantly plead to God in our liturgy, "Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer." All of these examples not only speak to our desires to be heard, but also reveal that many times we may also question if God is listening, asking that God not only hear, but respond.

What we learn from our Lord in teaching us to pray is the desire for the kingdom of God to come here upon earth as in heaven. Furthermore, in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prays to the Father, "not my will, but thine be done." So too, we seek God's will in our lives and in our prayers. We want what God would have us have, and do what God would have us do. Yet, how can we know what God desires of us?

One way is through diligent study of the Scripture. Through this we learn about what God has done and from this we can learn something of the nature of God and God's desire for us and all humanity. The most basic thing we can know is what Christ taught, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind; and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-39) In doing these things the kingdom of God is revealed in and through our lives. People see God at work in us.

The reason that I point this out is because sometimes we pray and ask God for guidance when we may already have the answers. We might ask ourselves how my life reflects the love of God. When we pray for guidance, we might also weigh which path will give God the greater glory.

In ministry I have counseled those who have made difficult decisions after praying to God. These conclusions were made when they realized that one choice was in conflict with their understanding of God's will.

Finally, a word about discernment of God's will. In the Bible there are places where divination or understanding of God's will is done by casting lots. One example of this is when the disciples decide upon a replacement for Judas. In Acts we read, "Then they prayed, 'Lord, you know the hearts of all. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to assume the task of this service and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' Then they cast lots for them, and the one chosen was Matthias; so he was counted with the eleven apostles." (Act 1:24-26) While some may be surprised by this, we still do similar things in the church today. We call upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and then vote as we are lead believing the result is the will of God and the direction for the church.

So again, I end by saying that ultimately, this is not an answer to the question. Yet, through faith, we believe that God hears and answers us in the fullness of time according to God's will and not our own will. Perhaps this is the most difficult part of following Christ, for we often believe that we know what is best. To yield completely to God's will is surely a journey that takes strength and grace that comes from God alone.

If there are further questions you can certainly submit them by leaving them in the slot in my office door.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Faron