

Will You Steward the Seed?

Steve Watson; January 20, 2019

(The blessing for the millennial generation which was part of the opening of this sermon is available as a separate PDF download.)

Quotes not otherwise designated are from *Draw the Circle*, the book that we are currently going through together as a congregation.

1) "Prayer is not a monologue; it's a dialogue." And you have the capacity to hear God's side of the conversation.

John 10:27 ESV

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

John 16:13 ESV

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

Jeremiah 33:2-3 CSB

"The Lord who made the earth, the Lord who forms it to establish it, the Lord is his name, says this: ³ Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and incomprehensible things you do not know "

- The word rendered 'tell' translates the Hebrew word *nagad*, which means to show or tell something in such a way as to make it very easy to see, notice or understand. The word *conspicuous* could be associated with *nagab*.

In Draw the Circle, Batterson mentions five specific ways God communicate to his people:

- dreams
- desires
- promptings
- ideas
- impressions

Additional ways include:

- recurring thoughts
- visions
- an angelic messenger
- the words of another person
- Scripture

Dallas Willard writes in his book, Hearing God:

"If we are to hear God's voice ourselves and on an individual basis, we must, above all else, observe how his word came to those people described in the Scriptures. How did they experience God's communication? What was it like for them to hear God?"

- **Note:** While there are certainly many wonderful resources for those who want to know more about cultivating their capacity to hear God, Willard's book, *Hearing God*, has been for me the most helpful.

2) "...when you get a God-idea, you need to take it captive."

While this a powerful and memorable statement, another statement that follows in Day 9 of the Draw the Circle is very helpful in remembering what taking a God-idea captive entails: "It means stewarding every word, thought, impression, and revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit of God."

How do we steward what we believe God has communicated to us?

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 CSB

Don't stifle the Spirit. ²⁰ Don't despise prophecies, ²¹ but test all things. Hold on to what is good.

- The Greek word rendered prophecies in this passage means something communicated from God, declaring his purposes.

There are three primary ways of testing something we think may be from God:

- the test of Scripture (see Acts 17:10-11)
- the test of 'spirit' (see 1 John 4:4)
- the test of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28)

Mark 4:24 CSB

"Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and more will be added to you."

- "Pay attention" translates the Greek word *blepo*, which means "to direct the mind to a thing, to consider, contemplate, to look at, to weigh carefully" (Thayer's).

The truth of Mark 4:24-25 has an even greater impact when read in context with verse 25:

Mark 4:24-25 CSB

"Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, It will be measured to you — and more will be added to you. ²⁵ For whoever has, more will be given to him, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Note: The three primary tools for faithfully stewarding "every word, thought, impression, and revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit of God" are the Bible, other communications from the Lord and a prayer journal. Batterson writes, on Day 5, "Journaling is one of the most overlooked and undervalued spiritual disciplines. In my estimation, it's on par with praying, fasting, and meditating."

3) "Prayer gives us a God's-eye view. It heightens our awareness and gives us a sixth sense that enables us to perceive spiritual realities that are beyond our five senses."

a God's-eye view = faith

- The clearest definition for faith in the Bible is found in Hebrews 11:1. The following paraphrase captures faithfully the meaning of the verse:

Faith is having the title deed for what we hope for made real in our heart; it is seeing the outcome from a God's-eye view, before it becomes a physical reality.

Perhaps the verse that most succinctly describes what a God's-eye view of a matter looks like is Romans 4:17b:

...the God who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist.

4) "If we're going to understand the potential of faith, we have to understand the power of a seed."

Romans 4:20 DLNT

But he did not waver *in* unbelief with reference to the promise *of* God, but became-strong *in* faith...

- Notice that this verse, which speaks of Abraham, says that he "became-strong in faith," which speaks of a process toward an end result.

Even though he went to be with the Lord 72 years ago, Smith Wigglesworth has not been surpassed as a model of faith in modern times. When asked how one comes to possess great faith he said the following:

"How can one come to possess great faith? Now listen, here is the answer to that: First, the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Faith must grow by soil, moisture, and exercise."

Surely that is what Jesus had in mind when he compared faith to a mustard seed in Matthew 17:20:

"...truly I say *to* you, if you have faith like *a* seed *of* a mustard-plant, you will say *to* this mountain, 'Pass from-here to-there', and it will pass. And nothing will be impossible *for* you." (DLNT)