

The Practical Matters – Part 5: Travel Plans

1 Corinthians 16:5-12; Coast Community Church; Earl Miles; 5-5-2024

Outline

- Paul's Travel (5-9)
- Timothy's Travel (10-11)
- Apollos' Travel (12)

1. Walking with God is Filled with Uncertainties

- The Uncertainty of 'Perhaps'** (6): The Christian life is filled with 'the perhaps of life' (it may or may not happen) regardless of how godly we may be. Are you okay with the reality that things you plan to do may or may not happen?
- The Uncertainty of 'Wherever'** (6): Uncertainty is part of the Christian life. Are you okay with walking with God without all the details of what is going to happen?
- The Uncertainty of 'Hope'** (7): The Christian life is filled with good hopes and desires that may or may not work out. (2 Samuel 10:12) We must distinguish between uncertain hopes (personal desire) and certain hopes (promises of God). Hope based on personal desire (not a promise from God), even good desires, are not guaranteed to take place. We can get disillusioned if we confuse our personal desires and God's promises to His children. (Philippians 4:12-13, 19) Are you making a proper distinction between your personal desires and what God clearly promises to His children?
- The Uncertainty of 'Divine Permission'** (7): The plans and hopes of the godly are subject to the wise and loving, sovereign providence of God. (James 4:13-16) Are you okay with the 'not my will but Thy will be done' of 'if the Lord permits'?

The uncertainty of walking with God might be surprising. We need to trust like little children and love in the midst of uncertainty.

Trust the Promise: *'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. – Job 42:3*

2. Walking with God is Filled with Opposition

- Opposition in Ephesus** (8-9): God's will for our lives often includes hard things and opposition. (Acts 19:21-20:3)
- Opposition in Corinth** (10-11) Do you tend to think that hard things and opposition are indications of closed doors or God's disfavor? (John 16:33)

Opposition and opportunities often go together. (1 Corinthians 16:9; Joshua 1:6; 11:18)
Opposition is no indication that God does not love us. Opposition is no indication that we going through the wrong door. Do you tend to see hardship and difficulties as ‘closed doors’ rather than a feature of ‘open doors’?

Trust the Promise: *And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. – 2 Corinthians 12:9*

3. Walking with God is Filled with Opportunities

- Opportunity for Paul** (8-9): What we should do in life will depend on open doors or opportunities. (Galatians 6:10)
- No Opportunity for Apollos** (12) Christians discern what to do in light of Scripture and circumstances. We need to be careful of looking for signs while ignoring obvious circumstances! (Acts 16:9) We ‘put together’ our Scriptural callings and our circumstances as we seek to do God’s will. How do you seek to discern the will of God with regard to any particular issue?

Opportunities are just that, opportunities. Opportunities or open doors are just that, opportunities which must be evaluated like anything else. (Galatians 6:10) Should you feel obligated to go through an open door that God places before you? *Opportunities are not obligations.* An open door or opportunity is not necessarily a ‘yes’ from God (an obligation). It actually may be a very bad idea! (2 Corinthians 2:12-13; Matthew 26:16; Ephesians 4:27; Galatians 5:13; Luke 21:13; 1 Corinthians 3:5; Galatians 6:10) Do you see that even opportunities to do good in a particular way are not obligations to do good (in light of other considerations)? *Opportunities are to be looked for, prayed for and evaluated.* (Galatians 6:10; Colossians 4:3, 5; 1 Corinthians 7:38-39) Opportunities are opened before us as we walk with God. We need to think rightly about the opportunities placed before us.

Whatever we may be encouraged to do should be handled in light of these principles:

- We know, for certain, that God has spoken to us in His Word. (Psalm 119:105)
- Everything else we experience has to be evaluated in light of His Word and wisdom. (Isaiah 8:19-20; Proverbs 24:6)
- Is this right? (Psalm 19:8)
- Is this wise? (Ephesians 5:15)
- Is this good? (1 Corinthians 7:39)
- God may communicate in subjective, extraordinary ways at times for our help and encouragement, but we should not expect it and we should still evaluate it in light of His objective Word and wisdom. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Trust the Promise: *He who gives attention to the word will find good, And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. – Proverbs 16:20*