

## ENCOUNTER – GOD’S PLAN

JANUARY 15/21

Our second last reading in Acts is from chapter 25:23–26:32. Note the huge contrast between the pomp and ceremony of the kingdom of the world and the poverty and humility representing the kingdom of God! Isn’t it always this way? Paul seems like a kite twisting in the wind – at the mercy of hateful enemies, hopeless bureaucracy, officials wanting a bribe and incredulity from a dominant pagan occupying force. He knew that the Spirit had led him to that point, but what would happen from then on? I love that Paul continued to point to Jesus from whatever platform he had – he left the plan to God! What a guy!

Often, I am not sure what God is up to – if only I knew his next steps for me. Can you relate? Now 2000 years later – this morning actually – I read these wonderful words that this same Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 5:18,19: “Under all circumstances give thanks, for such is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not extinguish the Spirit’s fire.”

So maybe, as we listen and watch for what the Lord wants next for us, we can simply BE His follower.

Henry Blackaby wrote such a seminal book called *Experiencing God* (I heartily recommend it), and in it he includes a prayer that I think is appropriate for us all to pray:

“God, You have spoken to me through the years of my love relationship with You. I pause now to reflect on some of Your ways and purposes that I have learned from You through the years. I want to live according to those ways and purposes, not my own. Give me the faith and courage to do so. Implant Your Holy Spirit within me. Create the image of Your Son in me so I can live out Your ways and purposes. Thank You, O Father; that You have patience with me and the confidence in me to take time to show personal interest in me and to reveal Yourself to me. I can only respond in obedience and in worship. I commit myself anew today to hearing your word to me and to responding to that word immediately in obedience. As I wait for You to speak, I bow in worship and adoration before You. You alone are God – the God above all creation, the Sovereign Lord who rules the universe. All power, all glory, all honor, all praise, and all worship belong to You and You alone. I love you, Lord.”

Pastor Leon