

Seeking Guidance

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 July 2022

Preacher: Rev. Clive Jennings

[0 : 00] Morning everyone. Morning. Should we pray? Let's pray. Holy Spirit would you come and would you open our ears and our hearts as we seek your guidance and your will in our lives.

Amen. Amen. Where do you go for guidance? I thought maybe that great program with phoning a friend. You know it's always good to phone a friend and just get that advice that we need.

The thing is there's always so many people that are out there at the moment who want to give you advice. Look at your internet browser. They want to give you advice on what to buy, what your diet is, what you wear, what you do, where you spend your holidays, where to buy a car, where not to buy a car. So much people want to maybe how our lives in guidance has, where is it that we've been shaped for good as we seek the Lord. Maybe we've received advice from our parents on money, on faith.

Sometimes it's just good to get that advice and of course we all know, don't we, that we look for guidance from our esteemed politicians who always tell us the truth. How quickly a week changes in politics, doesn't it? You know, the thing is a parent was so encouraged by her child. She had this talk about how the child should seek guidance and as she put the child to bed she listened carefully at the door as her child prayed and said, thank you that you're always there. Thank you that you are there in my time of need. Thank you that you're always there 24-7 to give me guidance and reassurance when I need. Thank you that you have all the answers. Thank you, Google. The thing is, is where do we go for our guidance? You know, that's what is our first port of call? Every disciple should say, or I hope they would say, Jesus, the Bible, Holy Spirit, the Counselor, constant prayer and also seeking wisdom, seeking wisdom from a good and trusted Christian friend, who a good and Christian friend will tell you the truth in love and probably give you the guidance that you need and probably not the guidance that you are going to take from elsewhere. It's, last week Susie talked on our theme about time and gifts, you know, and where do we seek advice and guidance on that as to how to use our God-given gifts in the harvest field that he has given us to reach? Because we've been called to reach a whole generation, to bring people into relationship with Jesus. How do we seek guidance for that? And, you know, don't tell me it's your diary, because if your diary is anything like my diary is the last person place to look, because it gets filled up with stuff.

And when our diary gets filled up with stuff, suddenly the issue of guidance and seeking God of what we do with our time and how we use our gifts seems to diminish and go out the window. You know, often it's filled up with my preferences, not God's purposes, and I need to fill that afresh maybe as we seek guidance on what to do and how to do it. You know, it's so often our guidance is obscured maybe by what has gone before as well. You know, maybe we had made bad decisions in the past, maybe we hadn't made, taken the best advice that there was there. And maybe that's influenced the way we make decisions now. Because the interest with that is maybe the bad guidance, maybe we heard it from ourselves and we were given conflicting guidance and we were left asking the big question, who do I trust?

[4 : 38] And that's a big thing as we think about guidance today. Who do I trust? Who do I really trust in to give me the guidance not only for my life, but our life as a church, as we reach the community God's called us to reach? I sense the trust is at the heart of accepting and acting on guidance. Financial advisors will always say to you, what would you like to do? Would you like high risk, medium risk, or low risk with your investments? And quite rightly would tell us, therefore, that the caveat is that anything that we invest can actually go down rather than up. You know, it's good advice to take. But who do I trust with God in the promise, knowing that when I invest in God, there is only one way and it can go well and up?

The thing is, sometimes we could be marred in our guidance by the things that the world teaches us. And in our reading this morning, we've got a clear signpost from Jesus is to good guidance. Ask,

seek, and knock.

Ask, seek, and knock. Where do I need guidance? Jesus encourages us to ask. Do we ask enough?

Do we ask? You know, where do I need guidance in my life? Where has the storms of life blown me off course? Where has it blown me away from my regular and connection with church and with Jesus? And I use it that way around, particularly this morning as we regather as a church. Because somewhere in this great thing called church, there are holes missing of people who need to return. And maybe God needs to seek their guidance. They need to seek God's guidance to say, where do I need, use my gifts and skills?

Maybe everything isn't going to be perfect. If you find a perfect church, you are the only person in it. I promise you. But where can I find you again, Lord, in this mess or in this questioning that I find myself? Why have others found other paths other than gathering? You know, we aren't doing God a favour by being here. If we think we are, we're here for the wrong reasons. Because we're here to receive everything that he has for us. He's joyous that we are here. But we're here to worship and receive.

[7:20] As Russ said a few weeks back, you know, you don't take your car into the garage just to pay for them to polish it. If you do, you're very posh. But again, you know, return it. I don't want my car returned as it was when I take it into the garage. I want it to be returned, to be serviced, to be repaired, to be fixed up, to be ready for the journey, to travel for the week. You know, in our offer course this week, Jackie sends the letter R. And Jackie just shared that with us on the day. You know, that was amazing.

And reconnecting, reconnecting with our faith. Lord, give me guidance where I can reconnect with my faith, with my church community, with my church family. Receiving. Lord, show me how I receive afresh something of your Holy Spirit that you have for me to guide, comfort, transform and engage. Lord, I trust you.

I rely on you in my decision making. You know, where is the right track, Lord? When I have doubts, when I'm likely to be blown off course, when the rudder of my boat of life seems to go missing, Lord, show me the right track. Give me the right guidance that I need it. Lord, show me the bad stuff that's going on in my life. Help me to recognise the bad stuff. The bad stuff that's saying in my head, I don't need to do that. Oh, that was, I don't know, you've got nothing to offer. Or, I don't like the way things are done. But rather than get back in and influencing and be the change. Relationships, you know, new and for healing of relationships. Lord, give me guidance on that. Give me guidance on new relationships that you're asking me to have. And also give me guidance, Lord, on the relationships you want me to heal. And how can I be that? And how can I be that presence in other people's healing relationships as well? And renewed strength. Lord, give me renewed strength. Where did that spark go?

But where was that spark of faith that I had? Where was that zeal for you? And where did I lose it? Somewhere along the way. Lord, restore that for me. Ask. Lord, give me guidance on this.

And I don't know about you, how good are you at asking for guidance? You know, I'm a bloke, you know, I'm so glad sat-mouse came in, because I don't have to stop and ask people. Because blokes don't, do we? Oh, we'll try down this. We'll keep going. You know, ask. How would you do about asking? Lord, help me maybe ask in our parenting? You know, and that's not just for young children.

[10:16] You know, if you've got grown-up kids, you will know that prayer too with grown-up children as well. I can see people nodding their heads. It often gets more complex. It certainly gets more expensive.

But often it's about giving and sharing. You know, Lord, ask, what do I do? I'm making a will. What do I do with that? Show me the best way to use what I have to give and encourage the next generation that's coming through.

But often, then there is seek. Seek and you will find. My goodness, you know, have I sought advice in my life? You know, really sought harder on a maybe particular, maybe you have as well. Maybe you're doing that today.

Maybe it's today, Lord, I am seeking. Will you show me, please? Will you show me what is next? What I'm asking for. Show me a way. When we came together all those years ago as a church, we sweated over the vision for this church because we wanted to get it right. We wanted to seek what the Lord wanted for this.

I would say the vision for this church is as fresh as the day that it was given all those years ago. You know, it's Proverbs 29 says, where there is no vision, the people perish.

[11:43] I'm sure you've seen that as well as I have in various different settings. We sought the Lord for his vision for Christchurch at the heart of this community.

A teacher said last week, she talked about links between church and the school. She is not yet a Christian, but she said Christchurch is a beacon in this community.

Before we built, we sought some guidance and the Lord said to be one in Christ, to grow more disciples, to serve the community. Praise God, that hasn't changed.

Also, the vision said, how would we achieve this? We would build, we would seek the power of the Holy Spirit to build us up as God's people. We would grow and we would share worship and teaching to nurture and learn for all faiths and all ages, to build faith in all ages.

And also, we would reach out. We would share, and there's that word again, share our faith and demonstrate God's love in the community. Seek the Lord where he may be found.

[12:54] He who seeks will find. As we finished on for this week, there are those who invested their time, maybe two, three, three hours a week in your diary.

You know, it's not a lot. Sort the Lord and ask the questions, Lord, why did you die? How can I pray? What should I do with the rest of my life?

Often I find Christians are actively, sadly, given up seeking. Seeking, seeking, seeking what the Lord wants in their life.

You know, the Bible is so full of God's story, of our story, of him, of intervening, of people breaking in. I was reminded this week, if you do Lectio 365, there's a story of Paul at Damascus.

We all get the Damascus Road experience, don't we? Paul wasn't that great. Wasn't that fantastic? Paul taken from persecuting Christians to that moment when suddenly there is this huge change.

[14:02] Who was praying for Paul? That's what I asked myself. Who was praying for Paul? And then the Lord led on, who are the Pauls in my life who I want to see come to Christ?

Who are actively seeking in some ways, or I am seeking, to bring them back. You know, we saw the prayer answered that day.

But mission begins at the very heart of God. It can never be secondary importance. Neither can mission be something that I do for him, unless it is something I do with him.

I don't want to do mission. I want to do mission with Jesus. Knock, and the door will be open.

There's this great picture by Holman Hunt.

It's in St. Paul's Cathedral. It's most people know it. And the thing is, knock. And I just sensed this morning, as we were thinking about guidance, for the number of people that maybe have been knocking, but has Jesus been knocking at the door of our lives?

[15:19] And in what areas where he wants to give us guidance? And the thing about this picture is, is if you look deeply into it, it's all covered with ivy.

It hasn't been open for a little while. And there's no handle on the outside. The only handle, I guess, is on the inside. Because we open the door.

I suppose my question this morning is, maybe some of us have stopped knocking. But Jesus is still waiting there outside the door.

All it needs is just to open maybe a little bit. Maybe for others this morning, it'll be opening even wider. And saying, Lord, I'm really seeking guidance on this.

Would you come in more and more? Maybe for some, it'll be flinging the door open and saying, just give me all you've got. Because I really know that guidance this morning in my life. Whether it's little, whether it's medium, whether it's large.

[16:21] And dare I say, the things that have stopped us maybe, Google, as big as it is, can point you to advice and to guide you. But it didn't die on the cross for you.

Google didn't know you before you were born. Google doesn't intercede at the right hand of the Father. Google won't be there to welcome you home.

Google won't be there as you stand there on that day. Knock if you are seeking and ask. How much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask?

Seeking God's guidance is pivotal. It's essential. It's why we are called as the body of Christ. Ask, seek and knock.

How much more will your Father give good gifts to those who ask? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.