02-15-17 Minutes

**Spirit Work**-

How Do I Choose? -Revelation 3:8

“…See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut…” Revelation 3:8a (NIV)

Life is full of tough decisions.

How do I know if he/she is “the one”? Which college should I go to? What should I major in? Which job should I take? Which church should we attend? Should I change careers? Now that the kids are grown, should we downsize? Is now the right time to retire?

People hate making decisions. Mostly because we’re terrified of making the wrong one.

Choosing thrills us. Choosing scares us. Choosing comes from the core of who we are. When we truly choose, we have no one to blame and nowhere to hide. And that can be downright terrifying.

My wife, Nancy, and I were at a restaurant once, and the waiter responded to every choice we made by saying, “Brilliant,” “Perfect” or “Excellent decision.” This happened so steadily throughout the meal that I finally asked him if he ever told anyone they made a lousy choice. He told us that the restaurant managers had discovered diners are so afraid of choosing the wrong thing, they actually print a list of “affirmation words” that the wait staff is required to say in response to everyone’s order.

Think about that. Even a question as simple as, “Soup or salad?” renders us so vulnerable that restaurants have to turn their wait staff into therapists!

In a way, we do the same thing with God. Terrified of making a bad decision, we lay all of our choices at God’s feet and ask Him, “What is Your will for my life?”

But, what if God’s will for us is that we develop the wisdom and discernment to make our own decisions in light of His Word, and the faith and confidence to know He will be there guiding us regardless of which path we choose?

Doesn’t that sound freeing?

God wants us to learn how to choose well. That may be why, when we look at the Bible, there is no chapter devoted to ’How to know God’s will for your life.” Paul doesn’t write about “6 Steps to Determine If He’s the One” or “5 Ways to Discern God’s Best Career Path for You.”

What we do see are statements like this: “If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you” (James 1:5, NRSV).

Or “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best” (Philippians 1:9-10a, NIV, 1984).

So the next time you face a difficult decision, instead of asking God what His will is for your life, begin by asking for wisdom. And don’t live in fear of making the wrong decision. Even if you walk through the wrong door, as long as you walk through it with the right heart, God’s will will be done.

Remember, God’s will for your life is not about whom, or if, you should marry, which job you should accept, or which neighborhood you should live in. God’s will for your life is that you become a magnificent person in His image, somebody with the character of Jesus. And nothing can stand in the way of that.

**Care Notes**-

Jack Vance: Words of encouragement

Gabrielle Evans: Denise’s Daughter- words of encouragement

Dave Zaken: still has tube, so surgery wound isn’t healing as fast as he would like

Deb is staying in the hospitality house

Angie Gregory: Chocolate Festival

Julie and Ron Waldrop: doing the directory pictures

Kevin Counts: In hospital- small bowel blockage

**Congregational Meeting Evaluation**-

It was a better meeting than most, but it was still a rough conversation. Birgit suggested putting a box for questions or concerns. Cindy suggests having it multiple times. Maybe during the day or after the services one day. Jim stated that we should have answers to questions. Leadership teams are not keeping their budget they way that they need to in order for the council to plan the way that they need. Maybe we should meet with them a couple months before. The members are not turning in all of their receipts so it is difficult for us to know what it really costs to do this mission work. Pastor says that it is difficult for us to have the people to actually look at the budget information. Jim told the council that in the software that there will be a spot for Source for the cash/ Use for the cash. There are 5 Leadership groups (should be 6, but Youths isn’t a part of it). Cindy suggests that we need to get the congregation on board for youth. Pastor says that the difficulty with that comes when the youth leader has to focus on the three different groups (elementary, middle, and high). Doing activities once a quarter will be ideal.

Matt (through text) pre-budget meeting helps to identify the “elephant in the room”. Jim was able to answer this. We should never leave a question unanswered or addressed and there is nothing wrong with the promise of finding out the answers and giving them at a later time.

**The Giving Team**-

The team is trying to come up with ideas. The biggest challenge is the tithe. It is being kicked off on the 5th. Jim and Rick Krenzer are focusing on this part of the team. We are anonymously going to put cards in a box so that members do not feel pressured to make that commitment. Weekly letters or emails will be sent with biblical passages related to tithes. It is related to gross income. Jim- What percent of our giving unit pledges? (60%). There are still a lot of programs that are geared towards the mega church. There is not a time frame for this team to be in existence.

**Financial Stewardship**-

debt reduction deposit- amount due on the 5th $2471. Asked Amanda the status of this. She is depositing $3800 tomorrow (2/16) which will cover the 5th’s payment. There is still a $2300 amount that will need to be paid by the end of the month.

Chocolate fest $: $5,078 there are receipts still out ($150 from the chocolatiers) doesn’t include the other vendors.

**Personnel**-

Sarah is very upset about her salary increase. She understood that she would be getting a little bit extra because of her time with 360. She is really hurt because she knows that her nursery attendant makes $17/hour and she is making $15.50/hour. She is asking us to look at her extra duties. Jim- What are the options that we have moving forward? Pastor- Says she was expecting at least a $2 raise. According to the church constitution, we can change the budget by up to $1500. Sarah’s salary has been increased to $16/hour.

**Mission Council Retreat**-

March 10-11th proposed for retreat

-Bethelwoods could be a possibility (last resort)

- Camp Kinard

8 people- 3 women’s rooms, 3 men’s rooms