

Line of vision – 28/01/2018

My son, give attention to my words;

Incline your ear to my sayings.

²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight;

Keep them in the midst of your heart.

²² For they are life to those who find them

And health to all their body.

²³ Watch over your heart with all diligence,

For from it flow the springs of life.” Prov.4:20-23

Beloved in the Lord,

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to spend an hour in a flight simulator, alongside a training pilot. It was a Father's Day gift and I found the experience very enlightening, as it gave me a greater insight into aviation. I did a number of manual take offs and landings as well as a fully automated landing. Thankfully I did not crash or lose control at anytime. The following day I read this passage from Solomon and it struck me that my experience in the simulator was a great illustration for this text.

In this passage, Solomon instructs us to incline our ear to God and to keep the Word of God in our line of vision at all times. The two main things I had to concentrate on whilst in the simulator were to listen to my instructor and to keep my eyes on the instrument panel at all times. The most important screen was the one that showed the altitude, direction and speed of the plane. I had to keep my eyes focused and my ears open at all times. I tried hard to do this and also to obey any commands immediately. My instructor was aware of what was happening at all times and corrected me if we were going off course or not holding the right altitude.

As I later pondered my experience in the cockpit, it became clear to me that there were similarities with my experience and day to day Christian living. We need to have our ears tuned at all times to hear when God speaks to us and we need to obey His voice immediately. Also we need to have our eyes on His Word at all times. The Bible needs to be in our line of vision at all times.

Solomon wrote in the preceding chapter:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He will make your paths straight.” Prov.3:5-6

This is very good advice. Solomon knew from bitter experience that leaning on one's own understanding leads to trouble. One's own understanding sooner or later leads you away from God and the consequences are great. The safest and most blessed place to be is leaning on God and trusting Him for all things. Solomon wrote: ***“In all your ways acknowledge Him.”*** All means exactly that. Acknowledge God in all of your ways.

The problem is that usually we don't. We tend to categorise our lives and to separate the earthly everyday matters from the spiritual. We live part of our lives leaning upon God and for other parts we trust in our own ability forgetting that everything that we are, and everything that we have, comes from Him. Living this divided life is not good. Our problem is that we are born with a corrupt and fallen nature. We are born with a sinful bent if you like. Our natural tendency is not to obey God and His Word, but to rebel. Usually what we want stands in opposition to what God says. That is why Solomon tells us to acknowledge God and lean on Him in all things. Remember that partial obedience is disobedience.

During my time in the Flight Simulator there were a couple of times when my mind was telling me to do something different other than what the instruments and my instructor was telling me. Thankfully, I was not arrogant or prideful but I did as I was told. That is why everything went smoothly. I didn't come out like my predecessor who said "I crashed the plane!"

Unfortunately, I can not truthfully say the same about my walk with God, There have been far too many times when I haven't obeyed God, and I have done things my way. Thankfully God is patient and merciful and always forgiving. Great is His mercy. He always forgives us when we repent. But God's grace is by no means a licence to sin, because although God forgives, He usually makes us reap and suffer the consequences of our disobedience.

Let us look at our text once more:

My son, give attention to my words;

Incline your ear to my sayings.

²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight;

Keep them in the midst of your heart.

Whilst in the simulator, I had headphones on all the time, so that I could hear what the instructor was telling me. They also cancelled out a lot of background noise so I could focus on the task at hand. I was constantly listening out for my instructors voice.

In this world we live in we are surrounded by sound. There are many voices that not only speak, but that are shouting at us all of the time. We are constantly being bombarded with things. We need to learn to shut out these sounds so that we can hear the one voice that really matters – The voice of the Good Shepherd – Jesus.

Over the years many people have said to me that God never speaks to them and that they have never heard God's voice. The fact of the matter is that God speaks to all of us, but often we are not listening. We don't have our headphones on. God doesn't usually shout, but speaks in a quiet but powerful way. In order to hear Him, we must want to hear Him. We must be tuned in to Him.

God speaks in many and varied ways, but the main way He speaks to everyone is through His Word – The Bible. The Bible is God's voice. When you read or listen to Scripture God is speaking. He is speaking to you. We need to ask God what He is telling us. What does this mean for me? What do I need to do, if anything in light of this message? Do I need to

change something? When we do this, God answers us clearly. Often we don't like the answer and so we say, "God doesn't speak to me!"

Let us be clear that above all things God is love. He knows us and our needs better than we do. His ways are always right. His motivation is always pure love and let us be clear, He will always achieve His purposes. That being the case it is better to walk with Him, in step with Him rather than in opposition.

So let us make it our aim to be tuned in to Him at all times and to be attentive to His call.

The second thing Solomon writes about is our line of vision. He tells us not to let the Word of God out of our sight. I already mentioned that during the flight simulation I had to keep my eyes on various screens in the instrument panel. As soon as I looked away and started to look around I had no idea whether the plane was still on course and holding the right altitude or not.

This also applies to driving. You need to be awake and alert and keep your eyes on the road at all times. Accidents often occur because the driver is distracted.

In order to avoid accidents in life we need to keep our eyes on the Word of God. It is our compass, our route map, our guide book, our instruction manual and our fuel. We need to remain focused at all times. This is so much easier said than done. Sometimes we are not even aware that we are drifting.

This is one reason the pilot has a co-pilot who sits next to him. They support and help each other. Quite often I have to drive to Canberra for services. I find the drive so much easier if Linda is with me, because she asks me from time to time if I am ok.

In life we have a Co-pilot who is with us 24/7. He never sleeps, He never tires, He never misses a beat. He is able to do all things, He is all powerful, all knowing and ever present. His name is God The Holy Spirit. He is our helper and our guide and counsellor. We need to learn to fully trust in Him at all times and in all places.

Remember Solomon wrote: ***"In all your ways acknowledge Him."*** This means to fully trust in Him all the time. Why wouldn't you? He knows all things and is all powerful.

Sitting in the simulator I realised that I basically knew nothing about flying. My instructor knew a lot and had a lot of experience. Knowing this, I had no trouble trusting him and doing what he said. I knew that with his guidance all will be well.

Before we began he asked me how much I knew about flying and what experience I had if any. When I said nothing and none he replied "Good. That means we will go well." He knew that if I was a bit of a know all or thought I knew something, I would be less likely to obey his every command.

In order for our life to be fulfilled and blessed we need to empty ourselves daily. We need to kill our ego and we need to place ourselves under God's complete command. We need to be listening for His voice all the time and we need to have His Word as our main focus.

If we do we will have a smooth flight through life. May God grant that this year 2018 be one of great and blessed flying with Him.
Amen.

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