

Acts of Jesus - part 19

A young pilot passed the point of no return where the weather changed for the worse. Visibility dropped down to a matter of feet as fog descended to the earth. Putting total trust in the cockpit instruments was a new experience for him, for the ink was still wet on the certificate verifying that he was qualified for instrument flying. It was the landing that worried him the most. His destination was a crowded metropolitan airport he wasn't familiar with. In a few minutes he would be in radio contact with the tower. Until this incident, he was not appreciative of his instructor's insistence on memorizing the rule book. Now he had acquired a new appreciation. **Finally, he heard the voice of the air traffic controller.** From that point on he had to rely on his previous instruction and training and trust in the voice that was coming over his head phones. He had to simply trust that that voice was guiding him around dangers and obstacles he could not see. With the words of the rule book in his mind and the voice of the controller in his ears he finally landed safely.

--An illustration of the Christian life--- most of it we are flying blind and if we don't know the rule book and if we don't listen to the voice of the air traffic controller....

--We are going to be taking a look at the events that transpire in the life of Philip the Evangelist (deacon=man filled with the Spirit of God and wisdom) over a relatively short period time and draw some lessons from his life about what it means to follow God's lead.

Acts 8:1, 4-5 -- Notice the first way God moves Philip circumstances...in fact bad circumstances – out of simple necessity Philip finds himself in Samaria. God leads through circumstances.

Acts 8:26-30 – Notice the second way God moves Philip – Extraordinary circumstances...he sees an angel and hears the voice of the Holy Spirit.
--Does God still lead this way?

Acts 8:39-40 – Notice the third way God moves Philip – literally picks him up takes him to a new place with no further instructions.
--"This must be where I'm supposed to be, because this is where I am." And he went right about doing what God had given for him to do.
--I have known those who, though not necessarily snatched through a spiritual dimension to somewhere else, have their situations change so very rapidly so very providentially that: **"This must be where God wants me to be because this is where I am."**

1. The question that we are going to answer together this evening is: How can we know God's Will and direction for our lives so we can follow His lead?

--Philip had it easy – you don't need to deliberate when your circumstances leave you only one option or when an angel appears or.

--This is by far the exception rather than the rule --- 99% of the time and 99% of situations God's will is not so easily discerned.

How do we know His will when the fog is thick?

1. We are actually assuming something here: that we really want to know and do His will.

--So, do we?

--Someone said, "95% of knowing the will of God consists in being willing to do it before you know what it is."

--Do you really believe that God knows what He's doing and that what He's doing is the best thing for you?

--Do you trust Him?

2. Once you've overcome the obstacle of your will, the next step is memorize the rule book!!

--Probably not possible to memorize all of it but reading and dwelling on it and holding it close to your heart is absolutely imperative for when you're flying in the fog.

--Listen carefully to what God says about His Word: **Josh. 1:8, Ps. 1:1-2, IITim. 3:16-17**

--Without a firm commitment to the rule book, you're not going to make it.

3. The third step = Ask for Guidance.

--May sound like something we shouldn't have to be told to do, but in reality, though we ask God something, we are not really asking for guidance.

--A lot of the times when we ask God to show us what to do, we are really saying "let me know that what I want to do is O.K."

--Asking for guidance is leaving the options all to God.

--Before you can find God's will, you must trust that God's will is the best.

4. The fourth step is to expect an answer.

--God answers through a number of means:

1. Through His Word – "How would the Bible speak to my situation...I need to know if I should change jobs" You'd be surprised!

2. Through Prayer –

3. Through His Church. God's people

--Not just us – Find some brothers or sisters who demonstrate they know how to hear and follow God's lead. Ask them to pray and tell them to give their objective opinion.

4. Through Circumstances – closed doors, open doors (opportunity)

--My family and I came to this church based upon leadership from the Lord that came through circumstances.

5. Through the supernatural – this is rare... many go their whole lives following the Lord faithfully and never once hear anything close to an audible voice.

Many signs and billboards in the path of a recent hurricane were no match for the violent storm. However, one billboard resisted the hurricane's 100-mile per hour winds. While the billboard still stands, the advertisement that was there when the hurricane hit was peeled back to reveal an earlier message.

When the sun rose the next morning on Sand Lake Road in Orlando the words on the billboard clearly read: "We need to talk. --God"

