

December 28, 2008
Judgments and Decisions in 2009
Isaiah 11:1-5 NIV

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him —
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD —
and he will delight in the fear of the LORD .
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
... Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Top Ten Things To Say About A Christmas Gift You Don't Like

10. Hey! There's a gift!
9. Well, well, well ...
8. Boy, if I had not recently shot up 4 sizes that would've fit.
7. This is perfect for wearing around the basement.
6. Gosh. I hope this never catches fire! It is fire season though. There are lots of unexplained fires.
5. If the dog buries it, I'll be furious!
4. I love it -- but I fear the jealousy it will inspire.
3. Sadly, tomorrow I enter the Federal Witness Protection Program.
2. To think -- I got this the year I vowed to give all my gifts to charity.
And the Number One Thing to say about a Christmas gift you don't like:
1. "I really don't deserve this."

Now we face a new year. In 2009 we will be faced with many decisions. It is not easy making judgments & decisions. Yet you are in positions to make judgments and decisions that will have a major impact on lives in your home, job, and other communities that you find yourself. The judgments and decisions you make will affect your life and the life of people you know and love. The judgments and decisions you make today can affect not only this life, but eternity. How can find help for the judgments and decisions we will need to make on 2009?

I wouldn't suggest the technique that one man used:

A police officer pulled a guy over for speeding and had the following exchange:

Officer: May I see your driver's license?

Driver: I don't have one. I had it suspended when I got my 5th DUI (Driving Under the Influence).

Officer: May I see the owner's card for this vehicle?

Driver: It's not my car. I stole it.

Officer: The car is stolen?

Driver: That's right. But come to think of it, I think I saw the owner's card in the glove box when I was putting my gun in there.

Officer: There's a gun in the glove box?

Driver: Yes sir. That's where I put it after I shot and killed the woman who owns this car and stuffed her in the trunk.

Officer: There's a BODY in the TRUNK?!?!?

Driver: Yes, sir.

Hearing this, the officer immediately called his captain.
The car was quickly surrounded by police, and the captain approached the driver to handle the tense situation:

Captain: Sir, can I see your license?

Driver: Sure. Here it is.

It was valid.

Captain: Whose car is this?

Driver: It's mine, officer. Here's the registration.

Captain: Could you slowly open your glove box so I can see if there's a gun in it?

Driver: Yes, sir, but there's no gun in it.

Sure enough, there was nothing in the glove box.

Captain: Would you mind opening your trunk? I was told you said there's a body in it.

Driver: No problem.

The trunk was opened; no body.

Captain: I don't understand it. The officer who stopped you said you told him you didn't have a license, stole the car, had a gun in the glove box, and that there was a dead body in the trunk.

Driver: Yeah, I'll bet he told you I was speeding, too.

We were in Acts for our daily reading. Acts is about the church after Pentecost. Are you uncomfortable talking about Pentecost? Christmas is a huge holiday and celebration, Easter is a huge holiday and celebration, but Pentecost doesn't seem as important. We don't usually celebrate Pentecost. Even the church doesn't usually make a big deal about Pentecost. Yet, Pentecost is *very* important. Christmas is God with us, but Pentecost is God in us. After Easter Jesus was gone, but at Pentecost He sent His Spirit to be with us forever. No longer would God be experienced in a particular place like a temple, at a particular time; no longer would God be far off, rather He would be everywhere, always, and within. When on earth Jesus was limited and then, after His ascension, He was absent. But at Pentecost Christ became utterly available in experience – by the Spirit.

During Advent this year we have learned that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the Messiah. At Pentecost we learn that the same Spirit can now rest on us. We can experience a fellowship with God never realized before.

How can we have this relationship with God? It is a love relationship, so how does any love relationship begin and grow? First there has to be an attraction, then, through communication we begin to draw near to know the person, and as we do trust is built, and when there is trust, self-surrender is made to that person, followed by continuous adjustment in the relationship; Attraction, drawing near, trust, self-surrender, and continuous adjustments. This is the same in our relationship with God.

Are you attracted to God? Let me introduce you to Him. Jesus *is* God. That means that God is like Jesus. God is a Christ-like God.

We now know what God is like, because we have seen Him in Jesus; He is “Christ-like”. And, if He is, He is therefore good and trustworthy. And, if He is good and trustworthy we should have no fear in surrendering ourselves to Him. We communicate with God and draw near to Him as we know His Word, and keep it, as we pray, and worship. Trust is built as we find Him to be good and trustworthy, and because of that we do not fear surrendering ourselves to Him.

We now know what we are to be like, because we have seen it in Jesus; we are to be “Christ-like”. We now know what goodness is: it is Christ-likeness. If so, then sin is un-Christ-likeness.

If God is a Christ-like God, then the Holy Spirit is a Christ-like Spirit. And if the Spirit lives in us, He will not make us anything other than Christ-like.

We don't need more spiritual gifts, more spiritual power etc., we need something deeper; we need Christ-likeness.

It is this Spirit of Christ in us that is our resources for decision making. We have access to God as a resource in making moral and ethical decisions. When you have the Spirit of Christ, you have been given the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of power, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

In Isaiah 11: 3-5 it tells us that Christ will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, or decide by what He hears with his ears; but will judge and decide with righteousness...justice...and faithfulness.

As believers who have the Spirit of God resting on them, we cannot and must not make decisions according to what we see with our eyes or hear with our ears. Rather we must depend on Righteousness, Justice, and Faithfulness when we make decisions.

Righteousness is "right-way-ness". Christ makes judgments and decisions by having right motives. What is important as you make judgments and decisions is that your motives are right. You must want what is moral and legal, and right in God's eyes. If your motive is to love God and love others as yourself you are on the right track to making good judgments and decisions.

Justice is similar to righteousness. What is just, and fair, and right must motivate our decisions. Use sound reasoning. Do what you would want done for you.

Faithfulness is to be lead by faith and truthfulness.

This is how one having the Christ-like Spirit would judge and make decisions; by what is right, fair, and true, motivated by one's faith in God and love for what is good. This is how you should make judgments and decisions in 2009. However, the Spirit must rest on you. If you submit to the Lord, Jesus Christ with a humble and contrite heart then His Spirit will rest on you. If you bow before Jesus, He will give you wisdom, understanding, strength, and power. When we are willing to submit, yield and be led by the Spirit of God we are inviting God to be the resource for our judgments and decisions as God invites us to participate with Him in His activities.

Many live sub-Christian, spiritually anemic lives. We take the facts of Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection, but we do not take *His life*. Take not only the facts about Jesus, take the life of Jesus, and let Him influence and direct your life.