

Excerpts from my journal, Feb 26th and 28th, 2021:

I seem to have three paths ahead, with what I can do with what's left of my life. All of these, I believe the Holy Spirit is guiding me to: A) write a memoir of my spiritual journey and the Church's role in it B) write a book about church, religion and life C) mentor or coach people in faith crisis. All have their formidable obstacles, I am finding.

We came home after picking up shakes at Santaquin (Marie, Todd and Dana, not me), then had a really enjoyable time talking and playing games. Jake & Shay went home, but the rest of us played. Except Marie and Dana and I, who talked for hours, it was so delightful. I talked to Marie about my three paths, three options, and how I didn't know which I should do/take, as none of them were really proving to be easy, or even facilitated, or moved along, by heaven. Which, for me, is *the* sign that it is God's will.

She asked if I had asked Heavenly Father in prayer what I should do. The answer is, no, I hadn't. Marie made the point that if I wanted to do these things, then wouldn't it make a big difference if I knew what God wanted me to do. I agreed, but said that I was afraid that God might take me in a completely different direction altogether, if I gave it all up to God's will, like telling me my life's work was to go serve up food at a soup kitchen for the rest of my life, and I didn't really want to do that. I want one of these three, maybe 2 or 3 of these options, and I felt the Spirit (the Holy Ghost, you know, God) was leading me to do these things. But the projects weren't coming along very well, or as quickly as I wanted them to. Things just didn't seem to be falling into place.

I've seen it over and over throughout my life. When God wants something done, it seems that things quickly fall into place. They happen, and when I look back on it, it seems it was quite obvious that it was God's will all along, because of how many things, even seemingly impossible things, fell into place seemingly effortlessly, flawlessly, and that's how I knew it was indeed God's will. I love that feeling, like the way we bought our home in West Jordan. There were so many little miracles. In retrospect, it seemed so easy, so blessed. But I also know that in the process it seemed nothing of the kind. It was hard, it was tenuous, it was difficult and took so much effort in darkness (faith) on my part. I prefer the hindsight, but it doesn't (or shouldn't, I don't think) obscure the difficulty in the moment that actually got it all done. Interesting, these differences of perspective.

Marie was very sympathetic and again encouraged me to take it to God in prayer. So I did after I went to bed. I spent a lot of time praying to God, and humbling myself and asking God what his will for me was. And it took a lot for me to say to God that I was willing to do his will, but I finally did get there. Begrudgingly. It saddened me that this was all I could do. But still, I was hopeful God would bless me.

Sunday morning, 28 Feb 2021

I had a dream last night. It was horrible, but I'm glad my subconscious is still trying to send me messages. I really, really believe it's important to keep a good relationship with my subconsciousness (Psalms 24:4-5), and pay deep attention to its messages to my conscious mind via dreams. But the message is not always wanted, if you know what I mean. But I do consider the message to be right up there with revelation, and/or the literal will of God. So here's the dream, as best as I can recall it. I may be filling in some gaps as I go, since I can't remember it perfectly.

I worked for a large, successful company. I was an important part of the business, with responsibilities and a very hopeful, bright future in the company. One of the best companies that we worked for had invited 20 or so of us 'high achievers' to visit their company headquarters, for a tour and orientation

about their business. It was quite an honor to be chosen by our company to go visit them, especially this time, as it was their 100 year anniversary, and quite a celebration was to ensue. I had never been before and was excited to go, and to be chosen for this.

I got there, to the conference room where we were to gather, a little early. The room was in disarray, as the company's person that would normally set up the room hadn't shown up. And I was a little early, so I began to set the room in order. Vendors showed up to decorate and to deliver food and such, and I helped them since no one else was there to coordinate the setup. I assisted and the room was really looking nice. Everything was as nice as could be.

Then some minor disruption occurred, and I happily jumped in and helped straighten things out. And as time moved on, which I didn't really notice, I kept helping and taking action and initiative in getting needed things straightened out. My help was appreciated, and needed, too, as far as I could see. And so I found myself doing much to help and make things better for all. The people around me were very appreciative of my help.

In the back of my mind, I wondered when I would be asked to join the group from my company for the presentations and tours and all, which was the entire point of me being there in the first place. But I didn't have any idea when this was to occur, what the schedule was, nor who was in charge of it. I had no information at all on the plan, and my place in it. But things were still needed by the people around me, and I was happily engaged in little things, as it turned out, all throughout the day. I was amazingly helpful, and pleased to be helping.

Eventually the day had passed. It was winding down, and I'd never met up with my group, had never seen the presentations, the tours, been with my peers from my company. And I finally realized that I'd missed the boat. Someone must have come to the conference room to pick up our group, but I hadn't been there when it happened, and I missed it. No one came for me. They may have noticed I wasn't there, but they simply marked me absent, and went on with their tour. And it was all over and done. Everyone around me throughout the day was happy with my involvement, but it wasn't why I was there. My purpose was unfulfilled. The invitation, the honor of it, the hoopla and promise of it was all for nothing. I was devastated and sad and this, this dream, was one of the most pleasant nightmares I'd ever experienced.

And now the biggest task of all. What does it mean? I believe that since the entire experience was generated by me, or perhaps by God, that only I, as influenced by the Spirit, can properly interpret its meaning.

My first thoughts were that my big three options (A)memoir (B)book (C)counseling-- would, if I did not pay attention and make them happen, would never happen. I am letting minor, inconsequential tasks take up my time, my life and they are interfering, even preventing, me getting anything meaningful done. And it's not that I'm exactly wasting my time, because good things are happening, good things are making people happy, even myself. But time is slipping away and I'm not where I really want to be. I'm doing nothing that truly meaningful. I can be happy doing trivial things. But the big goals, the big things are not done. And that makes me very, very sad.

Marie's telling me to turn to God to have Him tell me what to do. But if I'm right and the Holy Spirit is inspiring me here and now in my goals, my things I want to do, then that's what I need to do without any big revelation or approval from God to do them. Or they may just quietly slip away. This is nothing against Marie, she's being helpful and it's probably, generally, very good advice. But I don't think that's

going to make THE difference. Me deciding to engage, this will make the difference. And if it's wrong, I will trust God to tell me so.

I have learned throughout my life that God does not put up a big sign in lights, telling me what to do. Rather, I get teeny little clues, little nudges, and am left to make my choices, make my life happen more or less on my own. And if I make a bad choice, then God might step in and wake me up and change my course. He's done it before. But He always lets me step blindly into my future, without His overt direction, will or choices FOR ME ever being known by me. And I suppose that's for a reason. I would far rather be told what to do, especially if I knew that it was from God Himself. But I don't know that this has ever really happened in my life. It's lonely. But it seems impossible to ignore, this is how it happens in the moment. I only see God's hand in my life after the fact, with a few notable exceptions, such as the three pillars of mystical import, which, come to think of it, came to me in their time, I NEVER planned them out or 'made' them happen. At all.

I suppose this is all a very good reason for the Church existing in my life. The Church has a plan. And I have followed it. And very good things in my life have resulted from it. Occasionally, I have purposely and determinedly gone a different direction, as in when I insisted on searching for truth outside the Church when what I sought was not available there. And these things have worked out very well indeed. But these are exceptions to the rule. I suppose there is no cure for this, because it is what God wants.

It reminds me of being on my mission. My Trainer taught me what to do, and then gave me the reins. Eventually, it was my time to choose what to do, to lead. It nearly drove me nuts, but I had to learn to make choices of my own free will, and then act on it. At the time, I complained. I even accused my Trainer of laziness, since he wouldn't step in and take over for me. That was so terribly unfair of me. It's so hard. But time has shown, that it is unquestionably, so very good. I pressed on, and I got it done, even becoming a recognized expert at it, in time. But so incredibly (insert cuss word here) hard. Comfort has nothing to do with it. Left to myself, I wouldn't do it, I wouldn't be ABLE to do it. And I wouldn't become. I don't really like the way my life, my choices, is set up by God, but I can't deny that it works.