

First Baptist Church of Clinton, Louisiana
1689 Second London Baptist Confession:
“Chapter 1, Of the Holy Scriptures, Part 4”
March 19, 2017

- Read 2LCF 1.1, 1.10
- Some say they receive special words or impressions from God. They may say things like:
 - God just told me to witness to that person.
 - Or, a man tells a woman, God told me that we are supposed to get married.
 - Or, a pastor tells his congregation, I've prayed about it and sensed that the Lord would have us to stop meeting in a church building and start meeting in homes.
 - Or, one church member to another, I just really feel like the Lord is telling me that I should mentor you.
 - Or, I just really feel like God is telling me that I need to take this job.
 - Now, to clarify, some people just mean “I think it’s wise for me to do do these things.” They mean that from what they know about God and His Word, it seems and even feels right for them to do something. That’s one thing, and it’s ok.
- But, does the Bible teach that God literally tells us to do things, or gives us commands that are not in the Bible? I want to give you several reasons that the answer is “no.”
 - First, you will not find in the Bible any example of God telling a private person through direct special revelation what that person should do in ordinary life situations.
 - There is no example in the Bible of that.
 - What you find is God telling prophets to do things that have significance for the people of God.
 - For example, when God told Abraham to leave Ur of Chaldees, it was because God was establishing a line through whom Christ would come. God was choosing a whole people, and the patriarch of a people to lead to the promised land to be a type of the kingdom of God.
 - I once heard a missionary use God’s calling of Abraham as an example of how God called him. He said, God called Abraham to leave his home and go to the land he would show him. God told me to do the same thing. But that’s not a legitimate use of the Bible.
 - Can anyone think of anything in the Scriptures that
 - Second, New words from God are always for His whole people and to explain what God is doing to redeem them, never only for private individuals and their personal lives.
 - God often speaks to explain what He's going to do, then God acts. Other times, God acts, and then He sends prophets to explain what He did.
 - God often speaks to explain Himself and then He’s silent again.
 - God spoke to Adam to explain the terms of life in the Garden, the promise of blessing and the warning of the curse. But, then God was silent.
 - God spoke to Noah to explain that He would judge the world, but that He would save His people. But, then God was silent.
 - God spoke to Abraham to call him, and to explain that He would save the world through Abraham's offspring. He speaks to Isaac and Jacob but this was also for the

- redemption and preservation of His people. But, then God was silent.
 - God spoke to Moses to explain that He was going to judge Egypt, but save His people through many miraculous events. But, then God was silent.
 - God spoke to the OT Prophets to explain His judgments of Israel and the pagan nations, and also deliverances of Israel. But, then God was silent.
 - Then we come to the end of the OT, and we get the Apocryphal writings. And the Apocryphal writings claim God is silent. So, God was silent for 400 years.
 - Then, God spoke to the NT apostles and prophets to explain the coming of Christ and the establishment of the NT church. But, now God is silent again, just as He was silent before.
 - This means, we should only expect God to speak again when He moves redemptive history forward. The next major movement of history we should expect is the second coming.
- A third reason we should say that God doesn't give any more revelations is the doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture.
 - God's written revelation has always been sufficient to reveal God's will for each stage of redemptive history, unless God sent a prophet to add to His revelation.
 - Proof of the Sufficiency of Scripture: Ps 119:1; Prov 30:5-6
 - Prophets came to explain what God was doing. And there were strict tests about prophets. Deut 13:1-5; 18:15-22.
 - Reasons we know no more prophets or apostles will come.
 - Christ is now our final mediator (1 Tim 2:5).
 - There is no other mediator between God and men. To suggest that there will be additional prophets is to suggest that Christ is not our only mediator.
 - Also, Christ is a perfect mediator who discloses all the things the Father intends to communicate (Jn 15:15).
 - In these last days, God has spoken to us in His Son (Heb 1:1-2), both directly and through the apostles and NT prophets (Jn 14:26; 16:13-15).
 - The apostles and the prophets were the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). The foundation does not need to be laid again (1 Cor 3:11). Paul tells us he was the last apostle (1 Cor 15:8). To be an apostle, you had to be personally appointed by Christ and able to work miracles (Matt 10:1-2).
 - There are only 12 Apostles because heaven only has 12 foundation stones with the 12 Apostles names written on them (Rev 21:14).
- Therefore, we should not look to special and extra-biblical revelations to guide our lives.
 - We should look to the Word of God.
 - We should know the Bible so thoroughly that we have wisdom about how to act in any given situation (Col 3:16-17).
 - We must obey Scripture where Scripture speaks (Jn 17:17).
 - But, where there is no law in the Bible, there is no sin (Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13). This teaching is freeing!
 - So, what is the role of the Holy Spirit?
 - The Holy Spirit illumines our understanding of the Bible. The Holy Spirit helps us know how to apply the Bible in godly wisdom. See 1 Cor 2:13-14.

- The Spirit and Word always work together. Look up Eph 5:18 and Col 3:16. These are parallel passages in parallel books, but one says be filled with the Spirit and the other says let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you. Those are the same thing! See Jn 6:63.
- Does the fact that God has opened up the storehouse of His instruction to us mean that we're missing out on deeper communion with Him through special revelation? No!
 - God speaking to us in His Word is so sweet and intimate.
 - Hearing God speak in His Word should stir our affections and feelings of love for Christ. See Luke 24:27, 32.
- The Hymn: How Firm a Foundation communicates the sufficiency of Scripture perfectly.
 - How firm a foundation, you saints of the LORD, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He has said, you who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.
- Does God lead us by “feelings” and “impressions?” There are two problems with the idea that He does.
 - First, feelings and impressions are wrongly given AUTHORITY.
 - Often, Christians give them such authority that they have the final say in the decision.
 - But, the Bible alone is the sufficient and final authority in decision making.
 - Second, many wrongly believe God REVEALS His will through feelings and impressions.
 - Often, when people say they want to know God's will, what they want is an “feeling” or “impression” that they can believe is God's guidance.
 - But, we've already seen that God's revelation in Scripture is sufficient. It is enough for all doctrine and life. We don't need any more revelation than what He has already given.
- What is the Role of Feelings?
 - Should we “follow our hearts?” See Prov 28:26; Jer 17:9. Thoughts and feelings are often deceptive.
 - But, on the other hand, we should listen to our consciences. Rom 2:15; 1 Tim 1:19. It is possible to sear your conscience 1 Tim 4:1-2.
 - Do you think Christians sometimes make decisions based on feelings? Why do you think that is?
- What About Being Led by the Spirit? What do people mean by this?
 - If we look up “being led by the Holy Spirit” we'll find that they have nothing to do with making decisions.
 - Look at Romans 8:12-14; Galatians 5:16-26, and Matthew 4:1.
 - None of these have to do with making decisions. They have to do with being led into obedience to God's revealed moral law and about God's providential leading of Christ.
 - These are the only 3 statements about the leading of the Spirit in the whole Bible. It is not biblical to speak of being “led by the Spirit” in decision making.
- What About The Still Small Voice?
 - The Bible speaks of the still small voice in one place. 1 Kings 19:9-13.
 - This is Elijah, great victory with the prophets of Baal. Then Elijah ran. And, finally, God spoke to Elijah.
 - But, Elijah was a prophet.
 - And, Elijah was hearing a still small VOICE, not an inward nudge.

- It is a long verbal conversation with God.
- What About the Inner Peace to Confirm God's Guidance?
 - Colossians 3:15. The peace of God is to “rule.”
 - Some point out that the word rule means “to be a judge in our hearts.”
 - Then they argue that when we have a decision to make, we should pray about it and let the peace of God be a judge to us.
 - But, if we have a “check in our spirit,” then there is a red light on our decision.
 - But, we need to read the whole passage. Read Colossians 3:12-14.
 - What are vv 12-14 about? Paul is saying we need to have harmony among ourselves in the church, characterized by humility, unity, and forgiveness.
 - But, now what does verse 15 mean?
 - [Read it again.] It says let the peace of God rule in your [PLURAL] hearts.
 - What he's saying is that peace between us will be the judge of whether or not we are doing verses 12-14.
 - This is not about personal decision making. This is saying, “Do not fight with one another.”
 - And, if you have peace, then there is proof that you are loving one another. This verse is not saying that “peace” is the key to knowing God's will.
 - And, this is the ONLY verse that is used to substantiate the teaching that we know God's will by having a “peace” in our hearts about it. There is no evidence in the Bible about having a peace from God.
 - Also, Phil 4:7 speaks of a “peace” that passes all understanding, and there are other verses about peace.
 - But no verses teach that internal peace is to be a judge for us in decision making.
 - The Bible never says that “peace” in our hearts is a sign from God that it's His will that we do something.
 - Feelings of “peace” are often poor indicators of good decisions.
 - In major decisions, there is almost always emotional discomfort.
 - Often the bride and the groom in weddings feel some discomfort and lack of peace when they're getting married because it's such huge step, but a lack of the feeling of peace doesn't mean the marriage is not God's will.
 - What about sharing the gospel, confronting someone in sin, going to work on the first day of a new job, and on and on. Many of life's decisions are not peaceful.
 - Consider some biblical examples.
 - What about Moses? Do you think Moses had a peace about going to Egypt?
 - Gideon: Did he have a peace before leading the attack against God's enemies?
 - Or Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene? If Jesus was so peaceful, why was He sweating blood?
 - Also, sometimes people can be totally at peace with a foolish decision.
 - There have been many divorces in which at least one partner is at complete peace with the decision to divorce, even though the divorce is not a biblical one.
 - Actually, personal peace and prosperity is one of the idols of American Christianity. Having a peace isn't always a good thing at all.

- So, how should we make decisions?
 - We should study and meditate on Scripture. Josh 1:8; Ps 1:1-2.
 - We should cultivate wisdom and discernment. Prov 4:5-8.
 - We should walk wisely and make the most of our time. Eph 5:15-16.
 - We should obey God's commands. Deut 28:1-2; Jn 15:14.