

Note from Pastor Steve

I visited my doctor yesterday for a normal appointment. We talked about my health and eating healthy. Normally, when I meet with my doctor our conversation turns to God. He is a follower of Christ that is not ashamed to show it even in the doctors office. This time was different. No comments about God. Just two or three non direct comments about politics. Comments that I expect less than hearing someone talk about Jesus at a doctor office. But even still it was there.

As I reflected on my time yesterday. The doctor was more tense in his words and actions. He was still professional, but I could tell something was bugging him. We are getting closer to the election the rhetoric is getting louder and louder. I want to share with you a couple things with you. First, John Wesley over 200 years ago gave three simple rules about voting that I believe are good advise for today.

John Wesley's Rules for Voting

1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy.
2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against.
3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.

These rules might not be the most easy to keep. However, when we focus on the faults and problems with those running, we do not add value to anything. When our eyes focus on the things of this world those things consume our thoughts and words. Where in scripture we are called to fix our eyes on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2) It is hard in this season to not allow the messages of this world to consume us. Even still we can have peace when we point our thoughts towards Jesus and His nature. Slowing down and controlling the voices that we hear is important. You do not have to watch that show, listen to that person, or look at Facebook. Rather if you want information about the election there are Christian Voters Guide on the internet that you can look at. They normally just state the candidates views on issues not the rhetoric that surrounds everything today. We would should vote, it is wise to do so. It is also wise to not let the voting process destroy our souls and relationships. In the midst of the season remember Paul's closing words in Philippians 4.

Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. - Philippians 4:8-9

...when Moses was grown...he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. —Exodus 2:11

Moses saw the oppression of his people and felt certain that he was the one to deliver them, and in the righteous indignation of his own spirit he started to right their wrongs. After he launched his first strike for God and for what was right, God allowed Moses to be driven into empty discouragement, sending him into the desert to feed sheep for forty years. At the end of that time, God appeared to Moses and said to him, “ ‘...bring My people...out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go...?’ ” (Exodus 3:10-11). In the beginning Moses had realized that he was the one to deliver the people, but he had to be trained and disciplined by God first. He was right in his individual perspective, but he was not the person for the work until he had learned true fellowship and oneness with God.

We may have the vision of God and a very clear understanding of what God wants, and yet when we start to do it, there comes to us something equivalent to Moses’ forty years in the wilderness. It’s as if God had ignored the entire thing, and when we are thoroughly discouraged, God comes back and revives His call to us. And then we begin to tremble and say, “Who am I that I should go...?” We must learn that God’s great stride is summed up in these words— “I AM WHO I AM...has sent me to you” (Exodus 3:14). We must also learn that our individual effort for God shows nothing but disrespect for Him— our individuality is to be rendered radiant through a personal relationship with God, so that He may be “well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). We are focused on the right individual perspective of things; we have the vision and can say, “I know this is what God wants me to do.” But we have not yet learned to get into God’s stride. If you are going through a time of discouragement, there is a time of great personal growth ahead.

The spiritual life is not a life before, after, or beyond our everyday existence. No, the spiritual life can only be real when it is lived in the midst of the pains and joys of the here and now. Therefore we need to begin with a careful look at the way we think, speak, feel, and act from hour to hour, day to day, week to week, and year to year, in order to become more fully aware of our hunger for the Spirit. As long as we have only a vague inner feeling of discontent with our present way of living, and only an indefinite desire for “things spiritual,” our lives will continue to stagnate in a generalized melancholy. We often say, “I am not very happy. I am not content with the way my life is going. I am not really joyful or peaceful, but I just don’t know how things can be different, and I guess I have to be realistic and accept my life as it is .” It is this mood of resignation that prevents us from actively searching for the life of the Spirit.

Our first task is to dispel the vague, murky feeling of discontent and to look critically at how we are living our lives. This requires honesty, courage, and trust. We must honestly unmask and courageously confront our many self-deceptive games. We must trust that our honesty and courage will lead us not to despair, but to a new heaven and a new earth.

- From Making All Things New by Henri Nouwen