

October 22, 2017

# Pastoral Notes

Reverend Dr. Brigitte A. Black

## Ministry of Encouragement

### From Membership to Discipleship:

#### The Call to Discipleship

##### Luke 9:23-25

***40 On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.***

##### ***Leviticus 23:40 NIV***

The call to discipleship is a call to live differently. It is a call to surrender your will to the will of God. It is a call to discern your mission and purpose by following Jesus, your creator. The creator knows why and for what purpose we were created. We can take all kinds of career assessments, aptitude test, spiritual gifts test, and a sleuth of other test to determine what only God knows, what our mission and purpose is in this life. What has God called me to do? The call to discipleship is the call to go deep with God. We must abandon our ideas of success and be obedient to God. Spiritual greatness, greatness of any kind is measured by size, amount, numbers. Yet, God calls us to be Christlike, to live differently. Going deep with God brings fulfillment, purpose, mission, and joy. God has a plan, purpose, and promises for our lives.

Jesus says, "If anyone ..." indicates the choice is up to us to follow Him and become like him. It is more than just believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he died for your sins, and rose from the dead. It is about allowing the Word of God, your relationship with Jesus to change you; transform you into a new person with a different attitude and way of being. If you do not choose to follow Jesus every day, then finding yourself is not an option. You will not find yourself unless you give up yourself to Jesus. Saying "yes" to God sometimes means saying "no" to self. You cannot always have it your way. God's way is the best way for all of us. God loves us and cares about us and will lead us the best way. When you use your GPS to get directions it will sometimes give you choices, the fastest route, avoid highways, avoid tolls, etc. With God it is the best route to where you are headed. Choose daily to follow Christ and to become Christlike in your thoughts, deeds, and attitude. GPS – God's Positioning System, Amen!

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## Prayer

Mighty and Majestic God, we have gathered to lift up Your Holy Name. You have said that if we lift You up You would draw all people unto You. You are wonderful and awesome. You have been our provider and protector. You have made the crooked roads in our life straight. You have walked through the valleys with us and at times You carried us through the valleys. Lord, forgive us for holding on to bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, jealousy, hatred, discord, and resentment. Lord forgive us for we have sinned and fallen short of your glory. We cast our cares and burdens upon You because You said You would sustain us and never let the righteous be shaken. Comfort those who are grieving, bereaved, and mourning. Heal the brokenhearted and depressed. Watch over our children as they travel to and from school. Help them to focus when they study. Grant us solutions to heal the racial divide in America. Grant our government and leader's wisdom. Teach us to be instruments of love and peace. Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our heart be acceptable unto You. This we pray in the name and power of Jesus Christ. Amen!

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## Stewardship Moment

Today we kick off our yearlong "Jubilant Journey" celebrating 175 years of existence in McLean county. We have planned and are yet planning fun, family oriented activities to commemorate 175 years. The kickoff event is Friday, October 27, 2017 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM here at the church. Family fun night is all about laughter, fun, games, family and food. Come out play games meet new people, renew friendships and enjoy what God has given you – life. Bring your favorite board game and teach us how to play. If you want to bring treats for everyone you are welcome. We are going to be good stewards of the life God has given us. The Bible says, a merry heart does good like medicine. We are asking everyone to commit to giving \$175 over and above your tithe this year to the church. We want to plan and prepare for the future by starting an endowment. We want to leave a legacy for those who come after us.

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## Sermon Scripture

[Luke 9:23-25](#)

### Following Jesus, Becoming A Disciple

<sup>23</sup> Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?"