

Planning and Decision-Making Jesus' Way – It's all about Trust

In the course of His ministry, Jesus offered many teachings that have amazing staying power and relevance for us even thousands of years later.

"When we look at just the words that Jesus said in the Bible, it almost appears Jesus contradicts himself," said Glenn Pearson, Executive Vice President of the Georgia Hospital Association, during the June 10th session of BELIEVES held at Cathedral of Christ the King.

For example, Jesus calls us to be wise and discerning but not judging others.

Jesus also teaches that God's sovereignty is absolute, yet we're instructed to pray.



Pearson, who is also the author of a book titled "That's a Great Question," mentioned these and many other teachings may initially seem to be contradictory but they all ultimately lead to one consistent key – trusting God.

"God has something to say about every aspect of our lives – including our planning and decision-making," Pearson stated. "There's an ideal way for Him to handle every decision I make. It's a good decision if I do what God wants, whatever the results."

Ultimately, we want to confidently develop and execute plans, but we're called to trust God so that we can be in peace with how to react when the results may not be what we anticipate.

"As business people, we constantly have to make decisions," Pearson commented, "and many are high stakes like starting a business, expanding a product line, hiring and firing people, relocating, taking a new job, or even changing careers."

The impact of our decisions can be significant. On an immediate level, the personal decisions we make are impactful and can affect family. If in a senior role in a business or organization, the decisions we make can affect the lives of employees, and if they're bad decisions – even cost people their jobs.

"The reality is that we have to make decisions all the time, with many having huge impacts on ourselves and others," Pearson stated. "There are a lot of emotions surrounding many of our decisions, but since this is a Christian meeting, we also want to consider some of the spiritual dimensions."

Pearson said that given God designed human nature, He understands our circumstances and He has an ideal way to handle every issue in life, including decision-making – though the results aren't guaranteed.

"There are many sermons on this topic that talk about the need to live a 'holy' life," Pearson said sharing two quotes from Jesus in the gospel of Matthew – Matthew 5:20 and Matthew 5:48 – which are often cited about 'living holy.'

“In some ways it is understandable that there would be so much focus on the aspect of being ‘holy’ only, but it is important to consider a more 3-D view of what Jesus taught on this particular topic,” Pearson commented.

Pearson pointed out that though Jesus calls us to be more righteous than the Pharisees, he also shredded the Pharisees for their legalism and dependence on their own goodness and calls us to not be like them because of their hypocrisy. Added to these two dimensions is the third dimension to walk around as if all this is an easy yoke and light burden.

“In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus also said, ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light,’” said Pearson.

“Either Jesus was contradicting himself,” offered Pearson, “or there's a way to view these complementary teachings that makes sense.”

The way – God is trustworthy so we can relax in his love, and trust Him with all aspects of life.

“If we’re Christians, how could we NOT say that we want to trust God?” asked Pearson.

In the King James Version of Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus speaks of how Our Heavenly Father knows that we need food and clothes, and tells us that if He takes care of the birds and flowers of the field, why should we worry about what we’ll eat, drink, or wear?

“Jesus gives examples of birds and flowers,” said Pearson. “Flowers don’t have to do anything but be. It’s doing all it can do. Birds have to do a bit more. For me, do I have the ability to plan and think? Yes.”

Rather than worry about our needs, Pearson stated we’re asked to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all things He promises shall be added unto us.

“It almost sounds like we shouldn’t even think about the future, let alone plan for it, doesn’t it?” Pearson asked.



Walter Kozik, Cathedral of Christ the King parishioner, responded, “It makes me feel a bit contradictory. On the one hand, Jesus says ‘trust’ but he also says go do.”

Pearson said that when he personally faces these contradictory moments, he focuses on first praying, and then moving his feet and living with the consequences. He has to trust and know that God knows what he needs.

Early in his career, Pearson was in a situation like the one he described, when he made a decision that didn't work out as expected.

"I went to work for a hospital outside Detroit after my graduate school training and administrative fellowship at the University of Michigan Medical Center," Pearson recalled. "It was a bad match for me. I had two bosses – AT THE SAME TIME, four different VPs, and more to deal with. After a few years, we reached a mutual decision that this wasn't a good fit."

Pearson said he was devastated because prior to that in his life he was always the star guy. In this situation, he felt like he had failed.

"If you were to ask my wife, she'd tell you I'd regularly come home during this time, crawl up in bed and just feel like crying," said Pearson. "It was the worst time in our marriage."

Pearson looked for something else as a next career step and when he found something in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he prayed to discern what to do. The opportunity identified had some questionable aspects so he wasn't fully in peace.

"Finally, after praying and deciding to take the job in Grand Rapids, I wrote a letter to God saying 'we believe we're taking this job as a part of Your will and we will interpret everything through the view that it's Your will,'" Pearson told everyone.

He then accepted the job, and moved forward, trusting in God and believing all was a part of His will.



Those in attendance at BELIEVES, like Rick Robbins, VP at Bernstein Global Wealth Management, then opened up with everyone in the room about professional decisions and plan they had made as well.

Robbins, said after deciding to accept different professional roles in his career, he wound up learning something different from each one.

"The best job I have ever had was working with entrepreneurs – they had lots of ideas," Robbins said.

Another BELIEVES attendee shared one of the best jobs she had ever had was in film production because everyone had to work together as a team.

Noting the different reflections Robbins and others shared, Charles Jones, Cathedral of Christ the King parishioner, added, "Someone once said, 'Nothing ever works out as planned. We always have to continue to adapt.' I've always remembered that."

Dean McDonald, Principal at Walden Businesses, spoke in agreement with Jones, but from a more personal perspective.

“I’ve never been a big planner,” said McDonald. “Growing up in a bigger family, I had to learn to adapt.”

Margaret Piekarski, Director of Sales Training & Development at Given Imaging, also mentioned that amongst those at her table, everyone was discussing the importance of being quiet, praying, and listening to the Holy Spirit, in all situations – personal or professional.

Pearson agreed and tied everything in the session together by sharing three underlying truths that are a solid foundation for trusting in God.

“God loves me completely, God controls everything, and God knows what he is doing.”

