

“Seeing with the Eyes of Jesus; Discerning the Prompting Voice of the Holy Spirit”

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Intro: Imagine...

I. Two Stories – Simeon, Anna with Jesus in the Temple, Mary, Joseph search for Jesus, Luke 2:25-50.

- A. **Simeon:** Righteous and devout; listening and waiting; the Holy Spirit was on him.
 - a. Moved by the Spirit to go to the temple...
 - b. Prayerful prophesy to God and parents of Jesus.
- B. **Anna:** Old, always in the temple (where God is most likely to speak, if going to speak); fasting and praying.
 - a. Thanks to God
 - b. Prophesied to all who were there waiting for redemption of Israel.
- C. **A way of being with God...**
 - a. Believed what God had said would happen: A typical baby (two doves) but Messiah.
 - b. “Waiting,” attentive and prayerful... “Humility, queen of virtues” – Teresa of Avila
 - i. Attentive to the Word of God, Biblical teachings and principles
 - c. Listening for the inner witness of the Holy Spirit / a voice, an impression, a divine “knowing” which is from the Holy Spirit. God allows the m to see what is happening beyond normal, human perception and understanding, for God’s purposes.
 - d. Testimony of two witnesses, a man and a woman, neither in the temple hierarchy.
- D. **Mary and Joseph...** They know, but have jumped to crisis mode...
 - a. Feeling responsibility! Got to do something! Urgency of moment...
 - b. Pray? Stop and remember, “Oh, yeah... God”
- E. **Does God work like this today? Yes....**
 - a. In Session meeting... The Surma People Project in 1987.
 - b. In individual lives... Margaret Patch and...
 - c. Other... Your stories....

II. Recognizing the Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit / the Voice of Jesus...

- A. **The Voice of Jesus**, by Gordon Smith, Formatio Publishing
 - a. Leans on Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards: “Listening with heart and Mind...”
- B. **Defining the “Inner Witness”** of the Holy Spirit
 - a. The Four Expressions of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Speaks...
 - 1. Assures us of God’s Love, Rom. 5:5-8.
 - 2. Convicts us of sin, John 16:7-11.
 - 3. Illumines our minds to truth, John 6:2-14.
 - 4. Guides us in time of choice, Acts 13:2-4.
- C. **Making decisions / discerning with heart and mind:**
 - a. A word about the mind...
 - b. Importance of Gut Feelings...
 - c. “Desolation and Consolation” – Ignatius
 - i. Desolation: the desolate place of spirit, “absence” from the Holy Spirit.

- ii. Consolation: Feelings that come from restored faith from the Spirit.
- d. Importance of making decisions in Consolation... from a place of faith...
 - i. Yes, anger at injustice, but move through it to a place of consolation before deciding to act.

III. Reflective Questions:

- a. What struck you about the importance of gaining God's perspective by paying attention to the way the Holy Spirit communicates with us today?

- b. Share a time when God led you or someone you know by an inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

- c. What question would you like to ask about the way the Holy Spirit speaks and guides us?

- d. How might we restructure our lives and church processes to be able to be more attuned and attentive to what the Holy Spirit might be saying to us?