

Is That Really God Speaking? TMTPL #13 Handout

Throughout Scripture God has spoken audibly to some, has sent angelic messengers to some, given visions, spoken through dreams, spoken through other people through their spiritual gifts (like prophets), employed circumstances to guide, spoken in an inner still small voice, and has given us the Holy Bible. Expect God to speak but exercise cautious discernment. Was that really God speaking?

But on this matter of God's guidance, we have more help available than many of the people of the Bible did. Jesus made preparations for us to give us tremendous help in discerning God's leading.

John 14:11-26 NIV

¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works

themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

The first work in discerning whether God has spoken to us is that God the Father's leading requires us to believe in Jesus Christ and place all our trust in Him.

¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

If we are to do the works of Christ and even greater works, then we are going to need the help and power of Jesus Christ to accomplish them. The key here is to remember why Jesus will do this. He works to see the Father glorified in the Son. So, the second work of discerning whether God has spoken to us is to discover whether it is consistent with who Jesus is and whether it is in line with God's will as revealed in Holy Scripture, and will it bring glory to God the Father?

Guidance from God will call us to be more like Jesus and to take up our cross and die to self while lovingly serving God and glorifying Him by serving others.

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the

Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will beⁱⁿ in you.

The third work of discernment is whether this guidance promotes the love of Christ through faithful obedience.

Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, He is with us to remind us of truth, guide us into truth, and confirm God's truth to us.

The fourth work of discerning God's guidance is to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit. Is what you are being led to do promoting the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Is it true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy?

The next thing to look at is found in verses 18-24:

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

The fifth work of discernment is the question of unity with God and with the Body of Christ the Church. God's guidance draws us into closer fellowship with the Trinity and with the Body of Christ.

25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to

you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The sixth and final work of discernment in this sermon is the matter of peace.

1. Does this guidance require me to believe in Jesus Christ and place all my trust in Him?
2. Is this guidance consistent with who Jesus is, is it in line with God's will as revealed in Holy Scripture, and will it bring glory to God the Father?
3. Does this guidance promote the love of Christ through faithful obedience.
4. Will I need the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out this guidance and does it produce the fruit of the Spirit?
5. Will this guidance promote love for God and others that is marked by unity in the Body of Christ?
6. Does this guidance promote peace that is greater than all understanding and perfect love that casts out fear?