

Monday & Tuesday

Read Acts 1:12-26

The first type of waiting is a type of waiting that throws its hands up and figures that since the future cannot be known with the required level of certainty that it isn't worth bothering to do much at all. I am sure you have experienced as I have whether in this time or at another time of life. The future is too mysterious and it bears down on you like a thick, dark, foreboding fog that you can't escape. Everything in life seems to be consumed by the fog. When you are in a thick fog and don't know where you are pointed it can seem rather foolish to take the next step because you don't know in which direction you are stepping. Our spiritual practices can become lax because we don't see any results. This is a type of waiting that can be a precursor or marker for a period of depression and shouldn't be ignored. If you feel yourself here, reach out to me, a friend, or a mental health professional.

Another type of waiting is to try to not wait at all. We can become fervent in our activities in the hopes of forcing results. That might work with your spouse, children, or store cashier sometimes, but I bet you've discovered that it doesn't work too well in a pandemic. Perhaps there was a time during the past two months in which you figured the best way to wait was not to wait at all and to push forward through the sheer force of your will. You called on God to join you in getting going and you rushed through the fog. Maybe your spiritual practices turned to pushing through the fog and manically storming about searching for the best way forward and then calling back to others in the same fog claiming you've found the way. But the more fog you storm through the more fog you see and you get more frustrated, angry, and exasperated.

Are you experiencing one (or a mix of both) of these now? When are some times where you have experienced these in the past? What is the most frustrating part? How have you moved through those times in the past and how did you sense God's presence?

Wednesday

Read Acts 1:12-26 and Proverbs 16:33 & 18:18

So, why are we not rolling dice to make decisions today? It would be so easy to pray and roll the dice and abide by the result. It is essential to note that this is the last time that

casting lots is recorded as a means of decision-making in the New Testament. After Pentecost, which we remember and celebrate next Sunday, there is no need to cast lots to discern the will of God because the Church Universal and each follower of Christ has the presence of Jesus himself to reveal the will of God. From the gift of the Holy Spirit forward, the Body of Jesus makes decisions through prayer and discerning the will of God together.

Having to rely on communicating with God through the Holy Spirit and discerning God's will is admittedly more difficult on the front end than simply rolling the dice. But in the long run, it is so much better. I have trouble imagining how I would stick to a decision that I didn't like because the roll of the dice determined the outcome. I think like a child playing Monopoly, I would keep rolling the dice until I got the outcome I truly desired. Or think of a momentous decision based on a dice roll. "Why did you marry your spouse?" "I rolled a six." Seems rough. Doing your best to discern God's will through prayer, study, and fellowship not only provides for better decisions, these methods also form an on-going network of support with God and your community.

Thursday

Read Acts 1:12-26 (again!) with an eye towards how they behaved as a community

When you have important decisions to make it is best to talk to the key people in your life. When I was looking for that first pastoral gig, I talked to friends, mentors, and family. I don't think I ever expressly asked if that is where I should go (not that there is anything wrong with that), but we talked about the church, the area, and what I was sensing. Everyone seemed to be on-board. While you don't have to go with what everyone else says, you should look for confirmation from other Jesus followers who know you well. If they have concerns or questions, you should take those seriously. They love you and the Holy Spirit is speaking to them, too. Peter didn't just randomly go off and announce they were hiring a new apostle, it is obvious that this came through prayer, scripture, and that the Eleven (and maybe all 120) were of one mind about the need for this to happen. They were praying, studying, listening, and discussing together what the next step needed to be to fulfill God's mission. So, reach out to those around you. And if you could use some help processing, feel encouraged to call on me (Pastor Seth). I won't tell you what to do, but I will help you sense where God is leading.

Friday – In preparation for Sunday worship and Pentecost, please read and reflect upon Acts 2:1-13.