Week 1 ~ Where You Are

Dear Church Family,

Have you ever held the door open for a stranger, picked up a stray piece of garbage, straightened someone else’s wall art, assisted a stranded person alongside the road, closed somebody’s toilet seat, and so on? Why did you do that? If I had to guess, you stopped because you felt it was the right thing to do, or you acted automatically without even giving the matter a second thought. Either way, no matter what, you were persuaded to take action.

Whether we are trained or have strong convictions, each of us has odd little habits or mannerisms that operate in our daily schedules. We take action because, well, that’s just what you do. When I see a toilet seat left up, you know I am going to close that lid! If I see a piece of garbage in my path, I’m just gonna toss that rubbish in the nearest can. We don’t even think about it! Someone or something has persuaded us to take action.

Persuaded to Take Action

Jesus’ disciples were also persuaded to take action. After Jesus had nailed our sins to a cross and suffered in our place, He ultimately defeated and overcame every snare, inclination, and weakness that could hold us back when He rose again over sin, death, and Hell itself. Now, by the power of His Holy Spirit, Jesus’ followers can experience that same power.

So what does this power that overcomes sin, death, and Hell look like in our lives? I mean, that kind of power seems too crazy to believe. We are just ordinary people, living our ordinary lives with our families, our work, our obligations, and schedules. Well, same goes for Jesus’ disciples.

On an average unsuspecting day, two of Jesus’ disciples, Peter and John, are on their way to a regular afternoon prayer meeting; nothing unusual here. A man crippled from birth is by the entrance of the house of prayer, begging for money; again, nothing unusual here. In fact, this guy had been begging at that same location his entire life. It was more than likely Peter and John had seen this guy before. The entirety of the situation was mundane, normal, and routine.

The Persuasion of the Holy Spirit

God loves to work in the every-day and ordinary. And in that moment, Peter and John are persuaded by the Holy Spirit. They are compelled by the will of God. They take action and through their action, God heals the crippled man instantly. It doesn’t stop there; after the former cripple is healed, he leaps into the place of prayer shouting God’s praise. Everyone present knows this guy; they’ve seen him at the entrance his whole life. Needless to say, everyone is in awe. That crippled guy is healed! How is this possible?

Peter, persuaded by the Holy Spirit, sees this as a God-given opportunity. He stands before the amazed crowd and shares the life changing good news of Jesus. Thousands come to believe in Jesus and commit to following Him that day; amazing!

The Will of God

Peter took action because He was compelled by the will of God. That phrase seems so mystical and obscure: “The Will of God”. But that is a misconception. God’s will is not a mystery to unlock, a puzzle to solve, or a destination at the end of a long journey of devotion and prayer. No, the will of God is an active transforming person that persuades and drives the Jesus follower.

The will of God is made known through Jesus, and revealed and put into action in our lives by the Holy Spirit. So what does that mean? Well, the “Will of God”, or persuasion of the Holy Spirit, is just as natural as the habits and mannerisms we discussed in the beginning. Just as easily as we are compelled by a moment of kindness to hold a door open, we can be led by the Holy Spirit to take action.

Have You Ever Been Persuaded?

It won’t take long being a follower of a Jesus, a Christian, to suddenly experience an urge to act. Whether it be a seemingly insignificant act of generosity to a stranger, the desire to make amends in a broken relationship, or the urge to share the story of Jesus with a coworker, the Holy Spirit persuades us to take action. All that is required to do the will of God is to take action. We must allow ourselves to be persuaded by the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever had an opportunity and ignored the push? We all regrettably have. But God is not done with you. In fact, He has much more for you. All we have to do is be willing to be persuaded. This might mean discomfort for you. This could mean confronting an old habit or perspective you have. But if we want to fulfill the will of God in our lives, we must let the Holy Spirit persuade us.

Your Life’s Purpose

So your life’s purpose is not some abstract mystery or hidden treasure. Your purpose is tied to Jesus and the persuasion the Holy Spirit will bring to your life. Without His leading, we are aimless and our own convictions often fail.

But the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, persuades our hearts, and transforms who we are. He shifts our perspectives and opens us up to great opportunities and life-giving purpose. So our prayer for you church family, is to be persuaded. Let us seek the persuasion of God and allow Him to guide and direct our lives! It’s not complicated, just ask God to persuade you; pray for Jesus to persuade your heart. He will. And the will of God shall be done! And your life, just like Peter and John’s lives, will find purpose.

With Love,

Pastor Vern Pastor Ty

Group Discussion

*Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions with your group.*

1. When was the last time you felt the persuasion of the Holy Spirit? What was that like? How do you know this was the Holy Spirit?
2. What happened when you felt the Holy Spirit compel you? Did you take action? Why or why not?
3. What steps can you take to better hear and respond to the leading of the Spirit? How do you think Peter and John learned His voice?
4. Do you believe God has a purpose for your life? Why or why not?
5. Read Philippians 2:1-11. In the NLT, verse 2 refers to working together with one purpose. In other translations it says unity or one mind. What does this mean for you? What is this purpose we are to live by?

Closing Prayer

*Close your time together in prayer. Here are a few ideas of what you could pray about based on the topic of today’s discussion:*

* Pray for the Holy Spirit to persuade and challenge you in your walk with Jesus
* Ask forgiveness for the times you felt the persuasion of the Spirit and ignored Him
* Pray for God’s will to be done in your life.
* Invite Jesus to invade your day-to-day life.

Weekly Challenge

Listening to the persuasion of the Holy Spirit begins in submitting ourselves to Jesus. This means placing a higher value in His plans than our own. To practice this attitude, let’s begin with dedicating 1 HOUR to Jesus this week. Maybe some of you already do this, well, I would encourage you to add another hour. Choose a day, a time, and give it to Jesus. Pray, listen to a sermon, read the Word, or worship. You can even mix several things together; the idea is to simply give up time for Jesus. This may seem mundane, but Spirit-led and Purpose-driven life begins in the day-to-day.