

April 3, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through circumstance?

Scripture - Matthew 10:11-14

How often has your well planned-out day been derailed? A flat tire or a cancelled appointment leads to a domino effect of touching your other commitments on the calendar. A health crisis extends our stay and we have to juggle the days to follow. We've all been there and most likely will be there again in the near future. I know I often grow frustrated at such occurrences and it can sour my mood. Often after these times, I am humbled yet again to see that God brought, or allowed, these circumstances into my life to have me right in the position He wanted me to be in to learn or to help.

Circumstances...God uses them to place us in a teachable or serviceable position. In the Matthew 10 passage, Jesus teaches His disciples that how they are received can dictate God's direction for that moment. We have all encountered various circumstances that can help navigate God's direction for our lives.

Some guidance through God's circumstantial direction can be heard from a Desiring God podcast where John Piper answers the question from a missionary couple whose funding had dried up. They were wondering how to interrupt these circumstances for what God would have them do. John Piper's counsel to them was that first, God is saying something through this event but they should be careful when determining what that is. To him, there were three likely interpretations of this event: 1. It was a test of faith, 2. It was a sign they needed to change their fundraising strategy, or 3. It was time to move on from this season of ministry as God was calling them elsewhere. To the last point Piper stated, "I would simply say that that interpretation of ending is something you should be very, very slow to take up and conclude that's what God is doing."

I agree with this method of interpretation. Look at the circumstances of your life, lay out the possible outcomes, and then faithfully walk with God through each possible interpretation to see which one emerges as the true will of God for you right now.

What has God been saying to you in your life personally and in the life of Hope Fellowship through circumstances these past 100 days?

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Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the blessings you have bestowed on my life. You have provided me with more than I could ever have imagined. Thank you for the circumstances that You use to teach me. May I constantly be aware of these teachable moments that circumstances can bring. Make me conscious of how circumstances can be used to help bring vision to the kingdom of God at Hope Fellowship.

Amen

April 4, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through Scripture?

Scripture - 2 Timothy 3:16, Luke 24:26, 27

Marty was confused. He was constantly thinking of new questions, wrestling with them in his head, searching for answers from others in either verbal or written form. Marty was a young man who had a passion to learn as much about God as he could. He was diligent in his quest, pestering his instructors and peers constantly with questions and ready to debate. He had so much to discuss and Marty was anxious to learn but he constantly felt he was coming up short in his thirst for knowledge and wisdom. Evidently, young Marty was familiar with Latin and he arrived at a novel idea and made his life's cry 'Ad Fontes!' (The Latin phrase means, 'Back to The Sources.')

So, Martin Luther dusted off his red Bible and began his search to discover who God says He is, not who Luther (and others) assumed Him to be. An amazing discovery was found by the inquisitive monk: Jesus is the Word of God in flesh! From that time on, the Scriptures were his starting and ending points of Martin knowing God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church and the steps for his life. For Luther, it was the joint relationship of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit that led how he did life and church, which certainly got Luther in trouble with the established church but that is the subject for another day.

Over these past 100 Days, what has the Holy Spirit told you as you've read the accompanying Scriptures each day? How have you been prompted in your own life? In what ways has God given you vision and passion for Hope Fellowship and the future of His church here in Dorchester?

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Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank You for the gift of Your Word so we can know You, Your will, and Your plan for us. By giving us Your Word, You have also shown us what we are to do to please You. Thank you for teaching me and speaking to me as I read Your word. I ask that Your Holy Spirit to continue to guide my steps personally and the future of Hope Fellowship. Give me insight as I read the Bible. Thank You Lord for Your leading.  
Amen

April 5, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through listening to Holy Spirit?

Scripture - John 14:25-26

After you read the next sentence, stop and think about it for a moment. ***We have, in the Holy Spirit, the same Teacher who faithfully breathed the perfect and practical words of Scripture to imperfect people across thousands of years.***

Does that sentence excite your soul? That the author of the Bible is available to you and I today?

Not only did the Holy Spirit teach the disciples, He desires to teach us today. He wants to show us the depth of God, that we may learn to mirror Jesus. The Holy Spirit's plan for us is to know Him and Scripture so well, that we pursue His wisdom for our lives and not the 'wisdom' of the world. The teaching and molding desire of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to each of us personally but also to the church, which is lead by Jesus Christ.

Over these past 100 days, we have been leaning into the Lord for personal growth and for the future steps of Hope Fellowship. What has the Holy Spirit been saying to you during these days? What sense of direction do you feel the Holy Spirit is prompting you personally and corporately as a church?

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Prayer

Almighty God, I come before You on behalf of our church. Please crush any weapon formed against them, and do not allow it to prosper. God, we pray that You will grant our church with the spirit of Solomon so that it may have sound wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Thank You for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and I pray we will all be sensitive to Your leading and faithful to follow.

Amen

April 6, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through others?

Exodus 18:13-27, acts 8:26-39

One of the benefits of a community of faith and a network of other Christ-followers (maybe at work or extended family) is that you have some Godly people in your life that the Holy Spirit will use to speak into your current situation. We've all had those moments where those in our spiritual circles come alongside and give us direction. You've also, most likely, had those God moments where a stranger has been used to bring truth, encouragement or conviction into your life; those moments seem to appear from nowhere and yet you recognize that God has spoken into your life the very thing you needed.

The question to you now is this; how has God used others to speak into your life and/or church in the last 100 days?

In the Exodus passage above, you have an illustration of intentional voices who speak into the lives of others. The people come to Moses for direction, and God leads Moses to tell the people what they need to hear. We all have intentional voices in our lives, people that we have an ongoing, intentional relationship with, whom God can use to speak into our lives.

In the Acts 8 passage above, we see a random voice speak into the life of the Ethiopian. Here was a stranger in Philip, whom God has directed to that moment, to speak truth into the Ethiopian's life. I know I've had those random voices I've never met before (the former mayor of Kitchener and the owner of a U-Haul dealership), who God used to speak to me what I needed to hear at that time.

Review the past 100 days of your life, what intentional and random voices have spoken what you need to hear from the Lord regarding your life and Hope Fellowship?

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*Prayer*

*Father, thank You for giving us the "one anothers" in our lives who encourage us and build us up. Help me to recognize Your voice when You choose to deliver a message to me through another believer. Use me as a voice of encouragement and as a speaker of truth to others as well. Oh God, speak to me, for I am eager to hear Your voice. Amen.*

April 7, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through prayer

Scripture - James 1:5, Psalm 100.3, John 10:11

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Psalm 100:3 Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;[a]  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

We love to talk, but rarely do we love to listen. Listening involves intentionally being focused and not allowing distraction to overwhelm the opportunity. For any relationship, the ability to listen vastly improves the connection and for followers of Christ, it's vital that we listen. Scripture tells us that we are His sheep and one aspect of sheep, is that they know the voice of the shepherd. We need to know the voice of the Lord and so we need to be intentional to take the time to listen.

Listening prayer centres around a clear request for God's guidance. In making our request, we give God's guidance authority over the other voices we hear throughout our daily lives. Then we hit the pause button. We wait on God in a time of silence, giving the Lord opportunity to speak to us. We focus our time of prayer on intentional, purposeful listening and let God do the talking.

This is important because as followers of Jesus, we all desire to do the right thing and make the wise choices. Yet we are constantly being bombarded with the noise of the world all around us. There are lots of voices telling us very different messages, and too often we find ourselves challenged and confused about what we should do in a given situation or what is really the best way ahead. These are times when we can seek God's guidance through listening prayer.

Over the past 100 Days of Prayer, what do you sense God saying to you in times of prayer?

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Prayer

I ask, Father, that only your Holy Spirit will speak to me now as I wait on you for wisdom, insight, and direction. And whatever you show me or direct me to do, I pray that I will quickly obey. In Jesus's mighty name, Amen.

April 8, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through the teaching of others

Scripture - Roman's 12:6-8

How often have you sat in a worship service and felt that the person bringing the Word of God that day had somehow been able to peer into your very soul and crafted that message for you, and only you? That can be exciting because it's evident that God is leading the messenger (who likely knows nothing of your current situation) and you as the recipient.

But wait, this experience is not limited to your regular church service! If you take the time to put other sources of Godly teaching into your life throughout the week, you are increasing the opportunities for God to teach you. It could be a book on Christian living, a podcast that is discussing a theological truth, an online service of another church of some famous or little-known preacher. One of the benefits of today's technical world is that there is a wealth of spiritual teaching at our fingertips.

As we allow more spiritual teaching into our lives, I have to believe that its an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to teach us exactly what we need to hear.

So the question today is this...how has the teaching of others been used by God to speak into your life over these past 100 days? What have you learned through the teaching of others?

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Prayer

Almighty God, I come to You today and give thanks for all ways and people who teach Your Word to me. Thank You for glorifying Yourself through the spiritual gifts of Your children. Fill them with your strength, so they may rise to every challenge and not grow weary. Fill them with your wisdom, so that they may be able to make good judgement when guiding and helping others. Amen.

April 9, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - What has God said through past experiences (previous church efforts)

Scripture - Revelation 2-3

We can learn from history, in fact, we should learn from history. If you took the time to read Revelation 2 and 3 today, you can see that a history lesson was presented on the good, the bad and the ugly of seven churches. As we take the time to read this portion of Revelation, we can see what was accomplished (and not accomplished) for the Kingdom of God.

One of the objectives for the 100 Days of Prayer is for us to hear from the Lord regarding the future direction of Hope Fellowship. We know that God speaks through His Word, His Holy Spirit, His people and circumstances, but He can also teach us through the reflection of history.

What are some previous church efforts (either at Hope Fellowship or other churches you've worshipped at) that you learned some lessons about ministry? As you, and possibly your ministry team, reflected on these efforts, what did you learn? Write these lessons down because we should be reminded of them as Hope Fellowship looks to the future.

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Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the spiritual instructions I have in Your Word and the warnings that help to keep me looking to Jesus. I pray that my devotion for You will not grow cold, but that in all things I will become more and more thrilled with the wonders of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. May my love for You start to reflect, in some small way, the love that You have shown to me. And thank You for the many privileges that are mine in Christ, in Whose name I pray, AMEN.

April 10, 2022

Theme - What has God Said?

Today - Celebrating the 100 Days of Prayer

Scripture - Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.

Over these past 100 days, we have seen in Scripture the promises and provision of God. We have read about His passion for His church and the plan He has for it. We have witnessed the call from the written Word of the Lord. We have been challenged, we have reflected, we have celebrated, we have sought wisdom and we've heard from the Lord.

We want to celebrate the Lord and His interaction with us these past 100 days. As we read in Zephaniah, 'the Lord is in our midst' In the small community of faith that is Hope Fellowship, God is in our midst! 'He rejoices over us' as read in that same verse. Take the time to read through the following verses to see how God blesses us and shares in our joys over them.

- *Proverbs 17:6*
- *Luke 15:10*
- *Psalms 92:1-2*
- *2 Chronicles 30:21*

*Let's celebrate what we've experienced. Begin to list what you appreciate about the Almighty God.*

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Prayer

Loving God, I know that you love me and you made me in your image. I thank you for the blessings you've given me, even though they're too many to count. I pray that you help me to reflect on all the love you have given to me and those around me. Quiet my spirit and the noise in my head so I can understand the love and grace you've promised me. Amen.